

Complaints Policy



Policy Review Schedule

Policy	OLT Complaints Policy
Review schedule	Every 3 Years
Statutory Policy	YES
Policy owner	COO
Lead Reviewer	Governance and Communications Officer
Approver and date of last approval	CEO, May 2024
Key review dates	Changes made
04/05/2017	Approved by Chair, CEO and Chief Education Officer: to replace current policy and procedures
04/05/2018	No changes made
01/02/2020	Further information about panels and in line with DfE advice
22/05/2020	Amended section 6.4 to include independent member of complaints panel and removed section 6.5
09/11/2020	General review using DfE model complaints template
29/04/2021	Clarity regarding complaints about Principals and addition made to informal stage – using wider school or trust staff to help seek resolutions
17/06/2022	General review against DfE model complaints policy and model serial and unreasonable complaints policy templates. Removal of duplication. Clarity on timescales and on links with other OLT policies, such as OLT Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.
27/02/2023	Review against DfE guidance and DfE model complaints policy. Enhanced clarity on roles within the process and complaint outcomes.
21/05/2024	Reviewed against model DfE Complaints Policy and DfE best practice guidance on complaints processes (2021). Adjustments to sections 6.2(b), 6.3, and 7, to enhance clarity on investigation processes and panel hearings
Next review: May 2027	

Contents

Policy Review Schedule	2
1. Aims	4
2. Legislation and guidance	4
3. Definitions and scope	5
4. Roles and responsibilities	6
5. Principles for investigation	6
6. Informal and Formal Complaints Process	7
7. Complaints against one or more Trustees on the Trust Board, or about the CEO (or other Trust Executive)	11
8. Referring complaints on completion of this complaints procedure	12
9. Unreasonable Complaints	13
10. Duplicate Complaints	13
11. Complaint Campaigns	13
12. Safeguarding Referrals	14
13. Record keeping	14
14. Monitoring arrangements	14
15. Links with other policies	14
Appendix 1: Roles and Responsibilities	15
Appendix 2: Complaint Form	16
Appendix 3: Examples of Unreasonable Complaints	18

1. Aims

The Trust and each of its schools aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints. 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 complainants' desire for confidentiality
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy, and make reasonable adjustments to the process where appropriate to accommodate the individuals involved
- Ensure 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 school improvement evaluation processes

All schools within the Omnia Learning Trust are committed to providing the best education for our young people and want our pupils to be happy, healthy, safe and to do well. We recognise the importance of establishing and maintaining good relationships with parents, carers, and the wider community. We are aware that there may be occasions where people have complaints or concerns, and the following procedure sets out the steps that must be followed to resolve these as quickly and informally as possible.

If a Trustee or Governor is approached regarding a complaint, he/she should be mindful not to take action outside of this complaints procedure, or have discussions with other Trustees or members of the committees of the Board, in case he/she is needed to sit on a Complaints Review Panel at a later stage of the procedure.

2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to [the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which states that each school must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of pupils at the school. To this end, the policy is published on the Trust's and each school website.

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 the Trust's 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 each school's fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

3. Definitions and scope

3.1 Definitions

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint:

- A **concern** is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”. The school will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible
- A **complaint** is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”

3.2 Scope

(i) The school intends to resolve concerns or complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage. There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise his/her concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.

(ii) This policy does **not** cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion
- Whistleblowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff conduct and discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint, including those listed at Section 15.

(iii) Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) about the school’s support are within the scope of this policy. Such complaints should first be made to the class teacher and then the Inclusion Manager/SENCo. He/she will then be referred to this complaints policy. Our SEND information report includes information about the rights of parents of pupils with disabilities who believe that our school has discriminated against his/her child.

(iv) Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be considered under this complaints procedure and will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. To maintain confidentiality, complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member but will be notified that the matter is being addressed.

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

4. Roles and responsibilities

An explanation about the role and responsibilities of the complainant, investigator, and others taking part in a complaints process under this policy can be found at Appendix 1.

5. Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, the investigator will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

5.1 Time scales

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

Exceptions to this time frame will be considered 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 a complaint is made outside of term time, it will be considered as having been received on the next school day.

