

# **SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST**



## **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

**Date adopted or ratified; 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Reviewed & updated; 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

**This policy is regularly reviewed following recommended guidelines**

**This policy is applicable to all schools within Saffron Academy Trust**

## **1. Scope**

This policy sets out for all employees of Saffron Academy Trust (permanent, fixed term and casual), as well as parents and all other external parties how complaints should be submitted and how they will be dealt with by Saffron Academy Trust and all schools within the Trust.

*Note; Saffron Academy Trust will be referred to as SAT or the Trust in this document. Schools within SAT will be referred to as the 'School', the 'Academy' or 'Academies'.*

## **2. Framework of principles**

Our Complaints Procedure:

- encourages resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- is easily accessible and publicised;
- is simple to understand and use;
- is impartial;
- is non-adversarial;
- allows swift handling within agreed time-limits for action and keeping people informed of progress;
- ensures a full and fair investigation;
- respects people's desire for confidentiality;
- addresses all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- provides information to the Academy's senior management team so that services can be improved.

## **3. Who can complain?**

Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions).

## **4. Dealing with Complaints – Initial Concerns**

It is important to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. The majority of concerns should and can be dealt with without resorting to formal procedures. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints. Concerns about any aspect of the school or a pupil's education or wellbeing should first be raised with an appropriate member of staff; this could be the pupil's class or subject teacher, their form tutor or a member of the senior leadership team at the individual school. Ideally, the member of staff will be able to address the concern on the spot, or can arrange a meeting to discuss the issue. Staff should seek to resolve issues quickly and without recourse to formal procedures.

## **5. Which procedure do I need?**

Sometimes, when concerns are more specific, there are alternative and more appropriate policies for dealing with them. The following list details some specific topics of complaints, and the correct policy to refer to. You can access these policies on the individual school's website, or ask for a copy from the main school reception;

- Admissions: see the school's admissions policy
- Exclusions: see the school's policy that covers behaviour
- Staff grievances: see the appropriate policy which covers pay, performance management, capability, whistleblowing, code of conduct etc
- Safeguarding: see the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy

Wherever a complaint indicates that a child's wellbeing or safety is at risk, the school is under a duty to report this immediately to the local authority. Any action taken will be in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

If you are unsure which policy covers the concern you have, please contact the Clerk to the Local Governing Body of the individual school, who will be able to help you. Please also see Appendix 2: Complaints not in scope of the procedure.

## **6. Social Media**

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, Saffron Academy Trust requests that complainants do not discuss complaints publically via social media platforms such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter etc. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

## **7. Complaints that result in staff capability or disciplinary**

If at any formal stage of the complaint it is determined that staff disciplinary or capability proceedings are necessary in order to resolve the issue, the details of this action will remain confidential to the Headteacher and/or the individual's line manager. The complainant is entitled to be informed that action is being taken, but not the eventual outcome of any such action, and they are not entitled to participate in the proceedings or receive any detail about them.

## **8. Procedure for raising a complaint**

In the first instance, please raise your issue with the relevant member of staff who will be happy to talk to you and seek to find a solution (see paragraph 4 above). The formal procedures will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further. ***In this instance, complainants must submit their concern in writing to the school.***

## **9. Investigating Complaints**

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint makes sure that they:

- establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;
- clarifies the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meets with the complainant or contacts them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- clarifies what the complainant feels would put things right;
- interviews those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conducts the interview with an open mind and is prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keeps notes of the interview(s).

## **10. Resolving Complaints**

At each stage in the procedure the Academy will keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review Academy policies in light of the complaint.

It would be useful if complainants were encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that the Academy could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

## **11. Persistent and/or Unreasonable Complaints**

Where a complainant raises an issue that has already been dealt with via the school's complaints procedure, and that procedure has been exhausted, the school will not reinvestigate the complaint except in exceptional circumstances, for example where new evidence has come to light.

If a complainant persists in raising the same issue, the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, or Chair of the Trust (as appropriate) will write to them explaining that the matter has been dealt with fully in line with the complaints procedure, and therefore the case is now closed. The complainant will be provided with the contact details of the Education Funding Agency (EFA) if they wish to take the matter further.

