



St. Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School

"I serve Jesus with my body, heart, mind and soul."

Serviam means 'I serve'. Jesus Christ has taught us, 'it is more blessed to serve than to be served'. At St Ethelbert's school, following our Catholic faith, we serve the whole person – mind, heart, body and soul.

Body – because we care for our wellbeing, our parish neighbourhood and our environment.

Heart – because we teach love and respect for all.

Mind – because we believe in excellent education.

Soul – because we learn to pray and become closer to God as his children.

School Complaints Toolkit

Model Complaints Procedure

Guidance for Governing Bodies

- A Introduction**
- B Guidance for Governing Bodies**
- C Model Procedure - Introduction**
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A Introduction

From 1 September 2003 governing bodies of all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools in England are required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

The guidance is designed to support governing bodies in establishing a clear, simple and accessible complaints procedure, which aims to resolve issues as quickly as possible. The procedure is not intended to replace the normal discussions, which take place in schools on a day-to-day basis on problems and concerns as they arise. It is only where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of such discussions that further steps may need to be taken.

The guidance does not cover those matters already provided for by existing statutory procedures, which include:

- Admissions to schools
- Exclusions
- Special educational provision
- School reorganisation
- Curriculum – including public examinations, school records on individual pupils etc
- Grievances by staff
- Child abuse

It is in everyone's interest that complaints about your school 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, the school must be clear about the procedures they will apply when they receive a complaint.

B Developing a Complaints' Procedure:

Guidance For Governing Bodies

Framework of Principles

An effective complaints procedure will:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
 - be easily accessible and publicised
 - be simple to use and understand
 - be impartial
 - be non-adversarial
 - be an opportunity for the school to improve its practice and develop further a strong partnership with parents.
 - allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
 - ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
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- respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

Role of Governors

The governing body should work in partnership with the staff to develop the procedure and to monitor and evaluate its implementation. An effective procedure will specify how a complaint will be dealt with if it concerns the conduct of the headteacher or governor, or where a headteacher or governor has been involved in the matter previously.

It should be made clear as to whom complaints should be made in the first instance. In most cases this will be the Class Teacher/Head of Year. If discussions between the Class Teacher/Head of Year and complainant prove fruitless, the complainant should be told of his/her right to make a formal complaint to the Governing Body and be given a copy of the Governors' Complaints Procedure. The Chair of Governors should be the first person to approach only in cases which could involve disciplinary or legal action against the Head Teacher.

If an individual governor is approached about a complaint then the governor should direct the complainant to a member of staff or the headteacher with a view to resolving the issue informally. If this is not felt to be appropriate, the governor should refer the complainant to the procedure. The governor should not become involved in any detail of the complaint at this stage.

The procedure should set out the role of the governing body where a complaint cannot be resolved by the headteacher.

Developing the Complaints Procedure

A model procedure is attached for schools to consider and adapt to their own circumstances. In developing the school complaints procedure, it is important that:

- All staff and governors are fully involved; including staff providing extended school services. The Governing Body's agreed procedure for dealing with complaints should be made clear to all staff, including when complaints should be referred to the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors or the Governing Body's Complaints Panel,
 - The procedure is linked to relevant policies, such as the behaviour policy and the home-school agreement;
 - The procedure contains deadlines for communicating with the complainant at different stages of the procedure, including acknowledging the complaint, responding to the complaint, communicating the outcome of the governors' panel meeting;
 - The arrangements for discussing concerns at school level take account of staff safety (See Safeguarding Children in Education and Child Protection Procedures);
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- Confidentiality is important in securing the confidence of all concerned. Conversations and correspondence must be treated with discretion. Parents need to feel confident that a complaint will not disadvantage their child. However the parties to a complaint should realise that some information may have to be shared in order to carry out a thorough investigation.

It is recommended that the governing body ensures that any third party providers offering community facilities or services through the school premises, or using school facilities (even if it's hiring it out for a wedding reception!), have their own complaints procedure in place.

Initial concerns - informal

Schools need to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

The fact that schools must, by law, have a complaints procedure need not in any way undermine efforts to resolve concerns or complaints informally. In most cases the class teacher, or head of year or similar in a secondary school, will be the first to be approached with a concern/complaint. Being able to deal with it as an informal approach and resolve issues, apologising or expressing regret where necessary is, wherever possible the best approach.

The underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures.

On receipt of an initial concern or complaint, the Head Teacher, if appropriate, should attempt to resolve matters informally by inviting the complainant into school to discuss the complaint in confidence. However, it is advisable that notes should be kept of the meeting and its outcome. If the complaint has been made directly to the Chair of Governors, then the complainant should be referred to the Head Teacher in the same way, unless the complaint is against the Head Teacher.

