COMPLAINTS POLICY

Reference this policy is aligned with ESFA/ DFE and reviewed by J Walker (School Solicitor)	**January 2024**
Agreed with Support Staff Trade Unions	**n/a**
Adopted by the Governing Body	**Nov 2026**
Next Review Due	**Dec 2028 or before**
Agreed with Teacher Trade Unions and Professional Associations	**February 2018**

Welland Park Academy is committed to working in close partnership with parents and the community. However, we recognise that from time to time concerns or complaints may arise and it is our aim to work with all parties involved to resolve these as quickly and efficiently as possible. Usually, concerns can be resolved quickly through day to day communication between parents and school staff.

Academy policies:

When Welland Park Academy adopts or approves a policy, and the school put the policy into operation that is part of the day to day running of the school. If there is an objection to a policy, this is a matter that needs to be referred back to the Governing Body. It is separate to the complaint process

Day to day operational decisions about curriculum and timetabling should be referred to the Principal for review. They are operational decisions that are expected of the Principal and senior leaders by virtue of the Contract of Employment and expectations set out by the Department for Education. The method to address these issues is to refer these to the Governing Body.

The complaints process exists to enable parents, carers, students, former students, advocates and other individuals to complain about the *application* of policies, concerns about treatment or mistreatment or issues relating to prejudicial decisions to be properly reviewed in school and by an independent panel of governors.

However, for those situations where an informal resolution is not reached, there is a more formal process to investigate and deal with complaints.

The aim of this procedure is to:

- provide a fair complaints procedures which is clear and easy to use
- attempt to resolve concerns through informal discussions at the earliest stage
- provide clarity of who will be co-ordinating the process in school
- give clear timelines for resolution
- encourage resolving the issues and finding a way to move forwards
- demonstrate a fair approach to managing complaints and concerns
- explain how vexatious and unreasonable behaviour by complainants is dealt with

Complaints will be managed in line with the Complaints Process set out within this procedure.

Who can raise 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 Welland Park Academy 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.

If the matter relates to a member of staff that passes the threshold for a potential HR procedure, that will be implemented. Please note that the procedure and outcome of any HR process will not be shared with the complainant as to do so would breach the Data Privacy rights of the individual.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

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

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

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Welland Park Academy 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, discuss the matter with the Principal and arrangements can be made to refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, arrangements will be made to 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, Welland Park Academy will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

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

Complaints against school staff (except the Principal) should be made in the first instance, to Mr Leatherland via the school office burgessn@wellandparkacademy.com **.** Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Principal should be addressed to Mrs Parry (the Chair of Governors), via the Clerk to the Governors clerk@wellandparkacademy.com 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 clerk@wellandparkacademy.com . Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

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

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

Anonymous complaints

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

Unreasonable actions

Welland Park Academy defines unreasonable actions 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 if it 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 Principal or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the complainant continues to behave unreasonably, and not modify their behaviour to enable a fair process to be followed, then they may be notified that the complaint process is frustrated. In those circumstances, the investigating officer will conclude the process – taking into account information available at that time.

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 our 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.

Timescales for submitting a complaint

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

Complaints received outside of term time

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

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Scope of the complaints procedure

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

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools	Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process via the 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 Kim Taylor / Lovona Brown 0116 305 4141
• Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions. **complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.* *https://www.wellandparkacademy.co.uk/policies-and-gdpr-information*
• 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 whistle-blowers 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.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale.

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

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Welland Park Academy 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.

Withdrawal of a complaint

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

Stage 1: Informal complaints

It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis.

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, Progress Leader / Head of Department or Principal. 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.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide an informal written response within 15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Stage 2: Formal complaints

Formal complaints must be made to the Principal (unless they are about the Principal), via the school office burgessn@wellandparkacademy.com . This must be in writing using the Complaint Form.

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 5 school days.

Within this response, the Principal (or relevant Governor or Trustee depending on who the complaint is about) will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Principal (or relevant Governor or Trustee) can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

If the matter is within the scope of the complaint policy, it is important that the right person to investigate is identified. The Principal (or relevant Governor or Trustee) will look, initially, within the resources of the Academy, but it may be necessary to seek an external, neutral third party to undertake this role. The Principal (or relevant Governor or Trustee) has discretion to appoint this person, and to notify the complainant about who the person is and reasons for the decision.

If the complaint is about a member of staff, an HR process will be followed. That is outside the scope of this complaint guidance.

The Principal (or relevant Governor or Trustee) may delegate the investigation to another member of the Academy's senior leadership team or suitable investigating officer but not the decision to be taken.

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.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Principal will provide a formal written response within 20 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

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

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

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

If a matter proceeds to stage 3, and there is a requirement for an investigation to be undertaken by an investigating officer. If that is not the Principal, it should be down to the Chair of the Governing Board to determine who is suitably qualified and has experience to undertake the role.

If the matter is within the scope of the complaint policy, it is important that the right person to investigate is identified. The Chair will look, initially, within the resources of the Academy (if appropriate), but it may be necessary to seek an external, neutral third party to undertake this role. The Chair has discretion to appoint this person, and to notify the complainant about who the person is and reasons for the decision.

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 2.

Complaints about the Principal or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office clerk@wellandparkacademy.com

Records

The records of a complaint process are subject to the Data Protection Act 2018 and other statutory requirements.

There is an obligation to keep appropriate records. The Investigating Officer will collect and keep records of meetings as necessary. When the investigating officer writes their report they may decide to combine their notes into that report, and destroy original copies. They may decide to summarise their notes in the report and keep original copies. This will be specified in any report.

Schools keep necessary records and not a note of every meeting or discussion that is held between school staff or with parents, carers and pupils. To try and retain a record of every interaction or discussion about a pupil would be impossible on a daily basis.