Examples of persistent and/or unreasonable complaints include, but are not limited to:

- The complainant refuses to co-operate with the school's relevant procedures
- The complainant changes the basis of the complaint as the complaint progresses
- The complainant seeks an unrealistic outcome
- Excessive demands are made on the time of staff and school governors and it is clearly intended to aggravate
- The complainant acts in a way that is abusive or offensive

***For full details please see the SAT Policy on the management of unreasonable and/or persistent complainant behaviour***

## **12. Time-limits; Submitting and Considering Complaints**

The Governing Body has accepted the view of the Department for Education that a complainant should normally be expected to lodge their complaint within 90 school days of the event being complained about. The 90 school day limit has been established because investigation is more difficult after a period of time: memories may not be as clear as they would have been earlier, records may not be as readily available and witnesses may not be employed at the school. A delay in making a complaint may also disadvantage any person who is the subject of it, making it more challenging for them to defend themselves for the same reasons.

In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of Governors, acting on behalf of the Governing Body, will consider complaints submitted outside this timeframe. In such instances the complainant will need to offer an explanation as to why there has been a delay in making a complaint.

Where a number of complaints are made in one letter of complaint, some of which lie outside the timeframe, the Chair of Governors will determine which complaints can be considered, taking account of their relevance to the substantive complaint or complaints made within the timescale.

Complaints need to be considered, and resolved, as quickly and efficiently as possible using time limits published in this policy. However, where further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set and the complainant sent details of the new deadline and an explanation for the delay.

### **13. Publicising the Complaints Policy and Procedure**

The law imposes a duty on governing bodies to publicise their complaints procedure. This is done through:

- making copies of the procedure available in the school (clearly this should be easily accessible without a potential complainant being asked the reason why it is being requested);
- including the procedure on the school's website and Trust website, ensuring that it is easy to find through a link from the first page.

### **14. Confidentiality**

14.1 The investigation of any complaint will be kept confidential at all stages and any papers provided to those investigating, or adjudicating on complaints will be marked confidential and destroyed, except for the file copy, which itself, will be confidential.

14.2 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

### **15. Stage One: (Informal) Complaint heard by Staff Member**

15.1 It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the Academy can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate. To that end, staff will be periodically made aware of the procedures so that they know what to do when they receive a complaint. It is important to remind all staff involved about the importance of maintaining confidentiality at all times during the complaints process.

Before the formal processes are invoked every effort should be made to resolve matters informally. This is in line with complaints policies nationally. The Governing Body will ensure parents are made aware of how they can raise a concern.

Some issues are likely to be best resolved through discussion with a class teacher, form tutor, Head of Year or other member of staff below the level of a member of the senior leadership team. In some cases, though, a person may feel the need to escalate the matter to a member of the senior leadership team.

Initially school staff below the level of Headteacher will seek to resolve matters through provision of information and clarification. Where it is clear that there is a significant level of challenge, staff will refer the matter to the Headteacher as a cause for concern. The Headteacher will then seek to resolve the matter through discussion with those expressing concerns. Staff are advised not to engage in prolonged correspondence of an argumentative nature but to refer the complaint to the Headteacher at that stage.

15.2 Parents should never feel or be made to feel that a complaint made in a reasonable and appropriate way will be taken amiss or will reflect adversely on the student or his/her opportunities at the Academy. The Academy will try to investigate and try to resolve every complaint in a positive manner and will treat every complaint as an opportunity to improve our service.

15.3 The Academy will try to respect the views of a complainant who indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In these cases, the matter will be referred to a Deputy or Assistant Headteacher or to the Headteacher who may, if they feel it

appropriate, refer the complainant to another staff member. Alternatively, they may not feel this is necessary. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the complainant can be referred to the Chair of Governors who may wish to refer to the Chair of the Trust.