If at any point the time scales in this policy cannot be met by the school/Trust, it will:

- Set new time limits with the complainant
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay

5.2 Presence of children at meetings regarding concerns or complaints raised

It is unlikely that the resolution of a concern or complaint within these guidelines will be assisted by the presence of pupils at any meeting between the Principal, or other staff and the complainant. A meeting which required the presence of the pupil would only be one at which confidential matters or issues relating to named members of staff were not discussed. Staff are advised to consult a parent if his/her child is required to clarify facts concerning a complaint and ensure that a pupil does not participate in a discussion where he/she might witness confrontations between adults.

5.3 Complaints about our fulfilment of early-years requirements

The Trust will investigate all written complaints relating to the school's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint. The school 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 he/she believe that the school is not meeting Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, by calling 0300 123 4234 or 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>.

The school/Trust will notify parents and carers if we become aware that the school 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.

6. Informal and Formal Complaints Process

6.1 Stage 1: Informal Complaints Process

6.1(a). It is hoped that most concerns or complaints raised will be addressed through the informal complaints process. The school will take informal concerns or complaints seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

6.1(b). The complainant should raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the Principal as appropriate, either in person or by letter, telephone, or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, he/she should contact the school office.

6.1(c). The person investigating the concern or complaint will provide a response **within 20 school days**. If the matter remains unresolved, the next step is for the complainant to make a formal complaint.

6.2 Stage 2: Formal Complaints Process

6.2(a). Complaint to the Principal

(i) Formal complaints must be made to the Principal, via the school office. For complaints about the Principal or a school governor, see section 6.2(b), below. For complaints about the CEO or Trust Board see section 7 below. Ideally, the complaint will be made in writing and will either use the complaint form at Appendix 2 or provide the information it asks for, including a clear explanation of the outcome or solution sought. If complainants need assistance raising a complaint, he/she can contact the school office.

(ii) The Principal (or investigator) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint. The Principal will carry out an investigation, either personally, or via the appointment of a member of the senior leadership team as the investigator. The Principal (or investigator):

- Will establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved,
- Will clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved,
- Will clarify what the complainant feels would put things right if this has not been made clear in the complaint form or letter, and
- May identify one or more potential solutions, having in mind section 6.2(a)(v), below.

(iii) During the investigation, the Principal (or investigator) may ask to meet the complainant to meet in person and may interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of. The complainant (or interviewee) may be accompanied to this meeting and should inform the school of the identity of his/her companion in advance.

(iv) In certain circumstances, the school may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting, for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the school

will notify the complainant (or interviewee) as soon as he/she are aware, so that the complainant (or interviewee) can arrange alternative accompaniment.

(v) After the conclusion of the investigation, the Principal will decide whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part. It can be the case that the complaint does not have any substance and is therefore considered to be unfounded or unsubstantiated. To the extent that the complaint is upheld, in whole or in part, the Principal's decision will include one or more of the following actions:

- An apology;
- An explanation;
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better (please note that this is not an admission of negligence);
- 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;

(vi) The Principal may also recommend that the school takes a future course of action such as reviewing one or more school policies in light of the complaint, or reviewing the matter in line with one or more separate Omnia Learning Trust or school policies.

- For matters to be dealt with in line with the OLT Disciplinary Policies and Procedures, please refer to section 3.2(iv), above, which clarifies that complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member, but will be notified that the matter is being addressed.

(vii) The Principal will send a written response within **20 school days**. If the Principal is unable to meet this deadline, he/she will provide the complainant with a revised response date. The response will explain the actions taken to investigate the complaint, what decision has been made and the reason(s) for it, and if appropriate, actions the school may take to resolve the complaint. The response will also set out the complainant's options, which might include the offer of a meeting or further meeting with a member of school/Trust staff and will include information on how to escalate the complaint if he or she is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2. Examples of reasons for a complainant escalating a complaint beyond Stage 2 include:

- Failure to take proper account of relevant evidence
- Taking account of irrelevant or inaccurate evidence

6.2(b). Complaint about the Principal or about one or more school governors

(i) If the complaint is about the Principal or is about one or more staff or parent governors of the school, the complaint should be sent to the school office addressed to the OLT Governance and Communications Officer of the Omnia Learning Trust at admin@omnialearningtrust.org.

