

Paradise Rida Schools Trust

Complaints policy

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| Approved by: | Governors | Date: Sep 2025 |
| Last reviewed on: | Sep 2025 | |
| Next review due by: | Sep 2027 | |

Introduction

At Paradise Rida Schools Trust, we aim to provide high-quality education while building positive relationships with pupils, parents, the community, and other stakeholders. To support continuous improvement, concerns and complaints will be addressed effectively, appropriately, and in a timely manner.

We believe it is in everyone's interest to resolve complaints at the earliest possible stage. Parents are encouraged to raise concerns with their child's class teacher immediately, who can either reassure or take steps to address the issue. Concerns shared with teachers will **always** be taken seriously.

This complaints procedure applies to any person, including members of the public, regarding any provision of facilities or services provided by the Trust. Complaints subject to separate statutory procedures (e.g., exclusions or admissions appeals) will follow those procedures.

We welcome feedback—positive or negative—and will review policies and practices accordingly. Concerns or complaints will be treated seriously and courteously. We expect complainants to behave respectfully, especially not expressing disagreements inappropriately in front of pupils.

All staff and governors will receive this policy and be familiar with the procedures. The policy is available to parents on request and on the school website.

Aim

This policy aims to:

- Encourage resolution of concerns informally wherever possible
- Ensure concerns are dealt with quickly, fully, and fairly
- Provide effective responses to concerns and complaints
- Maintain good working relationships
- Respect confidentiality

To receive an effective response, complainants should:

- Cooperate with the school in seeking a solution
- Express concerns early and fully
- Respond promptly to requests for information or meetings
- Ask for assistance if needed
- Treat all involved with respect

Difference Between a Concern and a Complaint

- **Concern:** Expression of worry or doubt over an issue needing reassurance
- **Complaint:** Expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action

Many issues can be resolved informally without formal procedures.

Raising a Concern or Complaint

Complaints may be made in person, in writing, or by telephone, including via a third party with appropriate consent.

- Initially, concerns should be raised with the class teacher or Headteacher.
- If unresolved, a formal complaint can be made.
- Complaints should **not** be raised directly with individual governors.

Specific Points:

- Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher): to Headteacher via school office, marked Private & Confidential
- Complaints about the Headteacher: to Chair of Governors via school office, marked Private & Confidential
- Complaints about governors or the governing body: to the Board of Trustees, marked Private & Confidential

Templates and assistance are available via the school office.

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated, unless deemed serious by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

Time Scales

- Complaints should be raised within **three months** of the incident, or last of a series of incidents. Exceptions may apply in exceptional circumstances.
- Complaints received outside term time are considered received on the first school day after the holiday.

Resolving Complaints

At each stage, the school seeks resolution, which may include:

- Acknowledging validity in whole or part
- Apology or admission that the situation could have been handled better
- Explanation of steps to prevent recurrence
- Indication of timescales for changes
- Assurance the incident will not recur
- Review of school policies or procedures
- Explanation if evidence is insufficient to uphold the complaint

Informal Stage

- Parents should initially discuss concerns with the class teacher or form tutor.
- Staff may refer serious matters to Senior Management Team (SMT), informing parents.
- SMT will respond within **5 school days**.
- If unsatisfied, the complainant may proceed to Stage 1.

Stage 1 – Formal Complaint Heard by Headteacher

- Formal complaints to Headteacher (except complaints about Headteacher).
- Receipt acknowledged in writing within **5 school days**.
- Headteacher clarifies complaint, seeks resolution, and may meet the complainant.
- Investigation may include interviews with involved parties, keeping written records.
- For pupil-related complaints, discussions will normally involve a parent/carer unless inappropriate.
- Formal written response issued within **20 school days** (with updates if delayed).
- Response includes actions taken, decision reasoning, and next steps for escalation.
- Complaints about Headteacher or governors follow Stage 1 via Board of Trustees or independent investigator.

Stage 2 – Complaint Heard by Chair of Governors / Board of Trustees

- If Stage 1 outcome is unsatisfactory, complainant may escalate to Stage 2 within **15 school days** of Stage 1 response.
- Receipt acknowledged within **10 school days**.
- Response provided in writing within **15 school days** of acknowledgment.

Stage 3 – Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel

- If Stage 2 outcome is unsatisfactory, complainant may escalate to the Complaints Appeal Panel.
- Panel comprises three governors, chaired by Chair or Vice-Chair if prior involvement exists.
- Complaint must be submitted in writing within **10 school days** of Stage 2 response.
- Receipt acknowledged within **10 school days**.
- Panel meeting scheduled within **20 school days**, with prior written submissions circulated **5 school days** in advance.
- Meeting held in private; complainant may be accompanied by a relative/friend (legal representation generally discouraged).
- Panel may uphold or dismiss the complaint wholly or partially.
- Written decision issued within **10 school days**, including details for escalation to the Department for Education.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct follow disciplinary procedures and are not shared with complainants.