- 15.4 Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, the Assistant or Deputy Headteacher, or the Headteacher, may consider referring the complainant to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the complaint objectively and impartially is crucial.
- 15.5 Where the first approach is made to a governor, the next step would be to refer the complainant to the appropriate person dealing with the complaint. Governors should not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure.
- 15.6 The person dealing with the complaint will ensure that a written or oral acknowledgement is provided to the complainant within five Academy term time days of receiving a complaint. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the Academy's complaints procedure and will give a target date for providing a response to the complaint which should normally be within ten Academy term time days. If the target cannot be met a letter should be written within ten Academy term time days explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised target date.
- 15.7 The person dealing with the complaint will seek to meet or speak with all of the appropriate people in order to establish the facts relating to the complaint. This may include the complainant, staff and any other person.
- 15.8 Once all of the facts have been established the person dealing with the complaint may then produce a written response to the complainant, or may wish to meet the complainant to discuss/resolve the matter directly.
- 15.9 A written response should contain an outline of the complaint and a summary of the response to the complaint including the decision reached and the reasons for it. Where appropriate this should also include what response the Academy will take to resolve the complaint. This may be by way of a general description e.g. 'Action taken within the Disciplinary Procedure'.
- 15.10 When the investigation has been concluded the complainant and the member of staff concerned will be informed in writing of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:
  - There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld
  - The concern was not substantiated by the evidence
  - The concern was substantiated in part or in full. Some details may then be given of the action the Academy may be taking to put the matter right which may include, for example, reviewing procedures etc. but details of the investigation or of any disciplinary procedures will not be released.
  - The matter has been fully investigated and that appropriate procedures are being followed which may be strictly confidential (e.g. where staff disciplinary procedures are being followed).
- 15.11 This letter or report must be endorsed by the Headteacher. It should also inform the complainant that should he/she wish the complaint to progress to the second stage of this procedure then he/she should send a written request stating this to the Headteacher within ten Academy term time days of receiving the response. If no further communication is received from the complainant within ten Academy term time days it is deemed that the complaint has been resolved and should end.

15.12; The following criteria will apply;

- Only complaints received in writing will be considered.
- Anonymous complaints will not be considered.
- Complaints must be made within 3 months of the event.
- The person dealing with the complaint will investigate the complaint.

## **16. Stage Two: (Formal) Complaint heard by Headteacher**

16.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at Stage One, they may go to Stage Two and have the Headteacher hear the complaint. The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, the complaint will be dealt with by the Chair of the LGB or the Chair of the Trust.

16.2 The same timings as in Stage 1 will apply.

## **17. Stage Three: (Formal) Complaint heard by Local Governing Body complaints appeal panel**

17.1 The complainant must write to the Clerk to the Governors of the school's LGB or to the Chair of the Trust as directed by the Headteacher, giving details of the complaint.

17.2 The Clerk to the Governors should write to the complainant acknowledging receipt of the written request for the complaint to be heard. This acknowledgement must be sent within five working days and should inform the complainant of the arrangements for hearing the complaint within 20 Academy term time days of receiving it. The letter should explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. These must be received within five working days of the date of the hearing to allow adequate time for the documents to be circulated.

17.3 No person involved should have previous involvement in the complaint.

17.4 Individual complaints will not be heard by the whole Governing Body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any hearing set up for disciplinary purposes against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

17.5 The Chair of the Academy's LGB will typically chair the Complaints Panel, unless circumstances prevent this. In their absence the panel can be drawn from the nominated members and may consist of between two and four Governors. In this case the panel may choose their own Chairman. One additional member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the school.

## **18. The remit of the complaints appeal panel**

18.1 The panel can:

- 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 Academy's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

18.2 There are several points which any governor sitting on a complaints panel needs to remember:

a. It is important that any appeal hearing is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so. No Governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.

b. The aim of the process, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the Academy and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the panel does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.

c. An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel Chairman will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible.

18.3 In addition to the panel, the following parties may be invited by the Chair, where applicable;

- The complainant
- The staff member who dealt with the complaint at Stage 2
- Where the complaint regards a member of staff, the staff member who is the subject of the complaint
- Any other attendees deemed appropriate by the Chair of the Panel

The Chair of the Panel may decide to hold more than one meeting as part of the procedure.

The complainant is able to bring a companion with them to the hearing if they wish. Where the subject of the complaint is a member of staff, that staff member is also able to bring a companion with them.

