

# Complaints Procedure

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Please note that a record of the changes made to the original issue of this document can be found at Schedule 1 after any Appendices to the Policy/Procedure.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This procedure sets out how concerns and complaints can be raised to Cumbria Education Trust (CET) and how CET will manage these.
- 1.2 CET very much hopes that you and your child will be happy at our family of schools, and that any concerns that may arise are dealt with in a timely manner through communication with our staff. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when the formality of a complaints process is required. We believe that it is in everyone's best interests to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage and preferably informally.
- 1.3 This procedure is compliant with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure can be used by anyone who uses one of our family of schools, principally parents/carers and students. It is not designed to cover complaints raised by members of the public – such complaints will be dealt with respectfully and expediently by an appropriate staff member.
- 2.2 If you wish to raise a concern or a complaint on someone else's behalf, the Trust will only deal with this if the person on whose behalf you are complaining is unable to do so for themselves (for example, they are too young or they have a disability that prevents them from complaining themselves) and you have the appropriate consent.
- 2.3 This procedure covers all concerns and complaints about any provision or service provided by CET connected with the education or welfare of any student at any school within the Trust. This procedure therefore seeks to help parents/carers understand how to resolve concerns about their child's education. It is not intended to cover aspects for which there are specific statutory requirements including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools	Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process – either through the appeals process or via the Local Authority.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Child Protection Policy, Overarching Safeguarding Statement and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
Exclusion of children from school	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a> .
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

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	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: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a> .
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal Grievance Procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about the conduct of 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.

- 2.4 If a complainant commences legal action against the Trust in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the Complaints Procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

### 3. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CONCERN AND A COMPLAINT

- 3.1 A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important, for which reassurances are sought.'*
- 3.2 A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action.'*

### 4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

#### Overriding aim

- 4.1 It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Whilst the Trust takes concerns and complaints extremely seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible, we also encourage informal resolution in as many situations as possible.

#### Anonymous complaints

- 4.2 We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints.

#### People handling concerns and complaints

- 4.3 At all stages, those handling concerns and complaints will:

- Act sensitively, independently, and fairly.
- Deal with concerns and complaints on their merits and have an open mind.
- Take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest.
- Consider all information and evidence carefully.

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- Keep the concern or complaint confidential, as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter.

4.4 If you or a particular staff member have difficulty discussing a concern or complaint, views of the parties will be respected, and we will refer you to another staff member who may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the issue objectively and impartially is more important.

### **Withdrawing a complaint**

4.5 During any stage of this process a complaint can be withdrawn and the process will stop. If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

### **Being accompanied**

4.6 The complainant has the right to bring someone along to any meetings or the hearings to provide support. This can be a relative or friend, but not a legal representative. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

4.7 These meetings or hearings are not legal proceedings, and so legal representation is not permitted.

4.8 Any staff member interviewed as part of the investigation process into a complaint has the right to be accompanied to the meeting which includes representation by a recognised trade union.

4.9 Any pupil interviewed as part of the investigation process must be accompanied to the meeting either by a teacher who they are comfortable with or a parent/carer.

### **Timescales**

4.10 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 only if exceptional circumstances apply.

4.11 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.

### **Complaints made during school closure periods**

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

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## Resolving the complaint

4.13 At each stage of the procedure, CET 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.

## Confidentiality and Data Protection

4.14 All complaints will be handled in confidence by the Trust and schools and data protection principles will be applied in line with the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

4.15 It is expected that complainants will also keep their complaint private and confidential, in particular, complainants are not expected to discuss complaints publicly via any form of social media or with third parties.

4.16 Due to privacy rights under data protection legislation, information disclosed relating to an outcome if it relates to a third-party individual i.e. disciplinary action of a member of staff or another pupil, may be limited.

## 5. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN OR MAKE A COMPLAINT?

5.1 If you wish to raise a complaint or concern, you can do so in writing, in person or via telephone. If you are making a written complaint, this should be marked as private and confidential.

### 5.2 Stage 1 – Informal Stage

5.2.1 The first stage of the process outlined below is an informal stage and, in most cases, informal resolution should be attempted. An informal concern or complaint can be raised verbally or in writing.

#### At the informal stage:

If your concern/complaint involves:	You should raise it with:
A staff member	The staff member, or, if that is not appropriate, with the Headteacher.
Policy/practice	The Headteacher.
The Headteacher	The Headteacher directly, or, if that is not appropriate, the Chair of the Local Advisory Board.