Where it has not been possible for the complaint to be resolved by the Head Teacher, then the Head Teacher's written notes should be made available to group of Governors nominated to investigate the complaint.

Dealing with Complaints – formal procedures

The formal procedures will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

At all stages, confidentiality is important in handling the complaint as it could lead to the implementation of a personnel procedure.

A complaint is distinct from any formal disciplinary procedure. If it becomes apparent that the complaint is a disciplinary or capability issue, then the matter should be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure and not the complaints procedure. In this case the complainant should be notified that their complaint has been referred to the appropriate procedure; they do not have the right to know which procedure or the final outcome, but they can be reassured that it will be dealt with under normal personnel procedures. Staff who may have to be questioned as part of a complaints procedure must be treated fairly and have an opportunity to

put their case. They should be offered support before responding to any investigation into a complaint.

The model complaints procedure has two formal stages. It is important that at each stage, the person or panel investigating the complaint makes sure that they:

- Establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary)
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- Keep notes of the interview. The school should be in the position to produce documentary evidence that the complaint has received fair and proper consideration within the school's procedure.

At each stage, whether informal or formal, it would be helpful to clarify exactly who will be involved, what will happen, and how long it will take. There may, on occasion, be the need for some flexibility; for example, the possibility of further meetings between the complainant and the member of staff directly involved and further investigations may be required after the appropriate person has met with the complainant.

Establishing a Complaints Panel

The governing body should agree and review the composition of the complaint panel at the first meeting of the governing body each year.

There are several points which any governor sitting on a complaints panel needs to remember:

- It is important that the hearing is independent and impartial and that it is 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. In deciding the make-up of the panel, governors need to try and ensure that it is a cross-section of the categories of governor and sensitive to the issues of race, gender and religious affiliation.
- The aim of the hearing, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.
- An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.
- Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child. Careful

consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings will ensure that the child does not feel intimidated. The panel needs to be aware of the views of the child and give them equal consideration to those of adults.

- The governors sitting on the panel need to be aware of the complaints procedure.
- The governors sitting on the panel need to be aware that all matters discussed are of a confidential nature.

Remit of the Complaints Panel

The panel needs to consider whether the complaint:

decision taken by the Head Teacher, member of staff or the governing body

- is about the way a complaint or concern was handled

If the complaint was in relation to a decision taken by the Head Teacher or member of staff, the panel will need to consider whether:

A. it was a decision within the Head Teacher's responsibility or an area where the governing body have responsibility, or share responsibility but have delegated this to the Head Teacher.

If the complaint relates to **A**, the panel can:

consider the manner in which the complaint was addressed but not consider an alternative outcome

- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

If the complaint relates to **B**, the panel can:

dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;

uphold the complaint in whole or in part;

decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;

recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The Role of the Chair of the Panel

The Chair of the Panel has a key role, ensuring that:

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption;
 - the issues are addressed;
 - key findings of fact are made;
 - parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease;
 - the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy;
 - the panel is open minded and acting independently;
 - no member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
 - each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions;
 - written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises all parties must be given the opportunity to consider and comment on it.
 - to remind all parties that all matters discussed are of a confidential nature.
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Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure schools will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or part.

In addition, it may be appropriate to offer **one or more of the following**:

- An apology;
- An explanation;
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

It would be useful if complainants were encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage.

An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

Equally, an effective procedure will identify areas of agreement between parties.

It is also important to clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

If the school rejects the complaint, it is important to re-assure the complainant that the matter has been thoroughly investigated.

Written replies to complainants should aim to answer all the points of concern, be factually correct, avoid jargon and tell the person what to do next if they are still not satisfied. It may be appropriate for the Headteacher, Chairman or complaints governor to telephone the complainant but it is good practice to follow this up with a letter to make sure there is no misunderstanding. Try not to be too curt in writing to the complainant, however vexed you might feel. This can be very frustrating for the complainant, whether or not their complaint is justified. You can sometimes head off any further come-back with a few extra (conciliatory) words. Rather than just stating "I am writing to inform you that I have considered your complaint thoroughly but find no evidence to substantiate it and therefore regard the matter as closed", or similar, consider whether there are any lessons to be learnt from the case. For example, the governing body might have reviewed a particular policy or set of procedures as a result of the inappropriateness or inadequacy of the existing arrangements coming to light. Indicate this in your letter along these lines:

"We have, however, reviewed our procedures and have made a number of changes which should ensure that this kind of incident does not recur."

Time limits

Time limits need to be set for each stage of the procedure. Suggested time limits are included in the model procedure attached. Where it is not possible to respond to complaints within these timescales, the complainant should be informed in writing of the reason for the delay and given an anticipated response date. The complainant should be allowed a reasonable timescale in which to decide whether to refer a complaint to the next stage.