The companion will be a friend or a colleague. Neither party is able to bring legal representation with them.

The Clerk to the Governors will write and inform the complainant and any witnesses, the panel etc. of the date and location of the meeting(s) at least five working days in advance. The notification to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/interpreter. The letter should explain how the meeting will be conducted and the complainant's right to submit further written evidence to the panel.

18.4; Intervention of parallel investigations relevant to the complaint by the Police or social services may cause variation to these time scales. Any such variation will be notified to the complainant.

## **19. Hearing the complaint at the meeting**

- The aim of the meeting will be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the Academy and the complainant.
- In the interest of natural justice, the introduction of previously undisclosed evidence or witnesses would be a reason to adjourn the meeting so that the other side has time to consider and respond to the new evidence.

## **20. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **20.1 The Role of the Clerk**

The clerk is the contact point for the complainant and is required to:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate any written material and send it to the parties as appropriate in advance of the hearing;

- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- record the proceedings;
- notify all parties of the panel's decision.

## 20.2 The Role of the Chair of the Panel.

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

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption;
- the issues are addressed;
- key findings of fact are made;
- parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease;
- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy;
- the panel is open minded and acting independently;
- no member of the panel has any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions;

## 21. Communicating the Outcome

21.1; The matter should remain confidential. The Clerk will communicate the outcome, and set out the reasons for it, in a letter to the complainant, the outline of which will have been formulated by the Review Panel in the meeting. The final version will be agreed and signed by the Chair of the Panel. It is essential that the review decision letter is sent to all the parties at the same time. This will be in the form of an email or letter, depending on the style of communication that has been used by the complainant during the process. Whilst the letter should avoid unnecessary detail, there should be sufficient information to demonstrate that the review was considered in full.

21.2; The findings and recommendations of the panel will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headteacher.

21.3; The issue of the review decision letter concludes the process and the school should not enter into any further correspondence with the complainant. Beyond the school complaints process, any person may complain to the Secretary of State for Education that the governing body of a maintained school or academy has acted either unlawfully or unreasonably.

Complaints about academies should be sent;

- Via the Department for Education's schools' complaints form
- By post to;

