



Complaints Procedure

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1. Introduction, Legal and guidance

1.1 This document meets the requirements of [section 29 of The Education Act](#), which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. It is also based on [guidance for schools on complaints procedures](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), including the model procedure, and model procedure for dealing with serial and unreasonable complaints.

1.2 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 complaint procedure.

1.3 Stivichall Primary school takes informal concerns seriously and makes every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible and provide any resolutions and or reassurances that may be necessary. However, there may be occasions when a complainant would like to raise their concerns formally. In these cases, the school will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this Complaints Policy.

Our school aims to foster and maintain positive relationships with parents and carers through a timely response to all concerns and complaints.

Our school's Governing Board want to ensure that potential complainants feel able to raise concerns with members of staff without formality, either in person by telephone or in writing. This allows staff to establish whether a person is asking a question, expressing an opinion/concern, or making a complaint and advise them accordingly.

1.4 The Governing Board will track the number and nature of complaints received by the school.

The Governing Board will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Head teacher, where appropriate and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practices to help prevent similar events in the future.

1.5 This Complaints Policy will be reviewed in line with DfE guidance and by the Governing Board every two years.

1.6 [The Parent Complaint Guide is published on the school website.](#)

[Parent Complaint Guide](#)

2. 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 Stivichall Primary 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.

3. The difference between **feedback, a concern and a complaint**

Feedback is the sharing of a voice without needing the school to respond, but to listen and take it on board. Feedback is often sought by schools who want to hear and adapt to parents' views on a particular matter.

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. Stivichall Primary School 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 headteacher or member of the school leadership team will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the headteacher or member of the school leadership team 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, Stivichall Primary School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

4. 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
- follow the stages of the complaints procedure and not try to move to later stages of the

procedure before earlier stages have been completed.

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 and as appropriate
 - 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 resolve the issue.

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 is the school business manager)

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 the local authority 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

- for stage 2, 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
- for stage 2, collate any written material relevant to the complaint and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale

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 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- for stage 3, 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
- for stage 3, collate any written material relevant to the complaint 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 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.

5. 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 of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with the primary contact - class teacher, phase leader, school's complaints co-ordinator (School Business Manager) or, for wraparound, Acorns Manager. It is acknowledged that there may be circumstances when it may be appropriate for the initial contact to be made to the headteacher or another member of the school leadership team. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

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 3 of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the headteacher) should be made, in the first instance, to Karen Ferguson (the headteacher) via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. The Headteacher can delegate the investigation of any complaint to a suitable member of the senior leadership team.

Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher should be addressed to Kirstie Wren, Chair of Governors, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

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. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included (Appendix A). 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.

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.

Although AI can be a useful tool, it is important if using it to submit a complaint to ensure that it is accurate and reflects the nature of the complaint clearly before submitting it. AI is not always correct when citing laws and can make a complaint more complex than necessary.

6. Stages of the complaints procedure

If you wish to make a complaint, it is important to follow this procedure through each stage of the process. The school will not embark upon a new stage in the process until the previous stage has been completed. It is important to emphasise that there can be no exceptions.

Stage 1 – informal

The school will take informal concerns 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.

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the primary contact - class teacher, phase leader, school's complaints co-ordinator (School Business Manager)

or, for wraparound, Acorns Manager. This can be done either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office school@stivichall.coventry.sch.uk.

The school will acknowledge informal complaints within 5 school days, and investigate and provide a response within 10 school days.

The informal stage will involve a meeting or telephone conversation between the complainant and the relevant staff, as appropriate.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

Stage 2- formal

Formal complaints must be made to the headteacher (unless they are about the headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the complaint form), or by telephone. Complainants should include information such as relevant dates, times, names of witnesses of events and any copies of relevant documents.

The headteacher (or delegated senior leader) 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 headteacher (or delegated senior leader) will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The headteacher (or delegated senior leader) can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this. The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting and should inform the school of the identity of their companion in advance. In certain circumstances, the school may 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 as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange alternative accompaniment.

Note: The headteacher 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 headteacher (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 headteacher will provide a formal written response within 10 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. Whilst every effort will be made to complete investigations in this time, there may be occasions such as when there are a number of witnesses who may need to be interviewed, it will take longer to produce a written response. Where this is the case, the complainant will be provided 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 Stivichall Primary School will take to resolve the complaint.

The headteacher 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 headteacher, 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 2.

Complaints about the headteacher or member of the Governing Body must be made to the complaints coordinator, via the school office.

