



Complaints Policy

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Monitoring & Review	To be monitored by Board of Trustees, Local Governing Bodies	
Links	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy/complain-about-an-academy https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-an-academies-complaints-procedure Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy	
Staff responsible	Principals, Board of Trustees, Local Governing Bodies	

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1: Aims

Summit Learning Trust aims to deal positively with all complaints, from whatever source. Our Trust views complaints as an opportunity to re-examine its systems and services and, through feedback to the complainant, show that it is responsive to their concerns.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
- Make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how the complaint can feed into academy improvement evaluation processes.

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

Our Trust will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full. To support this, we will make sure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on our Trust website and on the website of our academies.

Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals where requested.

2: Complaints Procedure

This policy meets the requirements of Part 7 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 which states that we must have and make available a written procedure for dealing with complaints from parents of pupils in our Trust. This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

This procedure is based on the guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on creating a complaints procedure which complied with the above regulations and refers to good practice on setting up a complaints procedure from the Department for Education (DfE).

2.1: The difference between a concern and a complaint

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint:

- a **concern** is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”.
- a **complaint** is 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. Summit Learning Trust, with all our academies, will make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible.

2.2: Scope of this complaints procedure

This policy outlines the procedures relating to concerns or complaints. The procedures within this policy are intended to deal with concerns or complaints relating to the actions of staff members and

the application of academy procedures where they affect individual children or young people **except** in matters relating to:

- admissions
- suspension and permanent exclusion
- safeguarding matters
- statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- whistleblowing
- staff grievances
- staff discipline
- withdrawal from the curriculum
- a Freedom of Information request
- a subject access request
- complaints about the services provided by third party providers who use academy premises or facilities. Complaints of this nature should be directed to the provider concerned.

All the above are dealt with under separate procedures. Details of these procedures are available from the academies. Also see Appendix 5 for further information.

2.3: 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 on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Complainants should not approach individual members of the Local Governing Body or Trustees 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 a later stage in the procedure.

Concerns should be raised with the person who is most appropriate to respond to any matters at your child's academy. This will usually be the class teacher, form tutor, a senior leader, or if the concern is about a member of staff, the Principal in the first instance.

We understand, however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Summit Learning Trust, with all our academies, will attempt to resolve the issue internally through the stages within this complaints procedure.

Complaints should be made in the first instance, to the Principal who will direct your complaint to the most relevant member of the academy staff team. Complaints that involve or are about the Principal, a member of the Local Governing Board or a Trustee should be addressed to the Executive Assistant.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included in **Appendix 1**. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the academy office.

2.4: Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Principal or Chair of the Local Governing Body will determine whether the anonymous complaint warrants investigation.

2.5: Timescales

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the most recent incident.

We will consider exceptions to this timeframe in circumstances where we consider that there was a valid reason for not making a complaint on time provided that the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

If at any time we cannot meet the timescales set out within this procedure, we will notify the complainant of the new deadline and explain the reason for the delay. References to school days throughout this policy means days when the school is in session.

2.6: Complaints received outside of term time

When complaints are made outside of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

2.7: Resolving complaints

Our academies want 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 reoccur
- 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 academy or Trust policies in light of the complaint to determine necessary improvements
- an apology.

2.8: Withdrawal of a complaint

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

3: Academy based complaint procedure

Appendix 2 includes a flow chart which provides an overview of the academy based stages below.

3.1: Stage 1 – Raising a concern informally

The Trust takes informal concerns seriously and makes every effort to resolve matters quickly.

The complainant should raise their concern or complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff in accordance with paragraph 2.3 above.

Upon receipt of a concern, the academy will:

- if appropriate, invite the complainant to discuss and/or meet with the relevant staff member
- investigate and provide verbal or written feedback within 10 school days.

You can help staff resolve your concern by arranging to meet them at a convenient time, discussing the issues in a positive atmosphere and allowing them time to undertake their investigation.

If the issues remain unresolved, the complainant should make a formal complaint. See Stage 2 below for details.

3.2: Stage 2 – Complaint

Formal complaints must be made to the Principal.

If the complaint is about the Principal, the Trust, the Local Governing Body or the Board of Trustees please see section 4 below.