(ii) Ideally, the complaint will be made in writing and will either use the complaint form at Appendix 2 or provide the information it asks for, including a clear explanation of the outcome or solution sought. If complainants need assistance raising a complaint, he/she can contact the school office.

(iii) The OLT Governance and Communications Officer will appoint a senior Trust Executive to follow the Stage 2 process set out at section 6.2(a), in place of the Principal. An independent investigator may be appointed to assist the senior Trust Executive or to carry out the investigation in place of the senior Trust Executive.

6.3 Stage 3: Complaints Review Panel

6.3(a). Stage 3 is the final stage of the complaints procedure and involves the convening of a panel hearing to consider a complaint which has been escalated following the completion of Stage 2 of this procedure. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to escalate the complaint to Stage 3, he/she should write to the OLT Governance and Communications Officer of the Omnia Learning Trust via the school office, within **20 school days** of the date of the outcome letter received in Stage 2. This letter or e-mail from the complainant should include a clear explanation of the outcome or solution sought. For complaints about the CEO, anyone in the Trust's Executive Team, or about one or more members of the Trust Board, please refer to section 7.

6.3(b) Convening the panel

(i) Panel members

- The Complaints Review Panel consists of three members, who are appointed by the Governance and Communications Officer on behalf of the Trust.
- At least one panel member must be completely independent of the Trust. This person must not, in the last three years, have been a governor of the school, a Trustee of the Trust Board, a member of staff or supply staff at the school or otherwise an employee of the Trust, and must not have been the parent of a registered or former registered pupil at the school. He/she must also not have been directly involved in any matter detailed in the complaint.
- The two other panel members must not have detailed prior knowledge of the complaint and must not have been involved in the incident(s) or event(s) which led to the complaint. These individuals will have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress. The panel will select a panel chair from amongst themselves.
- If the complaint concerns one or more of the school governors, these two other panel members will be Trustees appointed from the Trust Board.
- If insufficient impartial panel members are available, the Governance and Communications Officer will seek panel members from other schools or the local authority.

(ii) Scheduling the hearing

- The Governance and Communications Officer will arrange the panel hearing to take place, if possible, within **20 school days** of the complainant's Stage 3 letter.
- The complainant will be given reasonable notice of the date, time, and venue of the hearing. However, if the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, the Governance and Communications Officer will set a date and inform the complainant. The hearing will go ahead using written submissions requested from both parties.

(iii) Copies of written materials

- The complainant will be asked to send or deliver copies of any further written material (in addition to the Stage 3 complaint) for consideration at the hearing, to the school office for the attention of the Governance and Communications Officer, to be received at least **5 school days** before the hearing. Any written material, including the Stage 3 complaint letter, will be circulated to all parties at least **5 school days** before the date of the hearing.

6.3(c). At the panel hearing

(i) *Attendance*

- At the panel hearing, the complainant, and representatives from the school, as appropriate, will be asked to attend.
- The complainant and any school representative may bring a companion to the hearing and should inform the Governance and Communications Officer of the identity of his/her companion at least **2 school days** in advance. In certain circumstances, the Governance and Communications Officer may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend as a companion, for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the Governance and Communications Officer will notify the complainant (or school representative) as soon as possible, so that he/she can arrange alternative accompaniment.
- The companion should not be from the media, or an individual acting in the capacity of a legal representative. However, exceptions may apply, for instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, he/she may wish to be supported by his/her union.
- The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recording of the meeting will not normally be permitted unless a complainant's disability or special needs require it. In this case all parties attending the hearing will be told in advance and his/her consent obtained before the start of the hearing.

(ii) *Support for child/young person*

- If the complainant is a child/young person, he/she will be asked in advance whether he/she needs support to help him/her present his/her complaint. If the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, 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 which the panel considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.

(iii) *Presenting statements and evidence*

- At the hearing, each individual will have the opportunity to give a statement and present his/her evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present his/her evidence. The panel, the complainant and the school representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. The panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with at Stage 1 of the procedure.
- Once the complainant and school representatives have completed presenting his/her cases, he/she will be asked to leave, and the panel will adjourn to consider the complaint and all the evidence provided.