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The Local Advisory Board	The Clerk to the Trust Board, who will then liaise with either the Chief Executive or the Chair of the Trust Board to support a resolution.
The Trust	The Clerk to the Trust Board, who will then liaise with the Chief Executive and/or the Chair to the Trust Board to support a resolution.

5.2.2 Sometimes further enquiries or investigation is required before matters can be resolved at the informal stage. This will normally be undertaken by the person to whom you have raised your concern, but that person may delegate investigatory steps, if appropriate. At the conclusion of any investigations, the appropriate person to whom the complaint has been addressed will provide an informal written response, usually by email. This will normally be within 10 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint, unless otherwise notified to you.

5.2.3 If matters cannot, or have not, been resolved informally to your satisfaction, you should follow Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure.

### 5.3 Stage 2 – Formal Complaints

#### 5.3.1 At the formal stage:

The Trust requires formal concerns or complaints to be put in writing, stating you wish to raise a formal complaint. The following table explains to whom your complaint should be addressed, and who is likely to be involved in the process (subject to discretion on a case by case basis, or delegation of duties where appropriate).

If your concern/complaint involves:	It should be addressed to:	The investigator that may be appointed:	At Stage 2, the Decision Maker will usually be:	At Stage 3 the Appeal Manager will usually be:	At Stage 4 a Panel will be appointed:
A staff member	Headteacher	Headteacher to appoint investigator	Headteacher	Trust Director/ Executive	Panel
Headteacher	Clerk to the LAB	Trust Head of Operations	Chair of LAB/Trust Director/ Executive	Trust Director /Executive	Panel
LAB member	Clerk to the Trust Board	Trust Head of Operations	Chief Executive	Trust Board Director	Panel
Trust Board Director	Clerk to the Trust Board	Trust Head of Operations	Chief Executive/Trust Board Director	Chair of Trust Board	Panel

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Chief Executive	Clerk to the Trust Board	Trust Board Director or Independent Investigating Officer	Chair of the Trust Board	Member	Panel
Chair of the Trust Board	Clerk to the Trust Board	Independent Investigating Officer	Member	Member	Panel
Trust Policy	Clerk to the Trust Board	Trust Head of Operations	Chief Executive or Chair of the Trust Board	Member	Panel

5.3.2 We 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.

5.3.3 For ease of use, a template Complaint Form is provided at Appendix 2. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school or the Trust. You can also ask a third-party organisation, for example, Citizens Advice, to help you.

5.3.4 We will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome you would like to see. A face-to-face meeting may be the most appropriate way of doing this if it is not clear from your complaint letter.

5.3.5 It is usual for an investigation to be undertaken as part of a formal complaint. An appropriate investigator may be appointed for this purpose.

5.3.6 During the investigation, the investigator will:

- liaise with you to determine the scope of the complaint and investigation and understand the complaints desired outcomes;
- 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.

5.3.7 At the conclusion of the investigation, the decision maker will provide a formal written response. They will aim to do this within 20 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint, but if they are unable to meet this timescale, you will be provided with an update and revised response date.

5.3.8 The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide an explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the Trust/school will take to resolve the complaint.

5.3.9 If matters are not resolved at Stage 2, you should follow Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure, which allows an appeal. Your grounds of appeal must relate to a procedural flaw in the process; or incorrect or incomplete facts being taken into account.

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#### **5.4 Stage 3 – Appeal**

- 5.4.1 If you have grounds for appealing the outcome at Stage 2, and wish to take the matter further, you should contact the Clerk to the Trust Board in writing clearly stating your reasons for requesting a review of your complaint within 10 school days of the date of the Stage 2 response. The request must set out clearly why you are dissatisfied with the response, and you may include evidence to support your reasons. The right to appeal must be based on challenges to the application of facts used to reach the decision; or to matters of procedure. If the grounds for appeal do not meet this requirement, the Trust will not proceed to Stage 3.
- 5.4.2 The Appeal Manager will carry out a review of the complaint. They may contact you if they need any clarification or further information to assist with their review. The Appeal Manager may carry out or ask for further investigation into areas of the complaint relating to the appeal grounds and will make recommendations regarding suitable resolution if they find that issues have been overlooked or not appropriately addressed at Stage 2.
- 5.4.3 The role of the Appeal Manager is not to conduct a further full investigation of the complaint. Their role is to consider the procedural fairness of the investigation undertaken at Stage 2 and the determinations made.
- 5.4.4 The review will aim to be concluded within 20 school days of receipt of your request for a Stage 3 appeal.
- 5.4.5 If matters are not resolved at Stage 3, you should follow Stage 4 of the Complaints Procedure, which allows a further appeal to a Panel. Again, your grounds of appeal must relate to a procedural flaw in the process; or incorrect or incomplete facts being taken into account at Stage 3 of the process.