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 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 3 – submit to the complaint review panel

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 meeting with members of the governing body's complaints committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, governors available. 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 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. Details on how the complainant feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently and what they feel would resolve the complaint should be included. 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.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 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. This is intended to ensure that complaints are considered promptly and to avoid unnecessary delays.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. 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 Stivichall Primary 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 3.

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.

If the Committee have decided to consider written representations only, the timeframe for documentation from both the Complainant and the school will be sooner. This is to enable Panel, Governor and Complainant questions, for those to be responded to and the responses shared with all parties before the meeting takes place. All parties will be informed of the timeframe by the Clerk.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, 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. 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.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

All parties should be notified of the proposed witnesses. Parties are requested to notify the clerk of the name of any witnesses who they intend to bring to the meeting at the earliest possible opportunity.

At least 5 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 4 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 2 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 Stivichall Primary School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 7 school days. 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 Stivichall Primary School.

If the complaint is:

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

stage 3 will be heard by a committee of independent governors. 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 Stivichall Primary School will take to resolve the complaint. The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

7. Anonymous complaints

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

8. Time scales

The complainant 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 only consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

9. Complaints received outside of term time

Although it is acknowledged that it may be necessary for a complainant to submit a complaint at any point in the school year, it is important to note that school staff are not required to work during school holidays or public holidays. Therefore, any complaints received during the last week of a half term, will not ordinarily be dealt with until after the school holiday. This will necessarily extend the response time. We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

10. Scope of this Complaints Procedure

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

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation

- Special Educational Needs - School re-organisation proposals	proposals should be raised with Coventry Local Authority.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) lado@coventry.gov.uk
Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions. <i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i>
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. 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 direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. 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.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

There are times where complaints may meet the scope for part of the complaint but other parts may require addressing under other statutory procedures (see above).

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 a complainant commences legal action against Stivichall Primary 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.

11. Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Stivichall Primary 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.

12. Withdrawal of a complaint

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

13. Next Steps

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 3.

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

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.

14. Serial and unreasonable complaints

Stivichall Primary 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.

Stivichall Primary 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 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 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.

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.

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

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Stivichall Primary 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.

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 Stivichall Primary School.

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

- Publishing a single response on the school website
- Sending a template response to all of the complainants

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

15. Record keeping

The school 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 school 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 the school's 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 school 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.

16. Monitoring arrangements

The Governing Body will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the senior leadership team, where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

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

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years. At each review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Body.

Appendix A – Complaint form

Please complete and return to <...Name> (*either headteacher / Clerk / complaints co-ordinator / designated governor – school to delete as appropriate*) 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: 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:

Appendix B - Guidelines for Conducting Stage 3

1. The chair conducting the complaint hearing will introduce all present and will seek confirmation from both parties that they understand that the status of the hearing is at stage 3 in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.
2. Any documentation provided in evidence must be provided in advance to all parties and sufficient time given for it to be considered.
3. Each party may request adjournments during the hearing. No reasonable request for an adjournment will be refused.
4. No witness will be permitted to be present in the hearing until they have given evidence. The panel will decide whether the witness(es) should remain after giving evidence and responding to questions.
5. The complainant will present the facts supporting the complaint and will call any witnesses in support. A time limit of 1 hour will apply for the complainant to put his/her case.
6. The subject of the complaint and his/her representative will have the opportunity to question the complainant and any witnesses called. A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
7. The complaints panel and the Clerk supporting the panel, may ask questions (for the purpose of ensuring that the panel has all the information that it will require to determine the outcome of the review). A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
8. The subject of the complaint and/or their representative may present their case in defence of the complaint and may call witnesses. A time limit of 1 hour will apply.
9. The complainant will have the opportunity to question the subject of the complaint and any witnesses called. A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
10. The complaints panel and the Clerk (for the purpose of ensuring that the panel has all the information that it will require to determine the outcome of the review) may ask questions of the subject of the complaint and any witnesses called. A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
11. The complainant may sum up their case. A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
12. The subject of the complaint and/or their representative may sum up the case in defence. A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
13. Both parties and any witnesses will be asked to withdraw. The panel members will remain to determine the review. The Clerk will remain to record the panel's decision

14. If for any reason the panel need to recall any of the witnesses or either party to ask further questions, or seek clarification before reaching a decision, both parties will be recalled and then asked to leave.

15. The decision of the Panel will be notified in writing within 7 school days of the panel's determination of the review. The complainant will be notified of their right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.