Complaints should be made in writing in accordance with paragraph 2.3. The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The Principal will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 2 school days
- If appropriate, invite the complainant to discuss and/or meet with them or a nominated senior leader so that they can:
 - clarify the nature of the complaint
 - ask what remains unresolved
 - ask what outcome the complainant would like to see.
- Conduct an investigation, or delegate the investigation to another senior leader
- Provide a written response to the complaint within 10 school days which confirms the steps taken to investigate and an explanation for how the decision was reached, and where applicable, what actions will be taken to resolve the complaint.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 they may escalate the complaint to stage 3. See Stage 3 below for details.

3.3 Stage 3 – Complaint to the Chair of the Local Governing Body

The complaint should be made to the Chair of the Local Governing Body, within 5 school days of the date of the written response to Stage 2. The Chair of the Local Governing Body can be contacted c/o the relevant academy address. Details of the Chair of Governors and how to contact them can also be found on the academy's website.

The Chair of the Local Governing Body or a nominated Local Governor will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 2 school days' time, via the academy
- if appropriate, invite the complainant to discuss and/or meet with them so that they can:
 - clarify the nature of the complaint
 - seek further information
 - ask what outcome the complainant would like to see.
- provide a written response to the complaint within 10 school days.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3, they may escalate the complaint to stage 4.

3.4: Stage 4 – Panel hearing

The complaint should be made to the Chair of the Board of Trustees within 5 school days of the written response to Stage 3. The Chair of the Board of Trustees can be contacted c/o Summit Learning Trust, Hartfield Crescent, Birmingham, B27 7QG. Details of the Chair of the Board of Trustees and how to contact them can also be found on the Trust website.

The complaints panel will:

- be appointed by or on behalf of the Chair of the Trustees
- consist of at least 3 people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least 1 panel member will be independent of the management and running of the academy
- have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress
- 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 complaint procedure.

The clerk will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 school days time
- write to the complainant to inform them of the date, time and venue of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 4 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed
- circulate any written material to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting.

If the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, the clerk will set a date. The hearing will go ahead using written submissions from both parties.

The meeting

- The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted but may be permitted at an academy's sole discretion, or where it is requested as a reasonable adjustment on the basis of a complainant's disability. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending will be sought in advance and the consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.
- At the meeting, the complainant and representatives from the academy, as appropriate, will be present. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting.
- The complainant is permitted to be accompanied to the meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend.
- Neither the complainant nor the academy may bring legal representation. A panel hearing is not a form of legal proceedings.
- Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called, as appropriate, to present their evidence.
- The panel, the complainant and the academy representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and academy representative(s) have presented their cases, they will be asked to leave, and evidence will then be considered by the panel.
- The panel will put together its findings and recommendations from the case.
- The panel will also provide copies of the minutes of the hearing and the findings and recommendations to the complainant and, where relevant, the individual who is the subject of the complaint, and make a copy available for inspection by the Trust and principal.

The outcome

The panel can:

- uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld, the panel will:

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

The Chair of the Complaints Panel will provide the complainant and the academy with a full explanation of the decision and the reasons(s) for it in writing within 10 school days.

There is no further right to appeal under this procedure. However, if the complainant is dissatisfied with the way in which their complaint has been handled, they may contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA), in accordance with section 5.

4: Complaints against the Principal, the Trust, Local Governing Body or Board of Trustees

Formal complaints should be directed to the Executive Assistant if they are about:

- a Principal of an academy within the Trust
- the Trust (Central team or the CEO)
- the Chair of the Local Governing Body or the Local Governing Body
- the Local Governing Body
- a Trustee
- the Board of Trustees.

Complaints should be submitted to the Executive Assistant c/o Summit Learning Trust, Ninestiles, an Academy, Hartfield Crescent, Birmingham, B27 7QG. Details of the Executive Assistant and how to contact them can also be found on the Trust website.

The Executive Assistant will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 2 school days and will arrange for an appropriate investigator to be appointed to undertake the relevant actions set out in this policy. See Appendix 3 for further details.

5: Complaint to the ESFA

If the complainant believes the academy / Summit Learning Trust 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 refer their complaint to the ESFA.

The ESFA will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the academy. The ESFA will not overturn an academy's decision about a complaint, but will intervene if an academy or trust has:

- Breached a clause in its funding agreement
- Failed to act in line with its duties under education law
- Acted (or is proposing to act) unreasonably when exercising its functions.

If the Trust's complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the Trust will be required to correct its procedure accordingly.