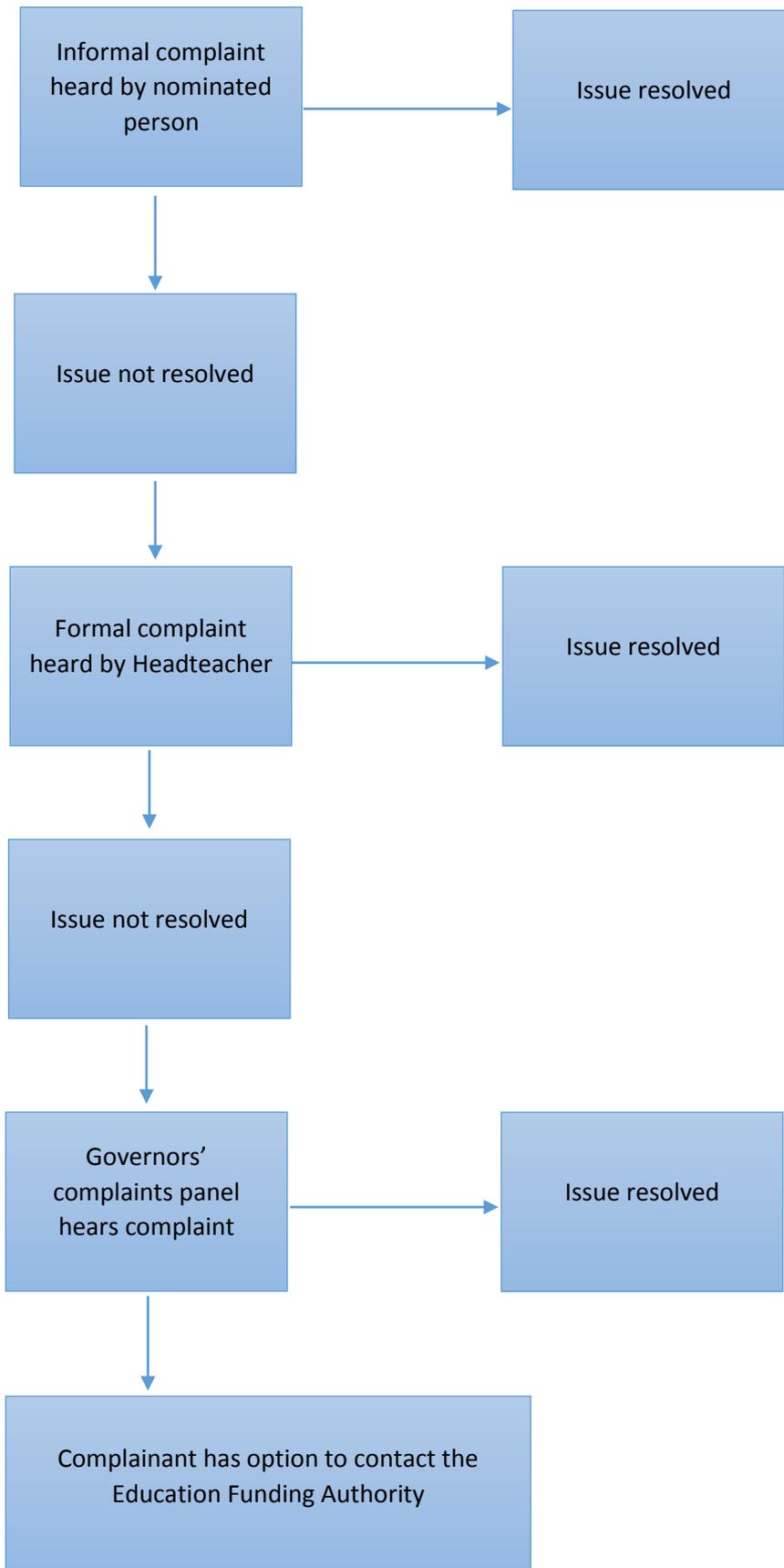
Ministerial and Public Communications Division  
 Department for Education  
 Piccadilly Gate  
 Store Street  
 Manchester  
 M1 2WD

The Department for Education is unlikely to re-investigate the substance of the complaint. Their Interest is likely to be restricted to whether due process has been followed correctly. More information is available at [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

**Policy Review Notes:**

27<sup>th</sup> February 2019: Paragraphs 14.2 and 21.2 inserted, in accordance with Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

## Appendix 1: Flowchart



## Appendix 2: Complaints not in scope of the procedure

<p>A complaints procedure should cover all complaints about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides with the exceptions listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures.</p>	
Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions to schools</li> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)</li> <li>• School re-organisation proposals</li> <li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities (LA). For school admissions, it will depend on who is the admission authority (either the school or the LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of children from school</li> </ul>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: <a href="mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk">whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk</a> or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures</li> </ul>	<p>These matters will invoke the school's internal HR procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.</li> </ul>	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.</p>

### **Appendix 3: Complaint procedure summary with recommended timings**

#### **INFORMAL STAGE – STAGE ONE**

School staff members seek to resolve the complaint informally through discussion with the complainant. A complaint will not normally be considered unless the complainant has first raised the matter informally with the relevant school leader.

The complainant should submit a formal complaint within 90 school days of the cause for complaint.

#### **FORMAL PROCEDURE – STAGE TWO (up to 10 school days total)**

Written complaint to the Headteacher

- Received by Headteacher
- Acknowledgement – 3 school days
- Investigation (including any discussion with the complainant)
- Formal Response (from the Headteacher – 10 school days from receipt)

\*If the complaint is about the Principal/Headteacher then the complaint will be directed to the Chair of Governors and considered as a Stage two complaint.

#### **FORMAL PROCEDURE – STAGE THREE (up to 20 school days total)**

Request for Review of Chair's Decision – Governors' Complaint Panel

- Received by Clerk to the Governors (within 10 days of the Chair of Governor's response)
- Acknowledgement – 3 school days
- Meeting
- Formal Response (from the Clerk) – 20 school days from receipt

The conclusion of Stage 3 brings to an end the governors' role in considering the complaint. Complainants who remain dissatisfied may wish to contact the Department for Education.

