



Holyhead

Teach What Matters

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Autumn Term 2020

Review Date:	Autumn 2020 (COVID-19 update)
Agreed:	Governors' HR, Autumn 2020
Ratified:	Full Governors, Autumn 2020
To Be Reviewed:	Autumn 2021
Policy Lead:	D Reddy



Complaints Policy and Procedure

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Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Holyhead School 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.

2. The difference between a concern and a complaint

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

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

2.3 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. Holyhead School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

2.4 If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Complaints Co-ordinator (Deputy Principal, Behaviour & Attitudes), will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Complaints Co-ordinator 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.

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

3. How to raise a concern or make a complaint

3.1 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 of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or Principal. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

3.2 Complainants should not approach individual governors 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 2 of the procedure.

- 3.3 Complaints against school staff (except the Principal) should be made in the first instance, to Ross Trafford, Principal via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.
- 3.4 Complaints that involve or are about the Principal should be addressed to Dominic Bradley (the Chair of Governors), via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.
- 3.5 Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office.
- 3.6 Please mark them as Private and Confidential.
- 3.7 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 third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.
- 3.8 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.

4. Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Principal or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Scope of this Complaints Procedure

- 7.1 This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Holyhead School, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals 	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Birmingham Local Education Authority</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding on 0121 675 1669 or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding 0121 303 1888</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at:</p> <p>www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure</i></p> <p>www.holyheadschool.org.uk</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain directly to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Curriculum - content 	<p>Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus</p>

7.2 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.

7.3 If a complainant commences legal action against Holyhead School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

8. Resolving complaints

8.1 At each stage in the procedure, Holyhead School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or 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.

8.2 Holyhead School will provide for a written record of all complaints that are made in writing whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and will provide that correspondence, including 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.

9. Withdrawal of a Complaint

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

10. Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

10.1 Formal complaints must be made to the Principal (unless they are about the principal), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form, see appendix A), or by telephone. The Principal will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 7 school days.

10.2 Within this response, the Principal will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Principal can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The Principal may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's Senior Leadership Team, at Holyhead this is the Complaints Co-ordinator (Deputy Principal, Behaviour & Attitudes) but not the decision to be taken.

10.3 During the investigation, the Principal (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.

10.4 At the conclusion of their investigation, the Principal will provide a formal written response within 7 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

10.5 If the Principal is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

10.6 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 Holyhead School will take to resolve the complaint.

10.7 The Principal will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

10.8 If the complaint is about the principal or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

10.9 Complaints about the Principal or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

10.10 If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

10.11 Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Stage 2

10.12 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with members of the governing body's complaints committee, which will be formed of the **first three, impartial, governors available and an and one person independent of the running and management of the school**. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

10.13 A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within 5 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

10.14 The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 7 school days.

10.15 Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

10.16 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.

10.17 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.

10.18 The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint **and one person independent of the running and management of the school**. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from Holyhead School available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through their LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2.

10.19 The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs. **Parents/carers will be invited to attend and they may bring someone along 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.

10.20 For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

10.21 Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

10.22 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.

10.23 Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 3 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.

10.24 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.

10.25 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.

10.26 The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented.

10.27 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.

10.28 The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Holyhead School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days.

10.29 The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Holyhead School.

10.30 If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent people and co-opted governors.

10.31 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 Holyhead School will take to resolve the complaint.

10.32 The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

10.33 **Holyhead will ensure that the procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is— (i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Principal.**

Next Steps

10.34 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 Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

10.35 The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Holyhead School. They will consider whether Holyhead School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

10.36 The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

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

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- cooperate 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

11.2 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.

11.3 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 Principal or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems. This will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Principal

11.4 The Principal 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

11.5 This could be the Principal / designated complaints governor or other staff member

providing administrative support

11.6 The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, principal, 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

11.7 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

11.8 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.

11.9 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

11.10 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.
- 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
- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting

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

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

11.13 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.

11.14 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.

12. Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

12.1 Holyhead School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that

behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

12.2 Holyhead School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to cooperate 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 they expect to be taken into account and commented on;
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their 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 complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with;
- 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.

12.3 Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

12.4 Whenever possible, the Principal or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

12.5 If the behaviour continues, the Principal will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Holyhead School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

12.6 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 Holyhead School.

13. Barring from the School Premises

13.1 School premises are private property and therefore any individual may be barred from entering the premises.

13.2 If an individual's behaviour is cause for concern, the Principal will ask the individual to leave the premises.

13.3 The Principal will notify the parties involved in writing, explaining that their implied licence for access to the premises has been temporarily revoked and why, subject to any representations that the individual may wish to make.

13.4 The individual involved will be given the opportunity to formally express their views regarding the decision to bar them.

13.5 This decision to bar will be reviewed by the chair of governors or a committee of governors, taking into account any discussions following the incident.