On occasion emails may also be deleted as part of the retention and information management process.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3 – a panel hearing consisting of at least three people who were not

directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

Right to Seek a Panel

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office clerk@wellandparkacademy.com , within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

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

Procedure for Stage 3

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 30 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.

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 completely independent committee panel.

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

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

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 (Human Resources) staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

Material for the Panel Hearing

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 panel at least 3 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 3 school days before the date of the meeting. The panel will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The panel 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 Panel Hearing

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 Welland Park Academy with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education (DFE) if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Welland Park Academy.

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 Welland Park Academy will take to resolve the complaint.

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

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

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Data Protection

Data protection

Prior to commencing any investigation, it is necessary for the complainant to give consider-ation to what personal data that they are content to be shared with an investigating officer. Attached to the complaint form is consent to share material to enable an investigation to be undertaken.

Over the course of the investigation, information may be gathered from third parties. On occasion, this information may contain personal data, but it may be given in confidence by witnesses. The investigating officer will have to determine if whole statements or summaries can be provided to parties and the panel.

If the complainant does not give consent to share information, it is important to note that the scope of the complaint may be limited and, therefore, the actions available to conclude the complaints process may also be limited. In some instances, the complaint may not be able to proceed. The complainant will be informed if this is the case to give an opportunity to consider consent to share the material again within 5 school days.

The investigation does not place any limits on school staff processing pupil data as re-quired. Additionally, this can include reviewing information to prepare for interviews with the investigating officer or the panel.

The same complaints process will be applied to Data Protection issues. A written outcome will be provided.

If the school does not comply with a Subject Access Request within 1 month (subject to any extension), or refuses all or part of the request, written reasons will be provided, setting out the principles for the refusal.

However, if you feel that the school has not dealt with your matter satisfactorily you can complain to the Information Commissioner.

By post: Customer Contact, Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF

Or by email: casework@ico.org.uk

More information is on the ICO website www.ico.org.uk/

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 DFE after they have completed Stage 3.

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

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

Regional Director's Office
Regions Group
East Midlands
Level 7, St Paul's Place
125 Norfolk Street
Sheffield
S1 2FJ

Vexatious Complaints

If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of Governors is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

Duplicate Complaints

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and the local process is complete
- Direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint
- If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

Complaint campaigns

There can be occasions where the school receives large volumes of complaints from multiple sources. In these cases, we reserve our right to treat this as a complaints campaign and as such we may choose to manage these complaints as a whole and produce a single statement which is shared with all complainants.

Although the subject matter of the complaint will be taken seriously and fully investigated, the issue will not
be investigated repeatedly without good reason.

In the event of a complaint which is identified as a part of a series of near identical complaints, the following process will be followed:

- The complainant begins the complaints process as usual.
- School staff identify that this complaint is one of many very similar complaints.
- A single letter of response is prepared.
- This letter of response is shared with each complainant.
- Complainants will have an opportunity to appeal the outcome of the complaint.

As there may be a high volume of complainants and therefore a high number of appeals received, appeals may also be managed as a whole and as such the procedure will be varied. It will not be possible for all complainants to attend an appeal panel meeting, however an opportunity to submit additional information will be provided.

You will be notified in writing of the panel's decision, usually within five days. The letter will confirm the end of the academy's and Governors' involvement with the complaint and explain any further rights of appeal.

Complaint relates to	Stage 1 Informal	Stage 2 Formal Investigating Officer	Stage 3 Complaint Panel
Students, parents or staff (other than the Principal)	The appropriate member of staff	The Principal or another Senior Leader	Panel appointed consisting of at least three people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school.
The Principal	The Principal	The Chair of Trustees	Panel appointed consisting of at least three people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school.
A Trustee or Trustees (other than the Chair of Trustees)		The Chair of Trustees	Panel appointed consisting of at least three people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school.
The Chair of Trustees		The Vice Chair of Trustees	Panel appointed consisting of at least three people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school.
The whole body of Trustees		The Lead Governance Professional - who seeks confirmation from the Members to appoint an Independent Investigator	Panel appointed consisting of at least three people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

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

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

Investigator

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

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
    - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
    - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
    - consideration of records and other relevant information
    - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond

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

Principal

The Principal should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, Principal, Chair of Governors or the Clerk and to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
    - sharing third party information
    - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records.

Clerk to the Governing Body (Governance Professional)

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

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example: stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the committee's decision.

Committee Chair

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

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

- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.

  If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting
- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the committee is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk

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 will not always be possible if the committee considers it inappropriate.

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

Complaint Form

Your name	
House/ flat/ building number and street name	
Town	
County	
Postcode	
Your telephone number	
Your email address	

Formal complaint

Please provide as much detail as possible. All of the boxes expand to take additional text.

I am writing to make a formal complaint against/about	
Please describe what your complaint is and when it arose	
What you think the Academy did wrong or did not do. Include dates, names of witnesses etc.	
Please provide details about the consequences of what happened	

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?).	
What do you think the School should do to resolve matters at this stage?	
Please list copies of any documents you are attaching to the complaint.	

Please consider if you give consent to share your personal data with any investigating officer or not. Please delete either

I give my consent for information held in paper and electronic records in respect of my case to be made available to any allocated investigator. I consent to this confidential and sensitive data to be shared for that specific purpose. I realise that any information held about any third party cannot be shared without their specific consent.

Should it be necessary in the view of the investigator to seek that third party consent I give my approval that they may share sufficient information with that third party to enable that person to make an informed choice about whether or not to give consent to sharing that person's information with the investigator.

OR

I do not give my consent to share my personal data to an allocated investigating officer. I acknowledge that this may limit the scope of the complaint investigation.

Signed

Dated