



The Island Learning Trust

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (Statutory)

March 2026

Aims

When responding to complaints, we aim to:



Be impartial and non-adversarial



Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary



Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response



Respect, if possible, complainants' desire for confidentiality



Treat complainants with respect and courtesy



Make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law



Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process



Consider how the complaint can feed into Trust improvement evaluation processes

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

The Trust will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full. To support this, we will make sure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the Trust website.

Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to [the Education \(Independent Trust Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of pupils at the Trust. It is also based on guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on [creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulations](#), and refers to [good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

In addition, it addresses duties set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework](#) with regards to dealing with complaints about the Trust's fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at our schools. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to The Island Learning Trust about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as: *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

A complaint may be defined as: *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. The Island Learning Trust takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, The Island Learning Trust will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, The Island Learning Trust will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.



Complaints against school staff (except the head teacher) should be made in the first instance, to the head teacher via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.



Complaints that involve or are about the head teacher should be addressed to the Link Trustee, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.



Complaints about the Link Trustee, any individual Trustee or the whole Trust Board should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.



Complaints about the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or a trustee of the Trust, should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees, via the trust office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a **template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure**. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask a third-party organisation for example like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the head teacher or Link Trustee, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope

The Trust intends to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage. This policy does **not** cover complaints relating to:



Safeguarding matters



Exclusion



Whistle-blowing



Staff grievances



Staff conduct



Withdrawal from the curriculum

Please see separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use Trust premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, 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. If this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against The Island Learning Trust in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, The Island Learning Trust will seek to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole, in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:



an explanation



an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better



an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur



an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made



an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint



an apology.

Of course, the outcome could also be that the complaint is dismissed.

Withdrawal of a complaint

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

Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:



What has happened



Who was involved



What the complainant feels would put things right

Time scales

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident.

We will consider exceptions to this time frame in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

When complaints are made out of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first Trust day after the holiday period.

If at any point we cannot meet the time scales we have set out in this policy, we will:



Set new time limits with the complainant



Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay

Complaints about our fulfilment of early years requirements

We will investigate all written complaints relating to the Trust's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, and notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint. The Trust will keep a record of the complaint (see section 10) and make this available to Ofsted on request.

Parents and carers can notify Ofsted if they believe that the Trust is not meeting Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, by calling 0300 123 4666, or by emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. An online contact form is also available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted#org-contacts>.

We will notify parents and carers if we become aware that the Trust is to be inspected by Ofsted. We will also supply a copy of the inspection report to parents and carers of children attending the setting on a regular basis.

The Procedure (3 Stages)

Stage 1 – Informal complaints- Listen and Respond

It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis. Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, year leader or head of school and to work constructively with that person towards resolving them. They will try to identify areas of agreement and clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred. They may make a written record of your concern or complaint, the date on which it was received, and then try to resolve the matter themselves or refer you to the appropriate person.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide an informal written response within **15 school days** of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step could be to make a formal complaint.

Most concerns can be dealt with without resorting to formal stages of the complaint procedure. We recognise that the sooner concerns are raised the easier it is for an appropriate resolution to be found.

Complainants should not approach individual Trustees to raise concerns or complaints; they have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 3 of the procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal complaints

Formal complaints must be made to the head of school (unless they are about the head teacher), via the school office. This may be done in person or in writing, preferably on the Complaint Form. The head of school will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) **within 5 school days**. Within this response, the head of school will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The head teacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The head teacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the head of school (or investigator) will:



if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish



keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the head of school will provide a formal written response **within 30 school days** of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the head teacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions that the school will take to resolve the complaint.

The head of school will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.

If the complaint is about the head teacher, or a member of the Trust Board (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled Trustee will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2.

Complaints about the head teacher or member of the Trust Board must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:



jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or



the entire Trust Board or



the majority of the Trust Board

Stage 2 will be escalated to the CEO of the Trust.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3 – a panel hearing consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school/Trust.

This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, **within 5 school days** of receipt of the Stage 2 response. The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) **within 5 school days**. Requests received outside of this period will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting **within 15 school days** of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

If the complaint is:



jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or



the entire Trust Board or



the majority of the Trust Board

Stage 3 will be heard by trustees and an independent panel member.

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. We don't encourage either party to bring legal representation, but will consider it on a case-by-case basis. For instance, if a Trust employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by their union.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 7 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:



confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible



request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties **at least 5 school days** before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

At the meeting

At the review panel meeting, the complainant and representatives from the Trust, as appropriate, will be present. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting.

At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called, as appropriate, to present their evidence.

