Complaints Policy & Procedure

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1. Aims and application

1.1 The aims of the procedure are to deal with complaints and concerns about Hamwic Education Trust schools, the academy Trust ("Trust") or any individuals connected with it by following the correct procedure; thoroughly and in an open, honest and fair manner. This policy complies with the Independent School Standards and the Department for Education's Best Practice Guidance for Academies Complaints Procedures.

1.2 This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children who are registered at one of the schools within the Trust. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to an individual school, or the Trust itself, about any facilities or services that we provide. Part 1 of this policy outlines how parents/carers of registered pupils currently attending schools within the Trust can raise a concern or complaint. Concerns or complaints from other persons will be dealt with in accordance with Part 2 of this policy.

1.3 This procedure does not apply to concerns and complaints relating to the matters listed in Annex 1.

1.4 Where an anonymous complaint is received, the Academy/Trust will use its reasonable endeavours to consider the complaint as best as it reasonably can. However, the Academy/Trust will not be required to consider the complaint pursuant to any specific process and will handle anonymous complaints on a case-by-case basis.

1.5 All staff will be made aware of this complaints procedure and are expected to review this procedure regularly in order that they are familiar with our process for dealing with complaints and can be of assistance when an issue is brought to their attention.

1.6 In this procedure:

- 'complaint' means an expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action;
- 'concern' means an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought;
- 'meeting' means an in person or virtual meeting (i.e. telephone or video conference where all parties can participate verbally), virtual meetings will only be held in the event that all parties have access to appropriate equipment to attend and are happy to do so;
- 'parent' means a parent, carer or anyone with legal responsibility for a child;
- 'school days' excludes weekends and school holidays and periods of partial or total school closure; 'Trust' means the Hamwic Education Trust.

1.7 The timeframes referred to in this policy are our usual timeframes and schools and the Trust will seek to adhere to these timeframes where possible.

1.8 Reasonable adjustments will be made to this procedure where required to ensure that complainants with disabilities can access and complete this complaints procedure. For example, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

2. Key principles

2.1 The Trust expects all complainants to make reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution.

2.2 The Trust encourages parents and others to approach the school with any concerns and refrain from airing concerns about the school/Trust and its staff on social media sites. Posting negative comments on social media can cause damage and upset and is often counter-productive to pupil education.

2.3 To investigate your complaint properly and fairly, we have implemented a staged approach. We anticipate that almost all complaints that arise will be resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2 outlined below.

2.4 We expect our members of staff to be addressed in a respectful manner and for communication to remain calm at all times. The procedure under Part 3 will only be used on very rare occasions to deal with repetitious and/or vexatious complaints or complaints pursued in an otherwise unreasonable manner.

2.5 Concerns or complaints should be brought to our attention as soon as possible. Any matter raised more than 3 months after the incident being complained of (or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 3 months of the last of these incidents) will not be considered unless the School Leader, Head of Compliance or Chair of Governors of a school accepts that there are good reasons to explain the delay or the complaint is about a particularly serious matter.

2.6 Where a complaint is received outside of term time, we will consider it to have been received on the first school day following the holiday period.

2.7 On rare occasions a school or the Trust may receive complaints from a number of individuals relating to the same issue. In order to deal with these complaints efficiently the school/Trust will follow the procedure set out in Part 4.

2.8 If it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines set out within this procedure, you will be advised accordingly and given an explanation as to why this has been the case and provided with revised timescales. If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority safeguarding teams or tribunals/courts, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. Where a complaint is raised but we do not have clarity from the complainant on the issues and/or desired outcomes, we will inform the complainant what information we need to progress the complaint and pause this procedure until reasonable clarity is achieved.

2.9 Complainants should not approach individual governors or trustees to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may prevent them from considering complaints at later stages.

2.10 If a complainant commences legal action against the Trust in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether it would be appropriate to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

2.11 If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

3. Records of complaints

A record will be kept of all written formal complaints, including at what stage they were resolved and action taken by us as a result of those complaints regardless of whether they were upheld.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where:

- access is requested by the Secretary of State;
- disclosure is required in the course of a school inspection;
- an individual has a legal right to access their own personal data contained within such documentation; or
- under other legal authority.

We will make the findings and recommendations from any complaint available for inspection if required on the school premises by an external authority, the Trust and the School Leader.

The Complainant should also keep all correspondence, statements and records relating to their complaint confidential, and should not disclose (by way of electronic communication, social media or otherwise) any information or documents relating to their complaint.