## Appendix 4: Frequently asked questions

**What if a formal complaint is made about a governor?** The complaint should be passed through to the Chair for investigation. There is opportunity for the complainant to refer the matter to a Review Panel where the complainant is dissatisfied with the response of the Chair.

**What if the complainant seeks support from a governor or governors?** Governors should not involve themselves in matters that are likely to lead to formal complaint. Where a complainant raises their complaint with a governor who is not the Chair (or the Vice-Chair if the complaint is about the Chair), that governor must decline to discuss it and direct the complainant to the Chair. A governor receiving written material about a complaint must forward it to the Chair (or Vice-Chair) without comment.

**What if the complainant wants to make a complaint on behalf of other people's children?** The Governing Body will not accept complaints about other people's children since to do so may well compromise the position of the parents/carers of those children who may have a different view of the matter complained of.

**What if the complainant makes reference to the complaint on social media?** The Chair of Governors should contact the complainant to advise him/her that the complaint is a confidential matter and neither those investigating the issues, nor those who may be investigated would use social media in this way. Some comment made on social media may be prejudicial to the fair investigation of the issues under consideration, and the Governing Body may decline to progress a complaint while unhelpful comments remain on social media.

**What if the complainant contacts the Press while the complaint is being investigated?** Similarly, the Chair of Governors should contact the complainant to remind him/her of the confidential nature of the process and the potential prejudice to fair investigation that can result from media involvement.

**What if the complainant contacts their MP?** MPs are normally conversant with school complaint policies and will usually point the complainant in that direction. Where the MP contacts the school they will be advised of the relevant process and, if the complainant wishes, of the outcome of the complaint at the end of the process.

**How should records be kept through the complaints process?** There are a number of aspects to this:

- The complainant may wish to take an audio recording of meetings, including a recording of the Review Meeting where governors have agreed to a face-to-face review. It should be made clear to complainants that audio recordings are not permitted without the prior consent of everyone who would be present. Audio recordings change the character of a meeting and usually increase tension between the parties. Participants in meetings should be aware that modern technology facilitates concealed recording.
- The clerk should record any action points, and decisions, and the reasons for them, should be recorded in a brief and self-explanatory way and these records should be accessible to the complainant if requested. There is no reason why the complainant should not make notes during the meeting if s/he wishes.
- There should be an emphasis on confidentiality of record keeping. No one should share a complaint beyond those who have a role in handling it. In particular, any disciplinary action that might follow the investigation of a complaint is a matter of employment law for employees and of conduct for governors and volunteers. Such action will not be revealed to the complainant. Individuals have certain rights under the Data Protection Act to see their personal data, including records about them.

## Appendix 5: Model forms

### 1. [Name of school] School: Meeting Request Form

I wish to meet [name of teacher] to discuss the following matter:

Your name: Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):

Pupil's name (if relevant to the matter to be discussed)

Your Address:

Telephone numbers

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address:

Signed ..... Date .....

[Please complete this form and return it to the school office]

Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc...), to allow the matter to be fully investigated: You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

**School use;**

Date Form received:

Date response sent:

Received by:

Response sent by:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

**2. [Name of school] School Complaint Review Request Form**

Please complete this form and return it to the Headteacher (or Clerk to the governing body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Your Address:

Telephone numbers

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address:

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on .....and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed. My complaint was submitted to ..... and I received a response from ..... on ..... . I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school. I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out, because:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =  
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

**School use;**

Date Form received:

Date response sent:

Received by:

Response sent by:

Request referred to:

Date:

### **3. Model Letters Response to spurious complainant**

Dear [Name of complainant]

Thank you for submitting your concern in the letter received on the [insert date].