The panel, the complainant and the Trust representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and Trust representative(s) have presented their cases, they will be asked to leave and evidence will then be considered. The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented.

The outcome

The committee can:



uphold the complaint in whole or in part



dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:



decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint



where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and head of school with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 15 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by the school. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the school will take to resolve the complaint.

The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head of school.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

All correspondence statements and records relating to individual complaints will 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.

Complaints against the Head of School, a Trustee or the Trust Board

Stage 1: informal

Complaints made against the Head of School or any member of the governing board should be directed to the clerk of the Trust Board in the first instance.

If the complaint is about the Head of School or one member of the Trust Board (including the chair or vice-chair), a suitably skilled and impartial Trustee will carry out the steps at stage 1/2 (set out above).

Stage 2: formal

If the complaint is:



Jointly about the chair and vice-chair or



The entire Trust Board or



The majority of the Trust Board

An independent investigator will carry out the steps in stage 2. They will be appointed by the governing board, and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

Stage 3: review panel (Final stage)

If the complaint is:



Jointly about the chair and vice-chair or



The entire Trust Board or



The majority of the Trust Board

A committee of independent trustees will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local Trusts, the local authority and will carry out the steps at stage 3 (set out above).

Referring complaints on completion of the Trust's procedure

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the ESFA after they have completed Stage 3.

The ESFA will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the school. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and whether they have followed Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the ESFA online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:
Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit
Education and Skills Funding Agency

Cheylesmore House,
5 Quinton Road,
Coventry,
CV1 2WT

We will include this information in the outcome letter to complainants.

Complaints about the Trust, CEO or a Trustee

If a complaint is escalated to The Island Learning Trust or if a complainant wishes to complain directly about the trust, then the complaint should be sent to the CEO to be investigated.

The CEO will write to the complainant acknowledging the complaint within 5 school days of the date that the written request was received.

The acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint will now be investigated under Stage 2 of this Complaints Policy and will confirm the date for providing a response to the complainant.

Following the investigation, the CEO will write to the complainant confirming the outcome within 30 school days of the date that the letter was received. If this time limit cannot be met, the CEO will write to the Complainant within 5 school days of the date that the letter was received, explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised date.

If the complaint concerns the CEO or a Trustee, the complaint should be investigated by the Chair of the Trust Board. If a formal complaint form is received about the Chair, the complaint will be referred to the Vice Chair for investigation.

NB. Where the Chair of the Trust Board has investigated the complaint, they will write the letter of outcome to the Complainant and provide a copy to the CEO.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the previous stage, the complainant should write to the Clerk to the Trust Board asking for the complaint to be heard before a Complaint Panel, within 5 school days.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 15 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

If the complaint is:



jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or



the entire trust board or



the majority of the trust board

Stage 3 will be heard by a completely independent committee panel.

The Complaint Panel will consist of three members. None of the three members of the Complaint Panel will have been involved in the incidents or events which led to the complaint, or have been involved in dealing with the complaint in the previous stages, or have any detailed prior knowledge of the complaint.

One of the Complaint Panel members will be independent of the management and running of the Academy Trust. This means that the independent Complaint Panel member will not be a Trustee or an employee of the Trust.

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. For instance, if a trust employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 7 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:



confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible



request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 7 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:



uphold the complaint in whole or in part



dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:



decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint



where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and TILT with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 30 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by The Island Learning Trust.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions TILT will take to resolve the complaint.

The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head of school.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

All correspondence statements and records relating to individual complaints will 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.

Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school / trust did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the ESFA after they have completed Stage 3.

The ESFA will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by The Island Learning Trust, they will consider whether The Island Learning Trust has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and whether they have followed [Part 7 of the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

The complainant can refer their complaint to the ESFA online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

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

Persistent complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:



Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the Trust's complaints procedure



Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive



Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure, beyond all reason



Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the time frames it sets out



Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on Trust time



Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value

Steps we will take

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns, and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter

throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the Trust in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place. We may:



Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address



Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term



Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as [Citizens Advice](#)



Put any other strategy in place as necessary

Stopping responding

We may stop responding to the complainant when all of these factors are met:



We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns



We have provided a clear statement of our position and their options



The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our Trust site.

Duplicate complaints

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account. If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:



Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and that the local process is complete



Direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint

If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

Complaint campaigns

Where the Trust receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the Trust, the Trust may respond to these complaints by:



Publishing a single response on the Trust website



Sending a template response to all of the complainants

If complainants are not satisfied with the Trust's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

Record keeping

The Trust will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and held centrally, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or through a subject access request under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a Trust inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy notices and record retention schedule.

The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole governing board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point.