Part 1: Complaints procedure for parents

Stage 1: Informal concerns

1.1 An informal concern can be raised in person or by telephone. Concerns may also be raised by a third party acting on behalf of a parent, as long as they have appropriate authority to do so. Most enquiries and concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily by the class teacher or the head of year without the need to resort to the formal procedure. We value informal meetings and discussions and encourage parents to approach staff with any concerns they may have, and aim to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding.

1.2 It is always helpful if you can fully explain the nature of the concern and identify the outcome you are looking for. Where appropriate, you may be invited to an informal meeting with the member of staff most appropriate for dealing with that concern. The member of staff dealing with the concern will make sure that you are clear on what action (if any) has been agreed. This may be put in writing if appropriate.

1.3 If the matter is brought to the attention of the School Leader they may decide to deal with your concerns directly at this stage. If the concerns are about the School Leader these should be referred directly to the Head of Governance (governance@hamwic.org) under Stage 2.

For schools where there is currently no governing Committee, or if you have concerns about the Chair of the Governing Committee these should be addressed to the Head of Governance (governance@hamwic.org).

1.4 You should not approach individual governors to raise concerns. Governors have no power to act on an individual basis and it may prevent them from considering complaints at later stages.

1.5 The school will respect the views of a parent who indicates that they would have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff. In this case, the School Leader will refer the parent to another designated member of staff. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved in the circumstances leading to the concern feels too compromised to deal with it, the School Leader may consider referring the parent to another member of staff. The member of staff may be more senior, but this is not essential.

1.6 Staff members should log all informal concerns on the school management information system (Bromcom) and inform the School Leader of any serious concerns.

The Academy will seek to resolve matters at the informal stage within 15 school days of the issue being raised by the parent. Where no satisfactory solution has been found, you will be advised that if you wish your concerns to be considered further you should write to School Leader under Stage 2 of this procedure within 15 school days.

Stage 2: Formal written complaints

2.1 If your concerns are not resolved under Stage 1, you may elevate your complaint to the formal stage by setting out the grounds of complaint in writing and sending this to the School Leader of the relevant school. This must be done within 15 school days of the Stage 1 response.

2.2 It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like us to take to resolve your complaint. We require you to use the Complaint Form provided at Annex 2 of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like Citizens Advice to help you.

2.3 Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within five school days of receipt. The acknowledgement will confirm who will be investigating your complaint and if appropriate, may invite you to a meeting to clarify your grounds of complaint and to explore possible resolutions. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by one other person, such as a friend, relative or interpreter, to assist you. Where possible, this meeting will take place within 15 school days of receipt of the written complaint.

2.4 If necessary, witnesses will be interviewed and statements taken from those involved.

2.5 Once the relevant facts have been established as far as possible, you will be provided with a written response to the complaint, including an explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. This will include what action will be taken to resolve the complaint (if any). Whenever reasonably possibly, this will be done within 15 school days of any meeting with the parent; if no meeting is arranged it will be within 25 school days of the written complaint being received.

2.6 If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, you may request that your complaint be raised with the HET Head of Compliance by emailing governance@hamwic.org, marked for the attention of Head of Compliance, who will review the actions taken to date and discuss outstanding concerns with the complainant. If resolution has still not been achieved, complainants may request their complaint to be heard by a complaints panel under Stage 3 of this procedure.

2.7 The Trust may engage an independent, external person to carry out the investigation into the Stage 2 complaint or to review the investigation and response at Stage 2. This may be appropriate where the complaint is particularly complex or involves legal issues.

Q. What if the complaint is about the School Leader or the School Leader has already considered your complaint under Stage 1?

In these cases, your complaint should be sent to the Hamwic central team via governance@hamwic.org who will arrange for a governor to carry out the Stage 2 procedure.

Q. What if the complaint is about a governor on the local governing Committee?

Complaints about the Chair of Governors or any individual governor should be sent to governance@hamwic.org, marked for the attention of the Head of Governance, who will arrange for an appropriate person to investigate the complaint in accordance with stage 2.

If the complaint is about the Clerk of the local governing Committee or the local governing Committee as a whole, you should send your complaint to the Head of Governance (governance@hamwic.org), who will then determine the most appropriate action with regards to Stage 2 and Stage 3.

Q. What if the complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer or a member of the Managed Service Team?

If the complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust, or if they have been closely involved at Stage 1, your complaint should be sent to the Head of Governance (governance@hamwic.org) who will arrange for an independent individual to carry out all the Stage 2 procedures.

Q. What if the complaint is about a Trustee, Clerk of the Trustees or a member of the Trust?

If the complaint is about a Trustee or member of the Trust, you should contact the Head of Governance (governance@hamwic.org) who will arrange for another Trustee to investigate the concerns in accordance with Stage 2.