Managing Serial or Unreasonable Complaints

Unreasonable behaviour is defined as conduct that hinders complaint investigation, including:

- Refusal to articulate or cooperate with complaint process
- Introducing irrelevant information or excessive detail
- Repeated complaints already addressed
- Threatening, abusive, or aggressive behaviour
- Excessive demands on staff time
- Publication of false or inappropriate information publicly

The school may:

- Limit contact methods and frequency through a communication plan (reviewed every six months)
- In serious cases of aggression or violence, involve police and bar individuals if necessary

Withdrawal of a Complaint

- Complainants wishing to withdraw must confirm in writing.

Next Steps

- If complainants believe the school acted unlawfully or unreasonably under education law, after Stage 3 they may contact the Department for Education (DfE) via:

School Complaints Unit (SCU)

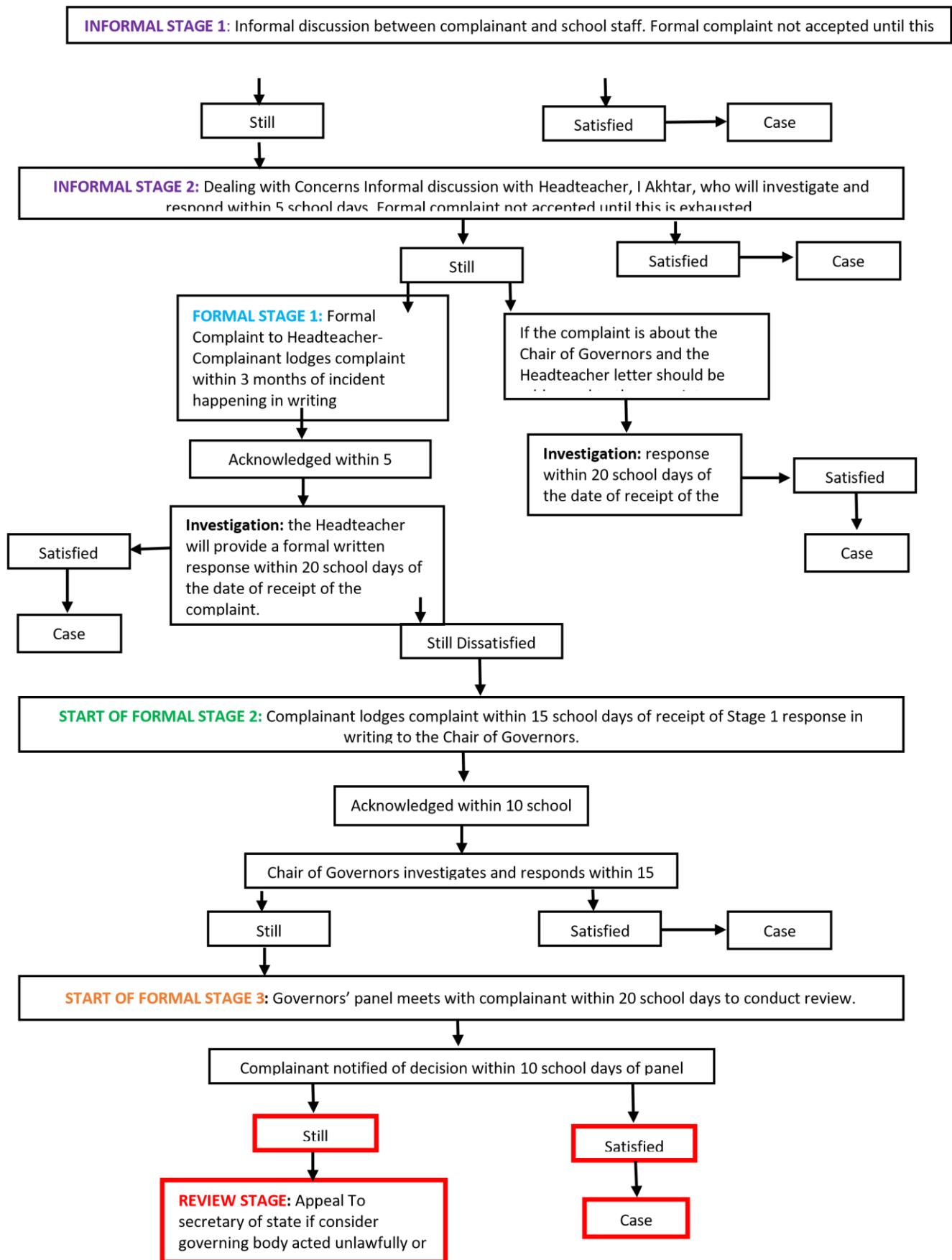
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street
Manchester, M1 2WD

Tel: 0370 000 2288

Website: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

- DfE will not reinvestigate the complaint but will assess adherence to statutory policies and procedures

Dealing With Concerns/ Complaints About Schools - Flowchart



Annexe (I) Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Bushra Hussain (Headteacher) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

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

Annexe (II) FORMAL STAGE :To be filled in by complainant School Complaints Recording Form

Complaints / Feedback form

Personal Details

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number(s)

Email address

If applicable, name of child (ren) and year at school

.....

Your relationship to the school, e.g. parent, carer, neighbour, member of the public, student:

.....

Please give details of your complaint:

.....

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your concern? Who did you speak to, when and what was the response?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

SignaturePrint Name.....Date

Official Use: Date of acknowledgment..... By whom

Complaint referred toDate

Annexe (III) Schools Complaints Outcome Log

Name of complainant

Address

Post Code Tel

Email:

If applicable, name of child(ren) and year at school

.....

Please ensure this log is passed on to the governor responsible for dealing with this complaint

Brief details of the complaint:

Formal stage

What action(s) have been taken by the school to try and resolve the complaint?

Action taken by

Details of final outcome:

Has the complainant been closed?

Yes at what stage

No

If **No** has this moved to Review stage

Yes/No

Signature

Print Name

Date

Annexe D Model Complaint Closure Letter – Stage 2

Please Note: letters should be sent out on School Letter Headed paper

Dear Mr and Mrs X,

FORMAL STAGE 1 COMPLAINT ABOUT Y AND SCHOOL Z

Thank you for your letter dated..... From your letter(s) it is clear that you are still unhappy with the situation. As a result I have decided to have the matter investigated as part of formal stage one of the school's complaints procedure.

You complain that:

Summary of complaint to be stated. State each point separately.

I have completed my investigation and can offer the following response(s) on each of the points you have raised.

1. Concerning your complaint that
2. Concerning your complaint that

It is important that you are clear about what action the school has taken at each stage of the process so far:

Informal stage

State what action was taken in response and the outcome of this.

Formal stage one

State what investigative action was taken in response and the outcome of this, including any remedial action to be taken if complaint is upheld.

I hope this response answers your concerns. Please let me know if you wish me to clarify any points.

In the meantime, if you are still not satisfied with my reply, there is a further stage of the complaints procedure that you can follow. This formal stage two is a review by a panel of governors who will look at the way in which your complaint has been dealt with. The panel will not, however, rehear the whole case.

To go to the next formal stage two, you should write to the chair of governors within 15 days of the receipt of this letter, giving your reasons why you wish to take your complaint further. If you are still not satisfied with the results of formal stage two (panel of governors outcome), you can complain to the Secretary of State for Education who will consider how your complaint has been handled.

Yours sincerely,

Annexe III Model Complaint Closure Letter – Stage Three

Please Note: letters should be sent out on School Letter Headed paper

Dear Mrs and Mrs

FORMAL STAGE 2 COMPLAINT ABOUT Y AND SCHOOL Z

The panel met on,date.....to hear your appeal regarding your complaint which can be summarised as follows:

That so and so/the school did/said/did not,...

Legal or administrative background

State any legal or administrative background to the case, including any legislation relevant to the investigation.

The investigation

Set out the key facts about the complaint, the findings and conclusions from the formal stage one investigation, and any continuing concerns.

Conclusion

Set out the findings of the panel

Panel decision

Outcome of the decision

Please let me know if you wish me to clarify any points for you.

In the meantime, if you remain dissatisfied with the way in which your complaint has been dealt with, you can contact the Secretary of State for Education through the DfE website www.education.gov.uk or by writing to the following address:

The School Complaints Unit (SCU)

Department for Education

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester M1 2WD

Yours sincerely

Appendix (IIII) Complaints which are subject to statutory procedures

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

| Exceptions | Who to contact |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 Kirklees Local Authority |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation | <p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).</p> <p><i>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exclusion of children from school* | <p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whistleblowing | <p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for 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 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</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint. |
| • Staff grievances | Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures. |
| • Staff conduct | Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed. |
| • Complaints about services provided by other providers 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 | Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus |

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 Paradise Rida Schools Trust 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.

Appendix (ii) Sample Policy for Unreasonable Complainants

This policy can also be adapted to manage unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints.

Paradise Rida Schools Trust is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not

normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Paradise Rida Schools Trust defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated

correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Paradise Rida School Trust causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Paradise Rida Schools Trust.

Appendix (IIIIII) Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

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

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

Investigator

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

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
 - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
 - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
 - consideration of records and other relevant information
 - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the Headteacher 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 panel that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

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

Headteacher

The Headteacher should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, deputy Headteacher, Chair of Governors, and LAs (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.

Chair to the Governing Body

The Chair is the contact point for the complainant and the panel 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 panel's decision.

Panel Chair

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

- both parties are asked (via the Chair) 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 panel is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.

If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting

- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the 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 Chair and Headteacher

Panel Member

Panel 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 panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.

- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant

We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

- Many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting

Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.

- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting

- Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.

- The panel should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.

- If the child/young person is the complainant, the panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.

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

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