Information on how to contact the ESFA will be included in our outcome letters, there is also further information at Appendix 2 and 3 and on the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy/complain-about-an-academy>

6: Managing serial and unreasonable complaints

6.1 Unreasonable complaints

We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. However, on occasion, complaints may become unreasonable.

We define unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our ability to properly consider a complaint because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the academy. Examples of unreasonable behaviour could include, but is not limited to, incidents where the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought, despite offers of assistance from the academy or Trust
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and/or to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff members who are trying to deal with the issues raised, and seeks to have them replaced
- unreasonably changes the basis of the complaint during the course of the investigation
- repeatedly makes the same complaint notwithstanding that the complaint has already been fully and properly implemented and completed under this procedure, including referral to the Department for Education or ESFA
- seeks an unrealistic and unreasonable outcome or a solution which lacks any serious purpose or value

- makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- Makes excessive demands on academy time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff members regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously
- aggressively
- using threats, intimidation or violence
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- knowing it to be false
- using falsified or defamatory information
- Publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Handling unreasonable complaints

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with an academy while a 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, and as set out above, may result in members of staff being unable to support an investigation or panel because they have prior knowledge of the complaint.

Whenever possible, the Principal or the Chair of the Local Governing Body will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before taking formal action, which may involve the Principal or the Chair of the Local Governing body writing to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is considered to be unreasonable and asking them to change it.

If the behaviour continues, the Principal or the Chair of the Local Governing body may introduce a communication strategy which could include:

- restricting the complaint to a single point of contact via an email address
- limiting the number of times the complainant can make contacts in a communication plan.
- suggesting that the complainant asks a third party to act on their behalf such as the local Citizens' Advice.
- any other strategy which the Trust considers necessary.

The complainant will be notified of this communication plan in writing. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months. The Trust will however still consider any new complaints raised in accordance with this policy.

We do not tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff members from behaviour which we consider to be abusive, offensive or threatening. In response to any serious incident of harassment, aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately (including the decision to stop responding) and the police will be informed. This may include barring an individual from academy premises.

6.2 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 to that complaint that have not previously been considered, or whether it contains any new information that should be taken 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 that the local process is complete
- Direct the new complainant to the Department of Education / ESFA if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint.

If there are new aspects, we will follow this complaint procedure again.

6.3 Complaint campaigns

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

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

If complainants are not satisfied with the Trust or academy's response, or they wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures set out in this document will apply.

7: Record keeping and confidentiality

The Trust 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. Where appropriate, details of complaints may be added to the child's or young person's educational record.

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.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy notices, and our record retention schedule. Complaints records generally will be retained for three years following the resolution date. In cases where the complaint is dealt with by our Trust Board the record will be retained for at least six years following the resolution date and then reviewed thereafter (a decision may be made to retain records for a longer period in relation to contentious disputes).

The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole of the Local Governing Body of the academy, or the Board of Trustees in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point. In the event that the local governing board is aware of the substance of the complaint before stage 4, the academy will (where reasonably practicable) arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint. A complainant also has the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in proceedings. The decision to approve this request is at the discretion of the Local Governing Board, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