If the complaint is about the Clerk of the Trustees, your complaint should be sent to the Chair of the Trustees c/o Unit E, The Mill Yard, Nursling Street, Southampton, SO16 0AJ.

If your complaint is about the Trust board as a whole, you should send your complaint to the Head of Governance (governance@hamwic.org) who will arrange for the matter to be independently investigated.

Please be aware that where your complaint relates to an employee a copy of the complaint may be shared with them in order to investigate the issues raised. Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Trust's internal disciplinary procedures, where appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.

Stage 3: Referral to a Complaints Panel

3.1 If you are dissatisfied with the decision under Stage 2, you may request that a Complaints Panel be convened to consider your complaint. The Complaints Panel will principally consider how the complaint was handled at the previous stages but has discretion to review other aspects of the complaint as it sees fit. The Complaints Panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

3.2 To request a hearing before the Complaints Panel, you should email the Head of Governance at governance@hamwic.org within 15 school days of receiving notice of the outcome of Stage 2. You should state why you remain dissatisfied and the outcome you are seeking. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. You should ensure that you provide copies of all relevant documents including a copy of the original complaints form.

3.3 Your written request will be acknowledged within five school days of receipt.

- The Head of Governance will appoint a clerk who will arrange for a Complaints Committee to be convened, made up of at least three committee members, including: governors of a local governing Committee and/or trustees of the Trust (as appropriate) with no prior involvement in the matter; and,
- one person who is independent of the management and running of the school.
- The Head of Governance shall appoint one of these members to be the Chair of the Panel.

3.4 The independent panel member may be a member of a Local Governing Body from another school within the Trust as long as they have no conflict and no prior knowledge of the complaint.

3.5 Every effort will be made to enable the hearing to take place within twenty school days of the receipt of your request. As soon as reasonably practicable and in any event at least five school days before the hearing, you will be sent written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the Panel members who will be present. Fair consideration will be given to any bona fide objection to a particular member of the Panel. You will also be informed of the name of the person who will be presenting the case on behalf of the school/Trust (referred to in this policy as the 'school representative').

3.6 You have the right to be accompanied to the hearing by a friend, relative or interpreter. You should notify the Clerk in advance if you intend to bring anyone to the hearing. Legal representation will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend. The Complaints Panel itself may take legal advice and/or be supported by a legal advisor at the hearing on matters of law and procedure.

3.7 A copy of the complaint and any other documents provided by you in support of your complaint, or by the school representative in defence of the complaint, will be provided to the Complaints Committee as soon as practicable upon receipt.. Copies of these documents shall also be provided to you and the school representative at least 3 school days before the hearing. The Complaints Panel reserves the right not to consider any documentation presented by either party less than 3 school days prior to the hearing. The Panel will not normally accept recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

3.8 The hearing will be conducted to ensure that each party has the opportunity to address the Complaints Panel. The procedure to be followed during the hearing will be explained to the parties by letter in advance of the hearing. The Clerk will ensure that sufficient notes are taken to record an accurate reflection of the points considered and any decisions taken or actions agreed. Electronic recordings of the hearing will not normally be permitted and, in any event, would require the consent of all those present.

3.9 Unless otherwise stated, the procedure for the Stage 3 hearing is as follows:

- the parent and school representative will enter the hearing together;
- the Chair of the Panel will introduce the Panel members and outline the process;
- the parent will explain the complaint;
- the school/Trust representative and committee members will question the parent;
- the school/Trust representative will explain the school/Trust's actions;
- the parent and the Panel members will question the school/Trust representative;
- the school representative will sum up the school/Trust's actions;
- the Chair of the Panel will explain that both parties will hear from the Panel within five school days;
- both parties will leave together while the Panel decides;
- the Clerk, and any legal advisor assisting the Panel (if applicable), will stay to assist the Panel with its decision making;
- the parent will sum up their complaint.

A Complaints Panel may be adjourned if the Complaints Panel require further evidence or in exceptional circumstances (for example, if clarification sought by the Complaints Panel is essential to the proceedings). The adjourned date must be as soon as possible.

3.10 After the hearing, the Complaints Panel will consider their decision and inform you and, where relevant, the person complained about of their decision in writing within five school days. The letter will set out the decision of the Panel together with the reasons underpinning that decision. The Panel can (by a majority if necessary):

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school or Trust systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the Academy premises by the Trust, the Principal and the Chief Executive Officer.

3.11 If the parent fails to attend the Complaints Panel Meeting on the day without compelling reasons, the Complaints Panel will still proceed in their absence and the process will continue to its conclusion. Any further attempt to re-open the matter will be considered as falling under the "Serial or persistent complainants" section as set below.