After careful consideration, unfortunately, I am unable to deal with this matter under the Governing Body's Complaints Procedure. This is because: [we suggest that you include one of the following statements] The substance of your complaint has been addressed under the complaints procedure already. or The concerns that you raise do not fall within the scope of this procedure [suggest alternative for example: admissions policy, exclusion policy, behaviour policy, grievance procedure etc]

If you wish my decision to be reviewed then you can follow the school's Formal Complaint Procedure, by writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Or Chair of Governing Body

#### **4. Acknowledgement of receipt of formal complaint and invitation to meet**

Dear [Name of Complainant]

I have received your formal complaint, dated ..... I am grateful that you have brought this to my attention. The school and governing body take any complaint seriously. Therefore, I would like to meet with you, as soon as possible, so that I may understand the details of your concerns more clearly. You are welcome to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, if you would find this helpful.

Please telephone..... in order to arrange an appointment.

**OR** I can offer you an appointment at .... on ,..... Please let me know if this is convenient. I hope that we will be able to resolve your concerns through our meeting, but if not I will ensure that the appropriate investigation takes place.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Or Chair of Governing Body

**5. Acknowledgement of receipt of formal complaint referred by a third party [e.g. LA, Diocese, MP]**

Dear [Name of Complainant]

I have received a copy of the documentation that you sent in to ..... setting out a complaint about .....  
. This has been passed to the school as it has responsibility for these matters.

The school and governing body take any complaint seriously. Therefore I would like to meet with you, so that I may understand the details of your concerns more clearly.

Please telephone ....., in order to arrange an appointment. OR I can offer you an appointment at ..... on ..... Please let me know if this is convenient.

Meanwhile I would be grateful if you would complete and return the Formal Complaint Form that is enclosed, along with details of the school's complaints procedure.

I hope that we will be able to resolve your concerns through our meeting, but if not I will ensure that the appropriate investigation takes place.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Or Chair of Governing Body

**6. Acknowledgements of receipt of formal complaint and advising complainant that the matter is being dealt with under a confidential school procedure**

Dear .....

I have received your formal complaint, dated ..... . I am grateful that you have brought this to my attention. The school and governing body take any complaint seriously. Therefore I have initiated an immediate investigation. It is possible that the investigator will wish to meet with you to clarify the evidence that you have provided so far. If so, he/she will write to you to make suitable arrangements.

As your concerns relate to the conduct/capability of a member of staff, the investigation will be carried out under the school's personnel procedures. This means that the detail of the procedure and its outcome must remain confidential to the school and the member of staff concerned.

**OR** As your concerns relate to the behaviour of a pupil, the investigation will be carried out under the school's pupil conduct and disciplinary procedures. This means that the detail of the procedure and its outcome must remain confidential to the school and the parents of the child concerned.

In due course, I may be able to provide you with some information about the outcomes of the investigation and the processes that have been followed, but in any event will let you know when the matter has been concluded. If I can be of any further assistance, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Or Chair of Governing Body

## 7. NOTIFICATION OF DECISION REGARDING FORMAL COMPLAINT

Dear

Following receipt of your complaint and careful consideration of all the available relevant evidence, I/the panel have/has concluded that: The concern is not substantiated by the evidence in that .....

**OR** The concern was substantiated in part/in full, as ..... The school will review its practices/procedures..... with the intention of avoiding any reoccurrence. Parents will be informed in due course of any policy changes.

**OR** In order to address fully the matters investigated, the school has initiated appropriate internal procedures. Due to the nature of these procedures, their outcome must remain strictly confidential. We are confident, however, that the circumstances that gave rise to your complaint should not recur

**OR** In order to address fully the matters of concern that you identified, the panel recommended that the governing body should review its ..... policy, as a matter of urgency.

We are confident that this should prevent similar concerns arising in future. I hope that this will now conclude the matter and we can look to the future working together for the benefit of your child's and the school.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher/Chair of Governing Body/Chair of Panel

## 8. REVIEW OUTCOME NOTIFICATION

Dear

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint.

Summary of reasons ..... Therefore, we now consider the matter closed.

**Or** Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint except ..... . Therefore, the following action will be taken ..... . Once this action has been completed the school will consider the matter to be closed.

**Or** Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint except ..... . However the panel determined that this procedural failure did not affect the outcome of the consideration of your complaint so, while we regret this error, we will now consider this matter to be closed as far as the school is concerned.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of Complaints Review Panel

C.c. Headteacher, Chair of Governors