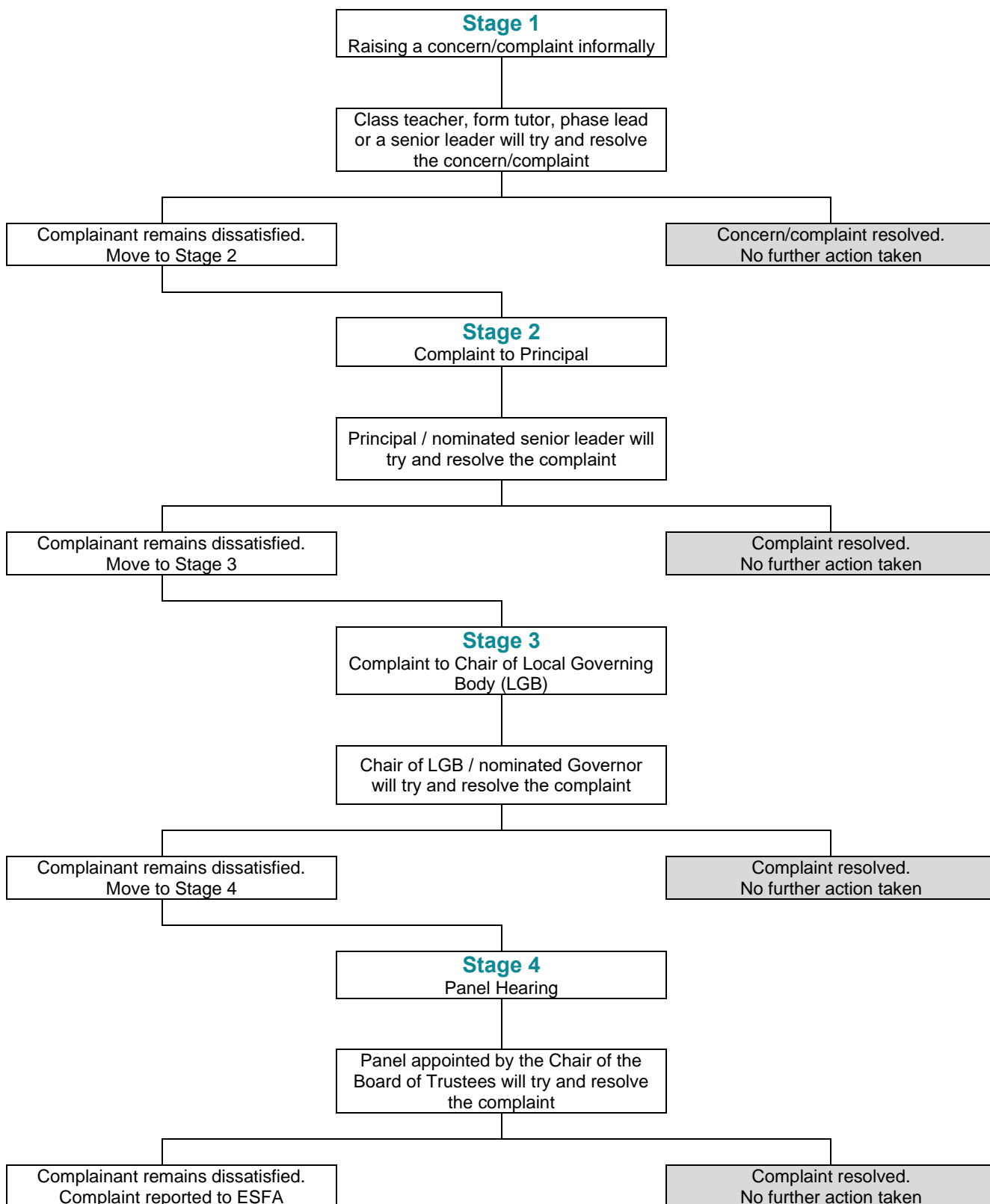
Appendix 1 – Complaint Form

It is NOT a requirement to use this form, but it may help us deal with your complaint if you do.