6.3(d) The panel hearing outcome

(i) *The panel can:*

- Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part

- Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part
- (ii) *If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the panel will:*
- Decide on one or more of the appropriate action(s) listed below, to resolve the complaint:
 - An apology;
 - An explanation;
 - An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better (please note that this is not an admission of negligence);
 - 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
 - If appropriate, also make a recommendation for future action to help prevent similar issues arising in future, such as a recommendation that a school review one or more of its policies, or review the matter in line with one or more separate Omnia Learning Trust or school policies.
 - For matters to be dealt with in line with the OLT Disciplinary Policies and Procedures, please refer to section 3.2(iv), above, which clarifies that complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member, but will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
- (iii) The chair of the panel will write to the complainant and the school within **20 school days** of the date of the hearing. The letter, which can be sent by e-mail, will contain an explanation of any actions taken to investigate the complaint, an explanation of the panel's decision and the reason(s) for it, actions to resolve the complaint (where appropriate), and details of how to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if the complainant is dissatisfied with the way his/her complaint has been handled. A copy of the minutes taken of the hearing will be available on request. The panel's findings and recommendations will also be made available to the school Principal for inspection on the school premises.

7. Complaints against one or more Trustees on the Trust Board, or about the CEO, or about another Trust Executive

7.1 Complaints about an individual Trustee on the Trust Board, or about the CEO, or about an individual employee in the Trust Executive Team

7.1(a) Such complaints should be sent to the Governance and Communications Officer via the Trust's registered address. Ideally, the complaint will be made in writing and will either use the complaint form at Appendix 2 or provide the information it asks for. If complainants need assistance raising a complaint, he/she can contact the Governance and Communications Officer.

7.1(b) The complaint will be investigated by the Chair of Trustees, or by the Vice-Chair of Trustees if the complaint concerns the Chair of Trustees. The Chair of Trustees (or Vice-Chair) will follow the **Stage 2** process set out at section 6.2(a) of this complaints procedure, in place of the Principal. An

independent investigator may be appointed to assist with the investigation or to carry it out in place of the Chair of Trustees (or Vice Chair, as appropriate).

7.1(c) If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to escalate the complaint to **Stage 3**, he/she should write to the Governance and Communications Officer within **20 school days** of the date of the outcome letter received in Stage 2. Stage 3 is the final stage of the complaints procedure and involves the convening of a panel hearing to consider the complaint. Sections 6.3(a) to 6.3(d) of this complaints procedure will apply in this scenario.

7.2 Complaints about “the Trust”, or about the Chair and Vice-Chair of Trustees jointly, or about the entire Trust Board, or the majority of the Trustees

7.2(a) Such complaints should be sent to the Governance and Communications Officer via the Trust’s registered address. Ideally, the complaint will be made in writing and will either use the complaint form at Appendix 2 or provide the information it asks for. If complainants need assistance raising a complaint, he/she can contact the Governance and Communications Officer.

7.2(b) The complaint will be investigated by an independent investigator appointed by the Governance and Communications Officer. The investigator will follow the **Stage 2** process set out at section 6.2(a) of this complaints procedure (in place of the Principal, as stated there).

7.2(c) If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to escalate the complaint to **Stage 3**, he/she should write to the Governance and Communications Officer within **20 school days** of the date of the outcome letter received in Stage 2. Stage 3 is the final stage of the complaints procedure and involves the convening of a panel hearing to consider the complaint. Sections 6.3(a) to 6.3(d) of this complaints procedure will apply in this scenario, with the exception that all panel members will be completely independent of the Trust.

8. Referring complaints on completion of this complaints procedure

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of this complaints procedure, he/she can refer his/her complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (‘ESFA’). The ESFA will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the school/Trust. The ESFA will not overturn a decision about a complaint. However, it will look into:

- Whether there was undue delay, or a failure to comply with the applicable complaints procedure
- Whether there was a breach of the funding agreement in place with the Secretary of State
- Whether there was a failure to comply with any other legal obligation

If the school or Trust did not deal with the complaint properly, it will be asked to re-investigate the complaint. If this complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school/Trust will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage:
<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>, or write to:

Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit
Education and Skills Funding Agency

Cheylesmore House
5 Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

This information will be included in each Stage 3 outcome letter to a complainant.

9. Unreasonable Complaints

9.1 Definition of an unreasonable complaint

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we be treated seriously. However, a complaint may be deemed unreasonable due to the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school or Trust. Appendix 3 contains a non-exhaustive list of examples of when a complaint has become unreasonable.