13.6 If the decision is made to continue the bar, the individual will be contacted in writing, informing them of how long the bar will be in place, they will also be informed of when the decision will be reviewed.

13.7 Anyone wishing to make a complaint regarding a barring order can do so in writing, including email, to the Principal or Chair of Governors.

13.8 Once the school's complaints procedure is completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts.

14. Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Principal who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken. Please send the form to JBent@holyheadschool.org.uk (Personal Assistant to the Principal) or Holyhead School, Milestone Lane, Holyhead Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B21 0HN

Your name:
Student's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the student (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: 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:

Date:

Official use

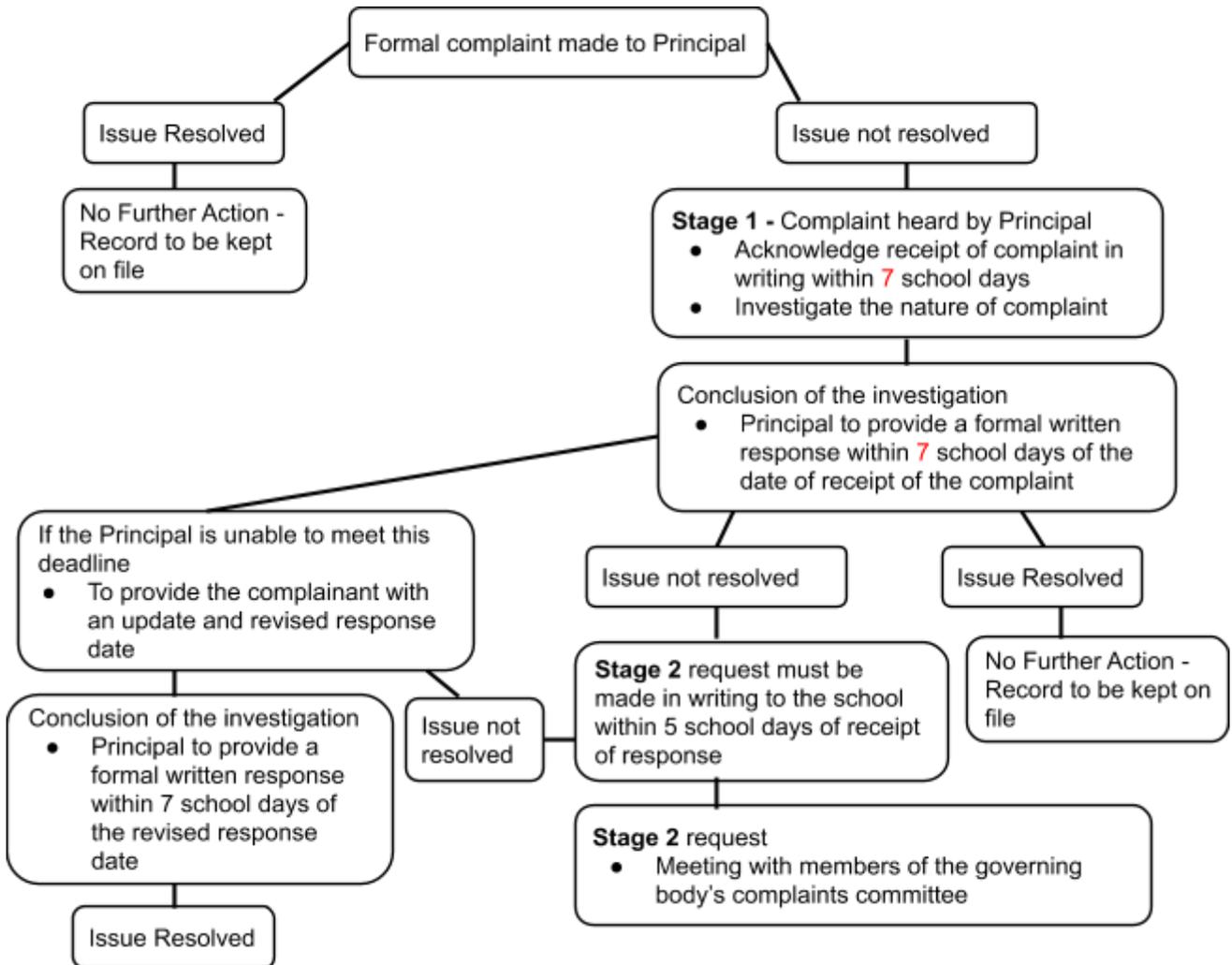
Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

15. Summary of dealing with Complaints



16. Appendices

Appendix A

Interviewing Best Practice Tips

Children/students

- Children/students should be interviewed in the presence of another member of staff, or in the case of serious complaints (e.g. where the possibility of criminal investigation exists) in the presence of their parents/carers. However, it might not always be possible to conduct an interview in case it prejudices a LADO or police investigation
- Care should be taken in these circumstances not to create an intimidating atmosphere
- Children/students should be told what the interview is about and that they can have someone with them