Stage 4: Referral of complaint to Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

4.1 If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Complaints Panel, you are entitled to refer your complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The ESFA will only investigate whether the complaint was handled properly and in accordance with education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

4.2 At the time of writing this procedure, details about the ESFA procedure and the ESFA academy complaints form are available at:
How ESFA handles complaints about academies - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Or you can write to the ESFA at the following address:

Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
5 Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 **The role of the clerk to the committee (appointed by the Head of Governance)**

The Clerk to the committee is the contact point for the complainant and the Complaints Committee, and should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure;
- liaise with staff, School Leader, the Chief Executive Officer, Chair of Governors of the school and Chair of the Trustee board (as applicable) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure;
- be mindful of the timescales to respond to complaints;
- ensure that the Complaints Panel has access to legal advice, where appropriate;
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, taking reasonable steps to find a date that is convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example: stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale;
- minute the meeting;
- notify all parties of the Complaint Panel's decision;

5.2 **The role of the School Leader (or other party investigating as applicable in accordance with the procedure) at Stage 2**

- to ensure that the complainant is kept updated;
- to ensure that the correct procedure has been followed;
- to ensure that an investigation is carried out, and a report compiled;
- to meet the complainant, if appropriate.

5.3 **The role of the Chair of the Complaints Panel**

The Chair of the Complaints Panel has a key role, ensuring that:

- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that everyone is treated with respect and courtesy;
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child;
- the remit of the Complaints Panel is explained to the complainant;
- the written material is seen by everyone in attendance (provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR);
- key findings of fact are made, and that any issues not previously mentioned in writing should not be raised at the meeting and, if they are mentioned at the meeting, these should not be noted or considered by the Complaints Panel;
- both the complainant and the school/Trust are given the opportunity to make their case, and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting, or verbally in the meeting itself;
- the Complaints Panel is open-minded, acts independently and no committee member has an external interest in the outcome or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- the meeting is minuted.

Part 2: Concerns or complaints from other persons

Part 1 of this complaints policy applies only to complaints made by parents or carers of current registered pupils of the Trust. However, the Trust wishes to work closely with other members of the local community and will deal with their concerns and complaints as follows:

1 **Stage 1 -** a concern regarding a school or its operations must be made to the School Leader. It is expected that most concerns will be responded to orally or in writing within five school days. If a longer period is required, you will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

Concerns or complaints regarding a School Leader or the Trust should be referred direct to the Head of Governance (governance@hamwic.org) who will arrange for the stages above to be considered by an appropriate person.

2 **Stage 2** - where a concern is not resolved at Stage 1, or you wish your concerns to be dealt with immediately as a formal complaint, you should put your complaint in writing and send this to the School Leader of the relevant school to investigate. The School Leader may delegate the task of investigation and/or responding to the complaint to a member of SLT or may escalate the complaint straight to Stage 3. A formal response to the complaint will usually be provided within 15 school days of receipt of the letter of complaint although if a longer period is required to respond, you will be kept updated.

3 **Stage 3** - if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, you may request that your complaint be reviewed by the Trust. You should write to the Head of Compliance by emailing governance@hamwic.org, marked for the attention of Head of Compliance, within fifteen school

days. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. The Head of Compliance will review the actions taken to date and discuss outstanding concerns with the complainant. If resolution has still not been achieved, complainants may request their complaint be heard by a complaints panel under Stage 3 of this procedure. The Head of Governance will appoint a Clerk who will usually arrange for a governor to consider the complaint alone or may refer the Head of Governance to convene a Complaints Committee on the same terms as set out in Part 1 of this complaints policy. The decision at this stage will usually be sent to you within 15 school days of receipt of the request for a review or within five school days of the Complaints Committee hearing (as applicable).

4 **Stage 4** - if you are dissatisfied with the decision at Stage 3, you are entitled to refer your complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as outlined in Part 1 of this complaints policy.

Part 3: Repetitious and vexatious complaints pursued in an otherwise unreasonable manner

There are rare circumstances where we will deviate from the Complaints Procedure set out in Parts 1 and 2. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Repetitious, including serial and/or persistent, complaints

Where the complainant's complaint is the same, similar to or based on the same facts of a complaint which has already been considered in full and we have:

- taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns; and
- given the complainant a clear statement of our position and their options,

we will write to the complainant to advise that the complaints procedure has been exhausted and that we will not be responding to any further correspondence in relation to these matters. The complainant will be referred to Stage 4.