9.2 Response to unreasonable complaints

Wherever possible, the school Principal, or Chair of Trustees if appropriate, will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking. If the unreasonable behaviour continues, the Principal or Chair of Trustees will write to the complainant to explain that his or her behaviour has become unreasonable and to ask for this to stop.

If the complainant makes an unreasonable complaint after receipt of such letter, the complainant's behaviour will be deemed 'unacceptable behaviour' as defined by the Omnia Learning Trust's Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and will be dealt with under the provisions of that policy, with no further recourse available to him/her to the provisions of this Complaints Policy in relation to such behaviour.

10. Duplicate Complaints

If a complaint has been resolved under this procedure and a duplicate complaint on the same subject is received from a partner, family member or other individual, the investigator will assess whether there are aspects that previously had not been considered, or if there is any new information to be taken into account.

If the investigator is satisfied that there are no new aspects, he/she will:

- Tell the new complainant that the complaint has have already been investigated and responded to pursuant to this complaints policy
- Direct the complainant to the DfE if he/she is dissatisfied with the handling of the complaint

If there is new information within the complaint, the procedure within this complaints policy will be followed in respect of such new information.

11. Complaint Campaigns

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

- Publishing a single response on the school/Trust website

- Sending a template response to all of the complainants

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

12. Safeguarding Referrals

Schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of his/her pupils under section 175 of the Education Act 2002. This involves making referrals to the appropriate organisation – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. It is not for a school to investigate or make a judgement about possible abuse or neglect but it must refer any concerns it may have. As such, any response to or investigation in relation to a complaint about a safeguarding referral made by school staff will be limited to considering whether appropriate action was taken at the time the referral was made based on the information available to the referrer at that time and in accordance with the safeguarding policy.

13. Record keeping

The school/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, 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 his/her 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 school inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law and our privacy notices. The complaints records are logged and managed by the CEO.

The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole Trust Board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point. Where the Trust Board is aware of the substance of the complaint before the review panel stage, the school/Trust will (where reasonably practicable) arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.

Complainants also have the right to request a fully independent panel if he/she believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The decision to approve this request is made by the Trust Board, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

14. Monitoring arrangements

The Trust Board will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly. The Trust Board will track the number and nature of complaints and review underlying issues which may have been identified.

15. Links with other policies

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures

- Admissions policy
- Exclusions policy
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- SEN policy and information report
- Privacy notices

Appendix 1: Roles and Responsibilities

The complainant

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to his/her complaint if he/she:

- Follows these procedures
- Co-operates with the school throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly
- Treats all those involved with respect
- Does not publish details about the complaint on social media

The complainant can ask a third party to make the complaint on his/her behalf.

The investigator

An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint and establish the facts. He/she will:

- Keep an open mind
- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
- Prepare a comprehensive report which includes the facts and potential solutions

The Governance and Communications Officer

The Governance and Communications Officer will:

- Be the contact point for the complainant and the complaints review panel, including circulating the relevant papers before any complaints review panel hearing
- Arrange the complaints review panel hearing
- Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the hearing

The Review Panel Chair

The Review Panel Chair will:

- Chair the panel hearing, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout
- Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the panel hearing, and are allowed to present his/her case

Appendix 2: Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the school office or Trust registered address, as appropriate, marked for the attention of [e.g. the Principal/Governance and Communications Officer - *please select as appropriate*] and marked 'Urgent, Private and Confidential'.

For the attention of:	
Complainant's Name:	
Pupil's name (<i>if appropriate/relevant</i>):	
Your relationship to the pupil (<i>if appropriate/relevant</i>):	
Address (including postcode):	
Daytime telephone number:	
Today's date:	

Please give details of your complaint (including where possible dates, times, and names or the existence of any witnesses to events)

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (who did you speak to and what was the response?)

What outcome or solution are you looking for and what specific actions do you feel might help resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature

Date:

OFFICIAL USE

Date received:

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Appendix 3: Examples of Unreasonable Complaints

The following is a non-exhaustive list providing examples of when a complaint has become unreasonable. Examples include when a complainant:

- refuses to articulate his/her complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure

- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which he/she expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists he/she are fully answered, often immediately and to his/her own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's/Trust's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint whether in person, in writing, by email or by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language, or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums