

Complaints Policy and Procedure

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1.Introduction

From time-to-time parents/carers, or others connected with the school, may become aware of matters which cause them concern. To encourage resolution of such situations the Governing Body has adopted a *Complaints Procedure*.

The procedure is devised with the intention that it will:

- usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means;
- be simple to use and understand;
- be non-adversarial;
- provide confidentiality;
- allow problems to be handled swiftly through the correct procedure;
- address the points at issue;
- inform future practice.

2. Policy Statement

This policy statement sets out our approach to dealing with concerns and complaints about the school, including arrangements for handling complaints from parents/carers of children with SEND about the support provided by the school.

We value good home-school relations and will therefore seek to resolve any concerns or complaints promptly.

We welcome feedback on what parents/carers and other stakeholders feel as a school we do well, or not so well. We will carefully consider feedback, whether positive or negative, which informs the review of our policies and practices as necessary.

We will treat concerns and complaints seriously and courteously and will advise parents and others of the school's procedures for dealing with their concerns. In return, we expect parents/carers and other complainants to behave respectfully towards all members of the school. *Any disagreement with the school should not be expressed inappropriately*, for example, in front of pupils, on parent chat groups, or on social media.

Whilst we will seek to resolve concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties, it may not be possible to achieve this in every case. If it becomes clear that a resolution will not be possible, for example when a complainant's conduct or communications are unacceptable to the school, we reserve the right to close the procedure before all the processes have been exhausted.

If a concern or complaint has previously been addressed by the school, we will not revisit the same or similar issues. Such repeat correspondence may be considered 'serial' or 'persistent,' and the school reserves the right to not respond further.

3. General principles and aims

Tetherdown Primary is a community school in the London Borough of Haringey and the Governing Body has overall responsibility for this policy. The Department for Education (DfE) and the Local Authority (LA) advocate resolution of parental concerns and complaints at school level, in the interests of maintaining good home-school relations. The expectation is that any matters referred to other authorities will have gone through the school's complaints procedures first.

This policy is aligned with the advice issued by the DfE and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The School has adopted the DfE (Department for Education) guidance called Best Practice Advice for Schools Complaints Procedures (the “Advice”).

This policy applies to any matter which has been raised with the school by parents/carers of pupils as a complaint, but which has not been capable of informal resolution, and which the complainant or the school considers should be dealt with on a formal basis (i.e. Stage 2 onwards).

There are exceptions to the complaints that are not dealt with under this policy:

Admissions to schools Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Haringey Council.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled in accordance with relevant statutory guidance and under our child protection and safeguarding policy. If you have safeguarding concerns, you should contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or Haringey Council’s Children’s Services. LADO: LADO@Haringey.gov.uk 020 8489 2968/1186 Haringey Council’s Children’s Services: - Monday to Thursday 8:45 am to 5:00pm; Friday 8:45 am to 4:45 pm 020 8489 4470 - Out of office hours, including weekends: 020 8489 0000 Do not use this number if a child needs immediate assistance from the Police or Ambulance Services. In these cases, call 999
Suspension of children from school	Complaints about the application of the behaviour policy and or exclusion policy can be made through the school’s behaviour and exclusion policy procedure.
Whistleblowing	We have a 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 grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures as 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 a matter is being addressed.
Complaints about services provided by other providers such as extra curricular clubs who may use school premises or facilities.	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum - content	The Department for Education (DFE) have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about the statutory curriculum.

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 Tetherdown School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

This policy is based on the principle that complaints expressed should be resolved **informally** as quickly as possible without the need to escalate to the formal stages of the procedure. However, where resolution has not been achieved and the person raising the concern wishes to take the matter further, the formal procedure for dealing with complaints, as laid out in this policy, will be followed.

Complaints should be raised as soon as possible, and within **three (3) months** of the incident or event to which the complaint relates (or, where the complaint relates to a series of incidents or events, within three (3) months of the latest incident or event). Matters raised after this time will not be investigated unless the headteacher or chair of governors decides to wave the time restriction due to exceptional circumstances.

4. Who can make a complaint?

- a. 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 Tetherdown School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Complaints and Communication

Parents and carers may use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to help write emails, letters, or complaints to the school.

To help us understand and respond effectively, all communications should:

- Be written in clear and simple language.
- Focus on the main concerns or issues.
- Include accurate information and relevant facts.
- Be respectful and courteous.
- Be no longer than 500 words wherever possible.

If a complaint or communication is very long, repetitive, or contains information that is not relevant to the issue, the school may ask the parent or carer to provide a shorter summary before continuing to investigate or respond.

The school will consider the information provided, not how it was written. However, parents and carers remain responsible for the content, accuracy, and tone of any communication submitted to the school, including content produced with the assistance of AI.

The school may not respond to communications that are abusive, offensive, defamatory, or unreasonable in volume or frequency. In such cases, the school will follow its Unreasonable Complaints and Communications Procedure.

5. Definitions

This policy uses the following definitions (unless otherwise stated):

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*’.

School day – equates to term time day (as deemed by the school)

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. Tetherdown School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Headteacher will select an appropriate staff member for you to meet with. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

6. Complaints Procedure

The school is committed to dealing with complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a service to those who complain. We will not usually limit the contact complainants have with the school, but we will take this step if a complainant's conduct, or communications are considered unacceptable by the school. The school does not tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will act, including legal action if deemed appropriate, to protect staff and pupils from that inappropriate behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, defamatory or threatening.

Unreasonable complainants include, for instance, those who, because of the frequency, or the nature of the contact with or about, the school, hinder its consideration of their or other people's complaints and/or whose complaints are harassment, abusive or offensive.

7. Stage 1 – Informal resolution

Members of staff can most frequently manage with issues of concern to the satisfaction of the complainant, informally. We value and encourage informal meetings and telephone discussions as a way of improving our procedures and relations with parents/carers.

At the informal stage your concern should be addressed following the route below:

Class Teacher >>> Phase Leader (Lower Phase for reception, Y1 and Y2, Upper Phase for Y3,4,5 &6) Please see the school website for names >>> Senior Leader Please see the school website >>> Headteacher

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

Arrangements for handling concerns from parents/carers of children with SEND about the support provided by the school may be raised with the SENDCO. Matters may then be explored further by the SENDCO with other staff members and external professionals as may be appropriate.

A precondition to the operation of this policy is that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way consistent with the school's vision and values.

There is no rigid timescale for resolving complaints at this stage. However, it is expected that most complaints will be typically addressed within 15 school days. Should the nature or complexity of the complaint mean that more time is required; the school will contact the complainant informing them of the delay and confirming a revised date for resolution.

Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher via the school office email: admin@tetherdownschool.org Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, by email to the School Business Manager: businessmanager@tetherdownschool.org. Please mark Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the School Business Manager's email: businessmanager@tetherdownschool.org. Please mark 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 this form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations, for example, the Citizens Advice Bureau, 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.

7.1 Anonymous complaints

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

7.2 Timescales

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

7.3 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. This should be taken into account when working within the 3-month deadline referred to above

7.4 Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Tetherdown School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies considering the complaint.
- an apology.

The complainant will be advised in writing of the process for escalating their concern or complaint in accordance with Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure.

7.5 Withdrawal of a Complaint

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

8. Stage 2 – Formal stage: investigation by a senior leader

Should informal meetings and telephone discussions appear unlikely to resolve the complaint, either party (i.e. the school or the complainant) may initiate a move to Stage 2 for the complaint to be investigated formally. Any such request must be set out in writing, stating where the complainant remains dissatisfied and lodged **within 10 school days** of the complainant receiving the findings. The school will consider complaints and appeals outside of this timescale if circumstances are considered to be exceptional. The school will also make reasonable adjustments to allow complaints to be made in other ways should the complainant have difficulty expressing themselves in written English.

The complainant must outline the nature of the complaint, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the school has not met reasonable expectations. A copy of the formal **Complaint Form is shown at Annex A** and additional information should be attached (as required). The form should be submitted to the school office and marked for the specific attention of the headteacher who will decide how the matter will be investigated.

An investigation will be carried out by a senior leader, or another appropriately identified investigator (appointed by the headteacher), that may include the offer of a meeting with the complainant. The investigator will speak to others involved. The investigator will document the findings and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done **within 20 school days** from the day of complaint made. Should the nature or complexity of the complaint mean that more time is required; the school will contact the complainant informing them of the delay.

Once the investigation is complete, the senior leader, or another appropriate school-appointed investigator, will make recommendations to the headteacher. The school will subsequently respond indicating how the matter has been resolved.

Any complaint relating to:

- The headteacher can be raised in the first instance to the school Business Manager, who will pass this on to the Chair of Governors, who will decide how the matter will be investigated.
- The chair of governors or any individual governors are made to the School Business Manager who will then refer this to clerk to the Governing Body (the clerk). The clerk should then arrange for the complaint to be heard. This can be done by another member of the governing body or another appropriate identified investigator (stage one) and then a committee of members of the governing body (stage two).
- The entire governing body or complaints involving both the chair and vice chair should be sent to the School Business Manager who will then send the complaint to the clerk, who should then determine the most appropriate course of action. This will depend on the nature of the complaint

9. Stage 3 – Formal stage: investigation by the governing body

Where the complainant is dissatisfied, they may request the complaint is dealt with at Stage 3. Any such request must be set out in writing, stating what the complainant is dissatisfied with and lodged **within 10 school days** of the issue of the written Stage 2 findings. An additional copy of the *School Complaint Form (Annex A)* requires completion at this stage and should be marked 'Stage 3 Complaint'. It should be submitted to the school office and marked for the specific attention of the chair of governors.

At Stage 3 the chair of governors will determine how the matter will be addressed.

The chair of governors may decide to form a Complaints Panel. Its membership will be made up of governors of the school, and they may identify governors of other schools or an independent investigator as panel members. The panel will be independent and will therefore have not been previously involved in the case.

The investigation may include the offer of a meeting with the complainant, who may wish to bring along a companion, in which case they **must** inform the Complaints Panel prior to the meeting.

Where possible the hearing will be planned within **25 school days of the complaint**, and after the panel meeting all parties will be notified of the outcome within **3 school days**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE about the Complaints Panel:

- The Complaints Panel will only proceed if the complainant and their companion (if applicable) attend. If the complainant does not confirm attendance or fails to attend on the day without compelling reasons accepted by the Panel, the Complaints Panel will not proceed, and the complainant will lose their right to the complaint being heard. Any further attempt to re-open the matter will be considered as falling under the serial/persistent complaint section as below.

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. If complainants are inclined to bring legal representation, they **must** inform the Complaints Appeal **5 days prior** to the panel meeting. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

- The aim of the Complaints Panel hearing is to independently consider the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. It is not to respond to demands for: compensation, staff disciplinary action, public apologies, or sanctions of other pupils within the school.

Summary Timeline for managing complaints at Stage 3			
1. Written request to the Clerk to the Full Governing Body (FGB) to escalate complaint to Stage 2 received within 5 days of the decision / outcome from Stage 1.	2. Clerk to FGB writes to acknowledge complaint within 5 school days from the date escalation request received.	3. Clerk organises an agreed meeting to take place within 15 school days of receipt of escalation request for the complainant and Complaints Committee.	4. Complaints Committee investigates the complaint.
5. Written response to the complainant following investigation made by the Chair of the Complaints Committee	6. Within 10 school days of the date of the meeting between the complainant and the Complaints Committee.	7. 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 Tetherdown School will take to resolve the complaint.	8. The Complaints Committee Chair will advise the complainant of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Tetherdown School.

10. Records and associated procedure

A record will be kept of complaints that were resolved at Stage 2, the formal stage of the complaint's procedure. Records will contain details of whether the complaint was resolved at Stage 2 or Stage 3. The action taken by the school because of a complaint (regardless of whether complaints are upheld or not) will also be recorded.

Records will be securely stored, with the appropriate access in place. Records of complaints will be kept for a period of 6 years after the complaint has been resolved, so that the school can evidence the action taken, and for the purpose of legal defence of any claim, after which they will be destroyed, unless they are needed pursuant to an ongoing legal action, in which case the period will be extended until six (6) years after the end of that legal action.