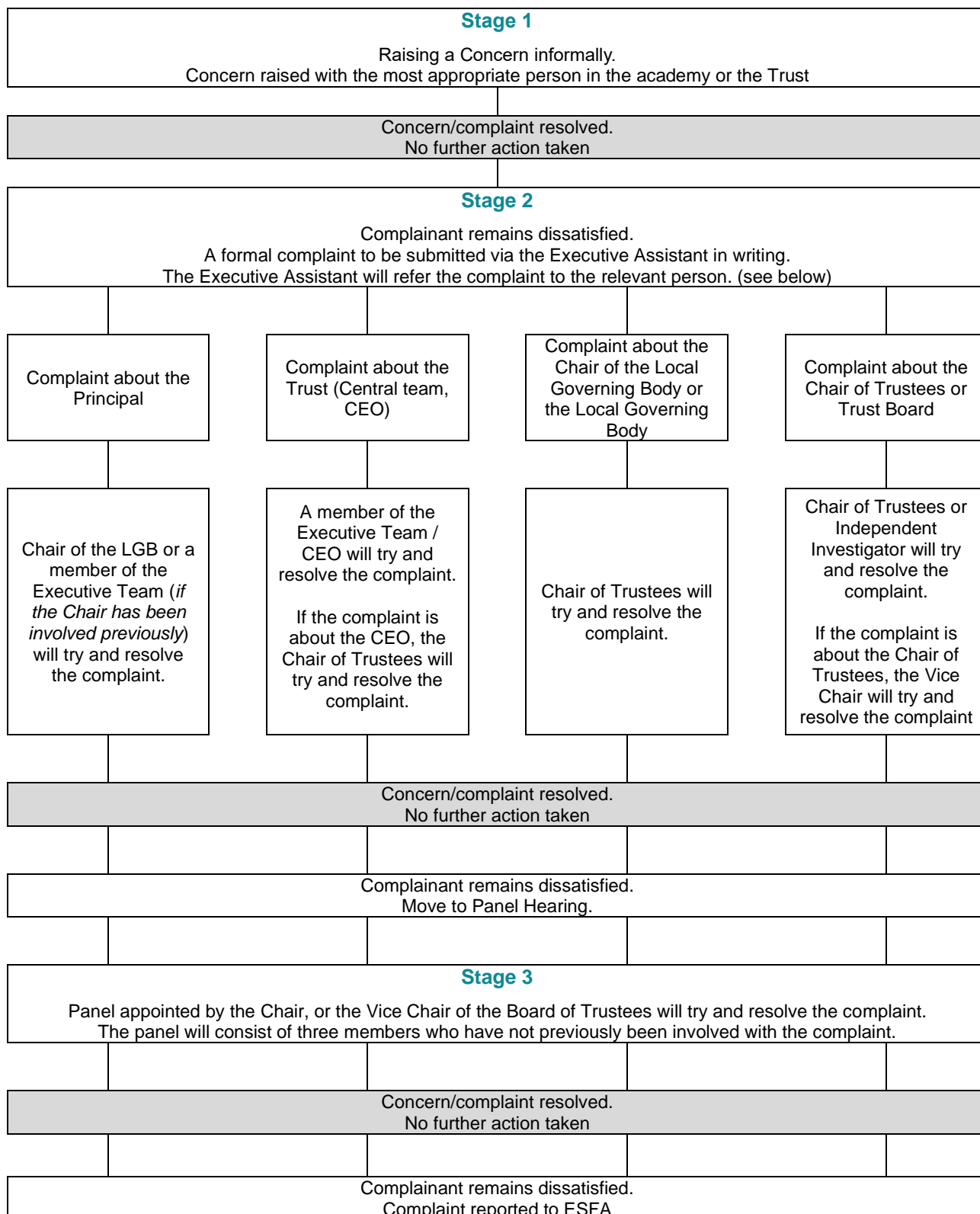
Please complete and return to the Academy who will distribute it to the appropriate person, acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken. In the interest of ensuring satisfactory outcome, we may contact you to see if this issue can be resolved as a concern rather than a formal complaint.

Your name:
Child / Young person's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the child/young person (if relevant):
Address
Contact number:
Contact email address:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the academy about it.
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
If your complaint has already been considered at Stage 2 or 3 what are your grounds for escalating the complaint?
Signature
Date
Official Use
Date acknowledgement sent:
By who:
Complaint referred to: Concern, Stage 1 / Stage 2 / TBC
Date:

Appendix 2 – Academy based Complaints Procedure Flowchart



Appendix 3 – Complaint against the Principal, the Trust, Local Governing Body or Board of Trustees



Appendix 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 academy 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 members and children or 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 Principal 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.

Complaints Co-ordinator

This could be the Principal, a nominated senior leader, the Chair of the Local Governing Body, a Trust leader or the Chair of the Board of Trustees, depending on the nature of the complaint.

The complaints co-ordinator should:

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

Clerk to the Local Governing Body / Board of Trustees

For panel hearings, the Clerk 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, academy 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 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 or a 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 academy 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 academy has one).

Panel 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 academy and the complainant
- 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 and carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child or young person and present during all or part of the meeting
 - Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child or young person does not feel intimidated.
 - The committee should respect the views of the child or young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
 - If the child or 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 or young person's parent or carer is the complainant, the committee should give the parent or carer the

opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child or young person needs to attend.

- However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child or young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child or young person's best interests.
- the welfare of the child or young person is paramount.

Appendix 5 – Types of complaint excluded from the procedure and dealt with under other statutory procedures

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools or college • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School or College re-organisation proposals 	<p>For concerns about admissions please see the School's or College's Admissions Policy</p> <p>Concerns about statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs or school or college re-organisation proposals should be raised with the relevant Local Authority.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school or college 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal Whistleblowing Policy for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus</p> <p>Volunteer staff members who have concerns about an academy should complain through our Trust's Complaints Policy. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the academies internal Grievance Policy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff member will be dealt with under the academies internal Disciplinary Policy, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use academy premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of information • Subject access request 	<p>Reviews should be submitted to the Data Protection Officer.</p>

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 the academy or Trust in relation to their complaint, we will suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.