2. Vexatious complaints

The Department for Education defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint as:

- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific or repetitious;
- insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner;
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance; and
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- refusal to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refusal to co-operate with the complaints investigation process;
- refusal to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure;
- insistence on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introducing trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on;

- raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- seeking an unrealistic outcome, such as the inappropriate dismissal of staff;
- making excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with;
- knowingly providing falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

3. Complaints pursued in an otherwise unreasonable manner

Where the complainant's behaviour or language towards staff, governors, trustees or members is aggressive, abusive, offensive, discriminatory or threatening or insulting personal comments are made about, or threats are made towards, staff.

In the circumstances outlined in (2) and (3) above, we may:

- inform the complainant that we consider their complaint to be vexatious or the manner in which they are pursuing their complaint to be unreasonable and why, and ask them to desist;
- refuse to consider the complaint any further and refer the complainant directly to Stage 4.

We may also restrict the complainant's access to the school, e.g. requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only), requiring contact to take place with a named person only, restricting telephone calls to specified days and times or number of contacts or banning the complainant from the school premises in line with our Visitor Code of Conduct.

Where the complainant's behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, governors, trustees or members we will consider other options - for example, reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.

Part 4: Complaint Campaigns

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint campaign is defined as a complaint from three or more separate individuals (whether or not connected with the school) which are all based on the same subject. Depending on the subject in question, we may deviate from the procedure set out in this policy and instead:

- send a template response to all complainants; and/or
- publish a single response on the school's website (as applicable).

Link to other documents and policies:

- Visitor Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Governor / Trustee Code of Conduct
- Relevant HR policies
- Whistleblowing Policy

Part 5: EYFS

In order to comply with the statutory framework, written concerns or complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS Requirements will be dealt with in accordance with the following process:

(i) The written concern/complaint will be acknowledged within 5 school days;
(ii) The [Principal] will investigate the concern or complaint which may include meeting with the Complainant and the Head of Early Years. A written response notifying the Complainant of the outcome of the investigation will be sent within 28 school days of the complaint being received.
(iii) Where the Complainant remains dissatisfied, the Clerk will ensure that a formal Complaints Panel will be convened in accordance with Stage 3 of this policy.

A record of the written complaints and their outcome will be maintained and made available to Ofsted on request.

Parents are further advised that where they have concerns regarding the Academy meeting EYFS requirements they may contact Ofsted on 0300 123 4666.]

Appendix 1: Matters excluded from the scope of this policy

Excluded Matters	Signposting
Admissions	The process for challenging admissions decisions is set out in our admissions policy in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
Child protection matters	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
Exclusions	The process for challenging exclusions decisions is set out in the DfE's statutory guidance and information can be found at: School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
National Curriculum content	Please contact the Department for Education at www.education.gov.uk/contactus
School re-organisation proposals	Where concerns are not adequately addressed by the academy, complaints can be raised direct with the Department for Education.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Certain complaints about staff may need to be dealt with under the academy's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Concerns about statutory assessments of special educational needs should be raised directly with the local authority.
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus Volunteer staff who have concerns should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of the complaint
Data protection / FOIA	Information Commissioner's Office

Appendix 2: Complaints Form

Your name:
Pupil(s) name:
Your relationship to pupil(s):
Your address and postcode:
Your daytime telephone number:
Your evening telephone number:
Your email address:
Your complaint is: (if you have more than one complaint, please number these)
What action have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint(s) in accordance with Stage 1 of the academy's complaints procedure? (Who did you speak to and what was the response?)
What would you like as an outcome from your complaint(s)?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, give details here:

Your signature…… Date ……

All functions of the complaints procedure must adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please complete and return to the school office in a sealed envelope addressed to the School Leader, Clerk of the local governing Committee or Head of Governance (as appropriate).

Office use

Date received ……

Date acknowledgement sent ……

Responsible member of staff ……

Appendix 3: Summary of Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Informal concerns	Parent brings complaint to attention of member of staff
	Issue to be resolved (guide: within 15 school days)
	Where no satisfactory solution has been found, parent to be advised that they should proceed to Stage 2
Stage 2: Formal Written Complaint	Parent to put complaint in writing using Complaint Form within 15 school days
	Complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school days
	Meeting with parents within 10 school days (where appropriate)
	Response to the complaint sent within 15 school days
Stage 3: Referral to Complaints Panel	Parent to request hearing within 15 school days of receiving notice of the outcome of Stage 2
	Request to be acknowledged within 5 school days
	Hearing to take place within 20 school days of receipt of request
	Notification of date, time and place of the hearing and details of the Panel members present sent at least five school days before the hearing
	School representative and parents to submit evidence in support of their case to Committee Clerk at least 3 school days before the hearing.
	Complaints Panel decision sent not more than five school days after the hearing