**SCHOOL COMPLAINTS FLOW CHART**

*This policy should be taken as part of the overall strategy of the school and operated within the context of our vision, aims and values as a Church of England School.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE ONE: INFORMAL</th>
<th>Expression of concern to member of staff / <strong>Response within 5 school days</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complainant to proceed to Stage 2 by informing the school within 10 school working days</td>
<td>Satisfactory outcome reached?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No:</strong> Go to stage 2  <strong>Yes:</strong> No further action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE TWO: HEADTEACHER’S INVESTIGATION</th>
<th>Complainant makes verbal/written complaint to headteacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complainant to proceed to Stage 3 by informing the school within 10 school working days</td>
<td>Investigation conducted and outcome reported to complainant. <strong>Response within 3 school days</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfactory outcome reached?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No:</strong> Go to stage 3  <strong>Yes:</strong> No further action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE THREE: CHAIR OF GOVERNORS/ GOVERNORS INVESTIGATION</th>
<th>If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the headteacher or the complaint is about the headteacher, the complainant should write to the Chair of Governors to request that their complaint is considered further.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complainant to proceed to Stage 3 by informing the school within 10 school working days</td>
<td>Investigation conducted and outcome reported to complainant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfactory outcome reached?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No:</strong> Go to stage 4  <strong>Yes:</strong> No further action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| STAGE FOUR: GOVERNORS’ APPEAL PANEL | If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the Chair. The complainant usually needs to write to the Clerk to the Governing Body giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before the appeal panel ( **Response within 5 school days**). The Chair, or if the Chair has been involved at any previous stage in the process, a nominated governor, will convene a GB complaints panel. The governors’ appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process and is not convened merely to rubber-stamp previous decisions. |

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<tr>
<th>FINAL STAGE: FURTHER RIGHT OF PROGRESSING COMPLAINT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Chair of the above Panel needs to ensure that the complainant is notified of the panel’s decision, in writing, with the panel’s response (including the reasons for the decision); this is usually within a set deadline which is publicised in the procedure. The letter needs to explain if there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed. This may be the LA or Diocesan Board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The final stage of appeal is to the Secretary of State for Education. Complainants should be advised to write to The School Complaints Unit (SCU) at:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Department for Education**, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester, M1 2WD
**Stage One Flowchart**

Discuss concern with member of school staff

- Complainant to discuss concern with member of school staff
- Five school working days

- Member of school staff to respond to complainant

- Satisfactory outcome or complainant to proceed to Stage 2 by informing the school within ten school working days

**Stage Two Flowchart**

Consideration by the Headteacher (or other appropriate person)

- Complainant to inform Headteacher of complaint in writing
  - Three school working days
  - Headteacher to acknowledge complaint
  - Ten school working days
  - Headteacher may arrange appointment to discuss complaint with complainant
  - Headteacher to respond to complainant in writing with outcome

- Satisfactory outcome, mediation and/or complainant to proceed to Stage 3 by informing the school within ten school working days
Stage Three flowchart

Complainant to complete and return Complaint Form to the school

Within ten school working days of the conclusion of Stage 2

Nominated Governor(s) to acknowledge receipt of Complaint Form and arrange meeting with complainant

Nominated Governor(s) to meet complainant to discuss complaint

Nominated Governor(s) to respond to complainant in writing with outcome

Satisfactory outcome, mediation and/or complainant to proceed to Stage 4 by informing the academy within ten school working days
Stage Four Flowchart

Time Limits: Complaints need to be considered, and resolved, as quickly and efficiently as possible. This procedure requires that specific time limits for all action within every stage are observed. Where further investigations are necessary, new time limits should be set and the complainant would need to be informed of this change and the reason.
The stages of the complaint

Stage One (informal): complaint heard by staff member
It is in everyone’s interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate. To that end, if staff are made aware of the procedures, they will know what to do when they receive a complaint.

It would assist the procedure if the school respected the views of a complainant who indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In these cases, the complaints co-ordinator can refer the complainant to another staff member. Where the complaint concerns the headteacher, the complaints co-ordinator can refer the complainant to the Chair of Governors.

Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, the complaints co-ordinator may consider referring the complainant to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the complaint objectively and impartially is crucial.

Where the first approach is made to a governor, the next step would be to refer the complainant to the appropriate person and advise them about the procedure. It would be useful if governors did not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure.

Stage Two (formal): complaint heard by headteacher
The headteacher’s influence will already have shaped the way complaints are handled in the school. At this point, the complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at Stage 1 as well as pursuing their initial complaint. The head may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken.

Stage Three (formal): complaint heard by Chair of Governors
If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the headteacher or the complaint is about the headteacher, the complainant should write to the Chair of Governors to request that their complaint is considered further.

Stage Four (formal): complaint heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel
The complainant usually needs to write to the Clerk to the Governing Body giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before the appeal panel. The Chair, or if the Chair has been involved at any previous stage in the process, a nominated governor, will convene a GB complaints panel.

The governors’ appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process and is not convened merely to rubber-stamp previous decisions. Individual complaints would not be heard by the whole GB at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

The governing body may nominate a number of members with delegated powers to hear complaints at that stage, and set out its terms of reference. These can include:

- drawing up its procedures;
- hearing individual appeals;
- making recommendations on policy as a result of complaints.

The procedure adopted by the panel for hearing appeals would normally be part of the school’s complaints procedure.

Policy reviewed: September 2018
Next review: September 2019
Reviewed by: Governors’ Policy group