Any data given will be securely transmitted (electronically or otherwise) for use by those entitled to see the information as part of the investigation process. Correspondence, statements, and records relating to individual complaints will be kept strictly confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR, the information collected/processed under this policy *may* be classified as personal data. The legal bases for processing this personal data will be dependent upon the complaint, but typically be legitimate interest or public task. This data will be processed to fulfil the purposes for which it was collected but may be copied and securely transmitted electronically to authorised persons (as required) as part of the complaints process. The data will be stored confidentially and retained in line with the Data Retention policy.

If you have any queries or requests at any time concerning your personal information held by the school or its practices in this regard, please write to the School Business Manager. Questions about how we handle personal information which cannot be resolved by the School Business Manager should then be addressed to Judicium Consulting Limited.

11. Policy for unreasonable complainants

The School is committed to dealing with complaints fairly and impartially. However, the school does not expect its staff to tolerate behaviour that it considers to be unreasonable, and will act, including legal action if deemed appropriate, to protect staff from that behaviour, including, for instance, that which is perceived as abusive, offensive, vexatious, or threatening.

The school considers unreasonable complainants to be ‘those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder its consideration of theirs or other people’s complaints’. A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint.
- 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 complaint’s 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 considered and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but irrelevant questions, and insists they are answered.
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and/or seeks to have them replaced.
- seeks to slander those connected with the case and/or the school, for example on social media, websites, or by other means.
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- repeatedly makes the same or similar 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.
- seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated, and/or stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email, by telephone and/or via any other media.

13.1 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 information
- publishing unacceptable inappropriate (as stated above) information, such as on, social media, on websites and/or in newspapers

If at any level a complainant attempts to reopen an issue, or a similar or related issue, that has already been dealt with under this complaints policy and procedure, the school will write to the complainant to inform them that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter closed. Continued correspondence on the same matter will be viewed as vexatious, and the school will not respond to any further correspondence on the issue or a closely related issue.

If the complainant contacts the school again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and the school may choose not to respond, given that such a course of action does not represent a good use of the school's time or resources.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with the school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (by letter, phone, email, or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached

The school or designate can speak or write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. The school may specify methods of communication and limit the method and/or number of contacts. Unreasonable complainants may, for example, make unreasonable assertions, or excessively contact the school, or cause a significant level of disruption.

In response to any incident of perceived aggression, intimidation or violent conduct, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the school premises.

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. The school will therefore act to ensure that school remains a safe place for pupils, staff, and other authorised users. If a complainant or representative's behaviour is a cause for concern, the school can require them to leave the school premises. In serious cases, the headteacher or designate can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent/carer may wish to make. The school have authority to formally express the decision to bar individuals from the premises in writing.

12. Pursuing the complaint beyond the School's jurisdiction

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure, or that the school acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of its duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2. The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the school. They will consider whether [Tetherdown School](#) has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

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

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street

13.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 – this could be the Headteacher, senior member of staff, Chair of Governors, or another independent individual, which may be a governor or head of another school.

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 people relevant to the complaint
 - consideration of records and other relevant information
 - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the responsible person managing the complaint (this may be the Headteacher, member of staff, chair of complaints committee or Clerk to the Full Governing Body) 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 and passed to the Headteacher for secure storage. Paper and electronic documents will be stored according to the school's information retention policy.
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the Headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The Headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Complaints Co-ordinator (this could be the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaint's procedure.
- be aware of issues regarding:
 - sharing third party information
 - the potential need for additional support, particularly where a complainant may need language interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records and ensure these are archived in accordance with the school's retention policy.

Clerk to the Full Governing Body

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

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties 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
- minute 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 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. The Chair must decide whether the new issue constitutes a new complaint and advise how to proceed.
- 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
- they deliberate with the committee members to reach a conclusion following the meeting and communicate this to the Clerk within an agreed timeframe

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.

Complaints Form - To raise a complaint please complete our online complaints form [here](#).

Annex A

School Complaint Form

Complainants should use this form when formally complaining to the school.

Complainants Name:			
Complainants Address:			
		Post Code	
Contact Telephone Number:			

Name of pupil:		Class:
Complainants relationship to pupil:		

Please give details of your complaint:

Continue on a separate sheet as necessary

Outline the action(s) you have taken to try to resolve your complaint. For example, who have you spoken to and their response. Please attach and date any relevant correspondence.

Continue on a separate sheet as necessary

Desired outcome: What actions do you feel might resolve the issue at this stage?