Where the governing board is aware of the substance of the complaint before the review panel stage, the Trust will (where reasonably practicable) arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.

Complainants also have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The decision to approve this request is made by the governing board, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

Learning lessons

The governing body will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Head of School where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school/Trust can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

Monitoring arrangements

The governing body will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in making sure that complaints are handled properly. The governing body will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues.

The complaints records are logged and managed by the Head of School.

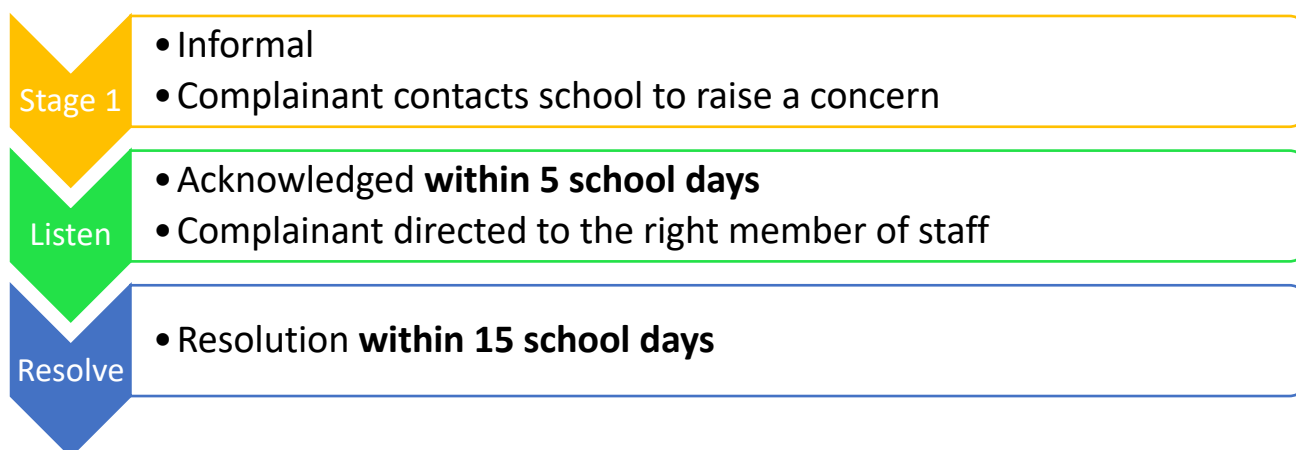
This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board every 3 years.

Policy reviewed:	March 2026
Next review date:	March 2027
Signature of Chair of Trust Board:	Signature of CEO:

