# Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

| |
|---|
| **Your name:** |
| **Pupil's name (if relevant):** |
| **Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):** |
| **Address:**<br><br>**Postcode:**<br><br>**Day time telephone number:**<br><br>**Evening telephone number:** |
| **Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.** |

| |
|---|
| **What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?** |
| **Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.** |
| **Signature:**<br><br>**Date:** |
| **Official use** |
| **Date acknowledgement sent:** |
| **Acknowledgement sent by:** |
| **Complaint referred to:** |
| **Date:** |

## 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 Headteacher or Complaints Committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The Headteacher 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 Headteacher / designated complaints Governor 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, Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk and LAs (if appropriate) 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

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 UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK 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 UK 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 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 is 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.