Staff/Witnesses

- Explain the complaint and your role clearly to the interviewee and confirm that they understand the complaints procedure and their role in it
- Staff are allowed a colleague to support them at their interview. The colleague must not be anyone likely to be interviewed themselves, including their line manager
- Use open, not leading questions
- Do not express opinions in words or attitude
- Ask single not multiple questions, i.e. one question at a time
- Try to separate 'hearsay' evidence from fact by asking interviewees how they know a particular fact
- Persist with questions if necessary. Do not be afraid to ask the same question twice. Make notes of each answer given
- Deal with conflicting evidence by seeking corroborative evidence. If this is not available, discuss with the complaints co-ordinator/ principal/ Chair of Governors the option of a meeting between the conflicting witnesses
- Make a formal record of the interview from the written notes as soon as possible while the memory is fresh. Show the interviewee the formal record, ask if s/he has anything to add, and to sign the record as accurate

Complaints not in scope of the procedure

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.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) • School re-organisation proposals • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<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"> • Exclusion of children from school 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/schooldiscipline-exclusions/exclusions</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<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: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk 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"> • Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures 	<p>These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.</p>

Further information Useful Resources and External Organisations

- National Governors Association
- Information Commissioner's Office

Other Relevant Departmental Advice and Statutory Guidance

- Section 29 of the Education Act 2002
- Governors Handbook
- Understanding and Dealing with Issues Relating to Parental Responsibility

Other Departmental Resources

- How to complain about a school - Advice for complainants
- Parental Responsibility Guidance – non-statutory advice for schools

Checklist for a Panel Hearing

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hearing is as informal as possible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complainant may question both the Principal and the witnesses after each has spoken.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The panel may ask questions at any point.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.

Complaints Procedure During a Tier 3 Local Lockdown in the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Statement of intent

In line with current government guidance, the school is not expected to handle new or existing complaints while it is under Tier 3 restriction during a local lockdown in the school's local area; however, the school remains committed to maintaining open communication channels with parents and all stakeholders during this time.

We understand the necessity to adapt our procedures during a local lockdown and to ensure members of our school community can continue to voice any concerns they may have.

This appendix outlines how the school will manage concerns and complaints during Tier 3 local restriction in the coronavirus pandemic, in line with the government's guidance and this policy. The information in this section is under constant review and kept updated to reflect any changes to national or local guidance.

Signed by:

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Mr R Trafford

Principal

Date:

.....

Mr D Bradley

Chair of Governors

Date:

1. Legal framework

1.1. This appendix has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2020) 'Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020'
- Department of Health & Social Care (2020) 'COVID-19 contain framework: a guide for local decision-makers'

1.2. This appendix operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): Contingency Plan
- Records Management Policy

2. Making a complaint

2.1 For the purpose of this appendix, a “**complaint**” can be defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction’ towards the actions taken or a perceived lack of action taken.

2.2 The normal complaints procedure set out within the main body of this policy will resume once the school is no longer under Tier 3 local restriction, as directed by the DfE; until this point, formal complaints will not be dealt with by the school.

2.3 Any updates that influence this policy or appendix will be communicated to all parties involved via **email** in a timely manner.

2.4 Complainants are encouraged to call the DfE for more information regarding the expectations on schools regarding complaints at this time.

3. Sharing a concern

3.1 For the purpose of this appendix, a “**concern**” can be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt’ where reassurance is required.

3.2 Parents can share concerns about aspects of the school’s current provision by contacting the school via telephone or email. Concerns will be responded to as soon as it is deemed possible.

3.3 Parents who wish to share a concern about their child’s learning should in the first instance raise their concerns with their child’s class teacher via telephone or email.

3.4 If a concern relates to the safeguarding of a child, the person concerned should contact the School’s DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead), LA or, where appropriate, the police without delay.

4. Recording a concern

4.1 A written record will be kept of any concern made in the school’s Concerns Log, where it is deemed necessary, and will include:

- The main issues raised and any recommendations.

- Whether the concern was resolved and how this was achieved.
 - Actions taken by the school as a result of the concern raised.
- 4.2 The school will keep the governing board up-to-date with any concerns raised and actions that are taken to resolve them, where necessary.
- 4.3 Any record of concerns made will be held in line with the Records Management Policy.

5. Monitoring and review

- 5.1 The Principal is responsible for continually monitoring government guidance and updating this appendix in line with any changes, including guidance on both national and local levels.
- 5.2 Any changes to this appendix will be communicated to all staff, parents and relevant stakeholders.
- 5.3 This appendix will be considered redundant once the school is no longer under Tier 3 local restriction, as directed by the DfE; at which point, the school will resume its regular complaints procedures.
- 5.4 The procedures in this appendix will be reinstated if the school goes back into Tier 3 local restriction at any point.