#### **5.5 Stage 4 – Panel Hearing**

- 5.5.1 If you have grounds to appeal the outcome at Stage 3, and wish to take the matter further, you can escalate the complaint to Stage 4.
- 5.5.2 A request to escalate to Stage 4 must be made to the Clerk to the Trust Board, within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 response. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. The request must set out clearly the grounds for appeal and may include evidence to support their reasons. The appeal must be based on challenges to the application of facts used to reach the decision or to matters of procedure. If this is not provided the Trust will not proceed to Stage 4.
- 5.5.3 Complaints from Parents/Legal Guardians of pupils under this stage will have a complaint 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 Trust.
- 5.5.4 The panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.
- 5.5.5 New evidence which was not provided before the completion of the Stage 2 investigation will

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not normally be considered, however the Chair shall have absolute discretion to permit new evidence if it is relevant to the matters to be considered as part of the hearing.

- 5.5.6 The role of the Panel is not to conduct a further investigation of the complaint. Their role is to consider the procedural fairness of the investigation undertaken at Stage 2 and Stage 3 and the determinations made.
- 5.5.7 The Clerk to the Trust Board will record the date the Stage 4 request is received and acknowledge receipt of it in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.
- 5.5.8 The Clerk to the Trust Board will write to you to inform you of the date of the hearing and invite you to attend. They will aim to convene a meeting within 30 school days of receipt of the Stage 4 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk to the Trust Board will provide an anticipated date and keep you informed.
- 5.5.9 If you reject the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk to the Trust Board will decide when to hold the meeting. If you cannot attend the date, it will proceed in your absence on the basis of the evidence available to the Panel.
- 5.5.10 In the event you fail to engage with the Clerk about your attendance at the hearing or any information you are asked to provide, the Stage 4 complaint may not be progressed and the file closed. The Trust may consider allowing the Stage 4 complaint to proceed if there are exceptional circumstances for the failure to engage.
- 5.5.11 At least 10 school days before the meeting, the Clerk to the Trust Board will:
- confirm and notify you of the date, time, and venue of the meeting, ensuring that 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 Clerk at least 5 school days before the meeting.
- 5.5.12 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.
- 5.5.13 The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless your 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.
- 5.5.14 The following are entitled to attend the meeting and address the Panel:
- Complainant(s) and by prior agreement, a lay companion.
  - The Investigating Officer and other Trust representative(s).
  - The Trust’s Complaints Adviser, to address any procedural questions which may arise.
  - Any other interested person whom the panel considers having a reasonable and just interest in the appeal and whose contribution would assist the Panel in their decision making.

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5.5.15 The Panel will consider the grounds of appeal, and all the evidence presented. The Panel can:

- uphold the appeal in whole or in part.
- dismiss the appeal in whole or in part.

5.5.16 If the appeal is upheld in whole or in part, the Panel will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- where appropriate, recommend changes to systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

5.5.17 The Chair of the Panel will provide you and the Trust/school with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days. This is the end of the internal Complaints Procedure.

5.5.18 The letter to you will include details of how to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if you are dissatisfied with the way your complaint has been handled by the Trust.

5.5.19 A written record will be kept of all complaints, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

## **6. NEXT STEPS**

6.1 If you believe the school/Trust did not handle your complaint in accordance with the published Complaints Procedure, or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, you can contact the ESFA after they have completed Stage 4.

6.2 The ESFA will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decision made by the Trust. They will consider whether the Trust 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](#).

6.3 You can refer your complaint to the ESFA online by contacting the [Customer Help Portal](#) or in writing to the following address: Complaints Team, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT.

## **7. COMPLAINT CAMPAIGNS**

7.1 If a single school or the Trust are subject to a complaint campaign, they may employ a different procedure to respond to these.

7.2 For the purpose of this policy a complaint campaign is defined as large volumes of complaints from multiple parties all based on the same subject matter. This could include from parents/carers as well as complainants unconnected with the school or Trust.

7.3 In these instances, the Trust may respond by:

- Sending a template consolidated response to all complainants with the same message, or,

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- Publishing a single response on the school or Trust’s website.

## **8. DEALING WITH UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS AND BEHAVIOUR**

8.1 We reserve the right to reject a vexatious complaint. Vexatious complaints may be characterised (but are not limited to) the following:

- Complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- Insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- Insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner;
- Complaints which are designed to cause disruption, harm, or annoyance;
- Demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value.