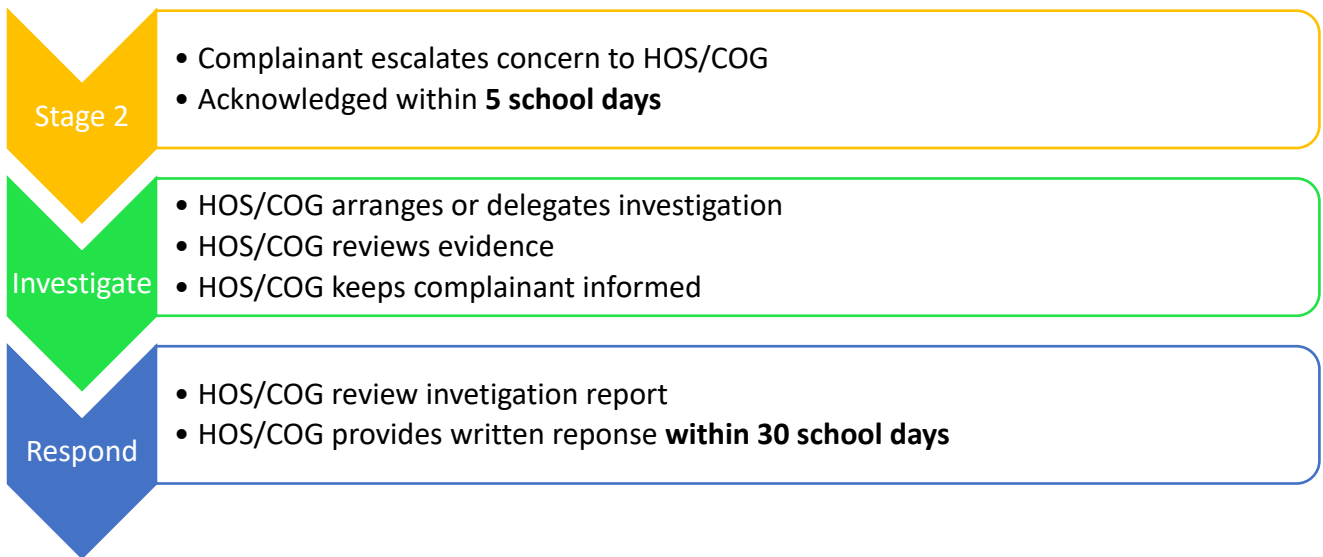
Appendix 1

Complaint Management Flowchart

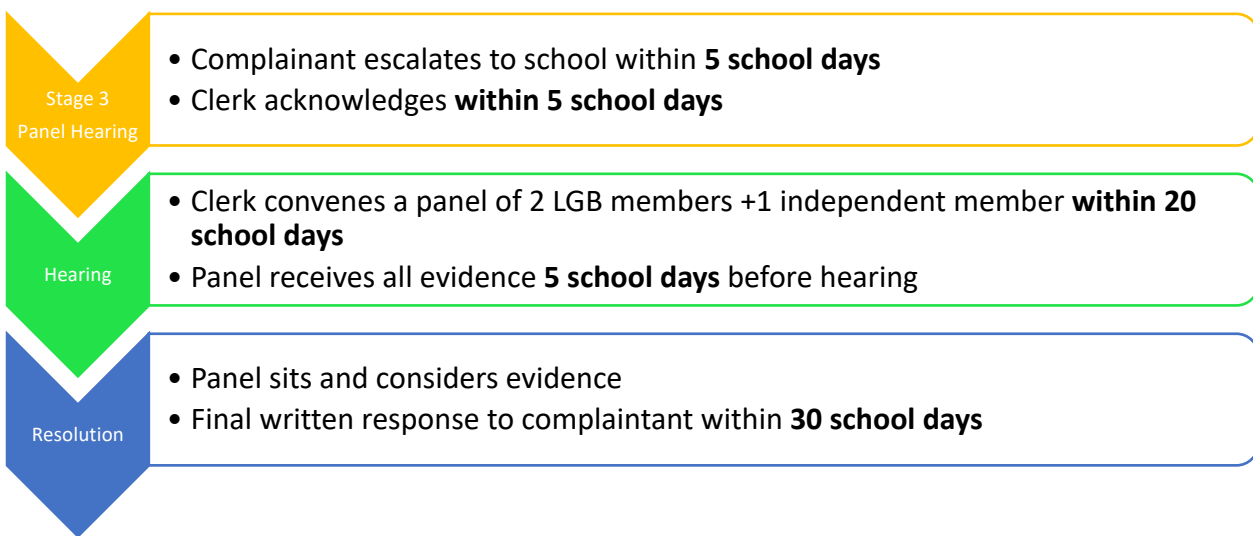
Stage 1 Informal Listen and Respond



Stage 2 Formal Investigate and Respond (HOS/COG)



Stage 3 Formal LGB Panel Hearing/Appeal



Appendix 2

Complaint Form

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address:
Postcode:
Day time telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
Email address:

<p>Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.</p>
<p>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</p>
<p>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.</p>
<p>Signature:</p> <p>Date:</p>
<p>Official use</p>
<p>Date acknowledgement sent:</p>
<p>By who:</p>
<p>Complaint referred to:</p>
<p>Action taken:</p>
<p>Date:</p>

Appendix 3

Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:



explain the complaint in full as early as possible



co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint



respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the

complaint



ask for assistance as needed



treat all those involved in the complaint with respect



refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:



providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:

- sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
- interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
- consideration of records and other relevant information
- analysing information



liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:



conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning



keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting



ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal



be mindful of the timescales to respond



prepare a comprehensive report for the head teacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.



The head teacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Complaints Co-ordinator

(this could be the head or CEO / designated complaints governor or trustee or other staff member providing administrative support)

The complaints co-ordinator should:



ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure



liaise with staff members, head teacher, CEO, Chair of Governors, Chair of Trust or the Clerk

and to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure



be aware of issues regarding:

- sharing third party information
- additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person



keep records.

Clerk to the Governing Body / Trust Board

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:



ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)



set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) 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



record the proceedings



circulate the minutes of the meeting



notify all parties of the committee's decision.

Committee Chair

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:



both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting



the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, 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/young person



the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant



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.



If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting



both the complainant and the school 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 issues are addressed



key findings of fact are made



the committee is open-minded and acts independently



no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure



the meeting is minuted



they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one).

Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:



the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so



No governor / trustee may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.



the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant



We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.



many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting



Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.



extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting



Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.



The committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.



If the child/young person is the complainant, the committee should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.



However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.



the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.