8.2 Further features of an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complaint include those detailed in appendix 3. Please note that this list is not exhaustive, nor does one single feature on its own necessarily imply the complaint will be so defined.

8.3 If a complainant is found to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious the Trust will write to the complainant advising them of the decision and the reasons for this. The letter will state that all future correspondence with regards to complaints should be directed to the Central Trust Services Team who will consider whether it raises any substantive new issue(s).

8.4 The complainant will be advised that if no substantive new issues are raised, any future complaints will not receive a response. They will also be advised of their right to complain about the decision to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA).

8.5 There is no internal route of appeal against the decision that a complaint is persistent and/or vexatious.

8.6 If future complaints do raise substantive new issues, these will be investigated in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.

8.7 The Trust will investigate complaints professionally and with respect towards individuals involved. The Trust expects anyone raising a complaint to be respectful and avoid aggression or intimidating behaviour.

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## 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 dealing with the complaint must understand the extent of the complaint, liaise with the complainant to determine the scope of the complaint and investigation, and understand the complainants desired outcome.

The investigator may be an impartial internal person, or an external 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, as appropriate, to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting;
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal;
- be mindful of the timescales to respond;
- prepare a comprehensive report for the Headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions, and recommends courses of action to resolve problems;

### THE DECISION MAKER

The decision maker will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate

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that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

The decision maker will review the investigating officers' findings and recommendations, seeking further clarity if required. The decision maker will inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaint.

### **CLERK TO THE LAB/TRUST BOARD**

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant in a formal process 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.

### **PANEL CHAIR**

The Panel Chair, who is nominated in advance of a Panel meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk to the Trust Board) 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;
- 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 panel is open-minded and acts independently;
- no member of the panel 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 to the Trust Board.

### **PANEL MEMBER**

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Panel members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial and should be seen to be so;
- no LAB member/Trust Board Director 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;
- careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the complainant does not feel intimidated.

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**COMPLAINT FORM**

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

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**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:**

**Action taken:**

**Date:**

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**Examples of unreasonably persistent and / or vexatious complaints**

- a) There are insufficient or no grounds for the complaint and it is only made to annoy (or for reasons that the complainant does not admit or make obvious).
- b) There are no specified grounds for the complaint despite offers of assistance.
- c) The complainant refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
- d) The complaint is about issues not within the power of the establishment to investigate, change or influence and where the complainant refuses to accept this.
- e) The complainant insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints policy (insisting, for example, that there must not be any written records of the complaint or that the complaint is only dealt with by the Trust Chief Executive).
- f) There appears to be groundless complaints about the staff dealing with the complaint investigation, and an attempt to have them replaced.
- g) There is an unreasonable number of contacts with us, by any means, in relation to a specific complaint or complaints.
- h) There are persistent and unreasonable demands or expectation of staff and/or the complaints process after the unreasonableness has been explained to the complainant (an example of this could be a complainant who insists on immediate responses to numerous, frequent, and/or complex communication).
- i) Attempts to harass, verbally abuse or otherwise seek to intimidate staff dealing with their complaint by use of foul, inappropriate, offensive, or discriminatory language.
- j) Subsidiary or new issues are raised whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the complaint at the start of the complaints process.
- k) Trivial or irrelevant new information is introduced whilst the complaint is being investigated and an expectation that this is taken into account and commented on.
- l) There is a change to the substance or basis of the complaint without reasonable justification whilst the complaint is being addressed.
- m) The complainant denies statements he or she made at an earlier stage in the complaint process.
- n) The complainant electronically records meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the other person involved.
- o) The complainant refused to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion repeatedly arguing the point, complaining about the outcome, and/or denying that an adequate response has been given.
- p) The same complaint is made repeatedly, perhaps with minor differences, after the complaints process has been concluded and where the complainant insists that the minor differences make these 'new' complaints which should be put through the full complaints process.
- q) Documented evidence is not accepted as factual by the complainant.
- r) The complaint relates to an issue based on historic and irreversible decision or incident.

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**DOCUMENT CONTROL – RECORD OF CHANGES**

<b>Version Number:</b>	<b>Publication Date:</b>	<b>Nature of, and Reason for, Change(s)</b>
001	July 2021	Reviewed and updated.
002	July 2022	Reviewed and updated.
003	January 2024	Reviewed. Changes to order of policy, minor amendments to content.
004	April 2025	Reviewed. Changes to stage and additions to content.
---	June 2026	Reviewed and no changes required.

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