LA Role

The LA has no power to investigate complaints about general matters which are the responsibility of the governing body (see above for matters covered by statutory procedures). If parents approach the LA with a complaint about a school, they will be advised to contact the school and to follow the school's complaints procedure.

If the complainant is not satisfied by the school's procedures, there is no right of appeal to the LA. That said, the LA can play a useful role in mediating between the parties and helping to reach a mutual understanding or agreement. It is for each governing body to decide whether or not the LA should have a role within their general procedures. The Chairman of Governors should contact the Local Education Officer for the Cluster if the governing body and complainant would like the LA to act as a mediator in trying to resolve a complaint. For most complaints, parents cannot take their appeal further than the governing body. 'Partnership with Parents' can help with parents who have problems communicating with their school. They can be contacted on 01622 755515. The LEA cannot investigate school matters on a parent's behalf nor can it review how the school has dealt with a complaint.

Appeals

If a parent feels that the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures and the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response by the governing body, he or she would have the right to refer the matter to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1 3BT, on the grounds that the governing body had failed to discharge a statutory duty or that the governing body had acted, or was proposing to act, unreasonably. This could lead to the issuing of a direction against the governing body.

Ofsted under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 can only investigate complaints about the work of the school as a whole and are not in a position to investigate any matter that relates only to a particular child.

Please note that the Local Government Ombudsman can only consider complaints about school governing bodies which relate to admissions. If the matter is not concerned with admissions, it would not be appropriate to direct a complainant to the Ombudsman.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The school should put in place arrangements for checking that the procedure is effective and fulfils the principles set out above. These should include a regular analysis of complaints, with reports to the governing body. It is recommended that records be maintained of all formal complaints which reach stage 1 and stage 2.

It is recommended that the governing body should review the procedure on an annual basis.

Publicising the Procedure

Once the procedure is agreed, the governing body needs to consider how it will communicate it to parents. Consideration needs to be given to the language used to ensure that it is accessible to all possible users.

The procedure might be included in:

- the school prospectus
 - the home/school agreement
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- newsletters
- documents supplied to community users including course information or letting agreements
- a specific complaints leaflet which includes a form on which a complaint can be made
- posters displayed in areas of the school that will be used by the public, such as reception or the main entrance
- the school website.

A copy of the procedure should be readily available to parents at the school – preferably on the school notice board.

Model Procedure

A model complaints procedure for your school’s governing body to adapt is attached to this introduction and guidance. It is broken down into four parts:

- Introduction and Guidance for Parents
- Flowcharts
- Complaint Form
- Procedure for a Governing Body Complaints Panel Hearing

There are two flowcharts – Concerns/Complaints under Head Teacher’s responsibility and Concerns/Complaints under Governing Body’s Responsibility. The procedure indicates which flowchart should be used depending on the type of complaint. The flowcharts give guidance as to when the above form and procedure should be given to the complainant

Model Letters

Please find below some examples of letters you may wish to use in the school’s governing body complaints procedure.

Letter of Acknowledgement to Complainant regarding establishment of Governing Body Complaints Panel

Dear.....

Parental Complaint from Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss.....

I am writing with regard to your parental complaint, which has been passed to me by the *Chair of Governors/Name of Designated Governor* and must now be considered by a panel of governors under the complaints procedure. Under the procedure the panel must consider your complaint within 10 working days of receiving it and give you at least five days notice of the date of the meeting. Therefore the date of the meeting will be.....

All relevant correspondence, reports and documentation about the complaint is enclosed with this letter.

Please let me know if:

there is any other documentation you wish the panel to consider

there are any witnesses you want to bring to the meeting

you want to have a friend or representative with you

You can contact me by writing to.....

I enclose a copy of the 'Procedure for a Governing Body Complaints Panel Hearing' for your information.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of Governing Body Complaints Panel

Letter from Chair of Governing Body Complaints Panel to Complainant following Hearing

Dear.....

Parental Complainant from Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss.....

Thank you for attending the hearing of the Governing Body Complaints Panel on
I am writing on behalf of the Panel to let you know its conclusions.

The Panel has given careful consideration to your complaint about....., which raises the following issues:

1.
2. etc

The Panel's conclusions are as follows:

1. Issue 1

As regards your complaint that....., the Panel considered the following factors:

-
 -
 -
-

In the light of these considerations, the Panel does/does not uphold this aspect of your complaint.

1. Issue 2

As regards your complaint that....., the Panel considered the following factors:

-
-
-

In the light of these considerations, the Panel does/does not uphold this aspect of your complaint.

In addition to its conclusions on your complaint, the Committee will also be making the following recommendations to the full Governing Body:

-
-

(N.B.) There is no obligation to make recommendations)

This completes the Panel's conclusions.

Finally, please note that the hearing of the Governing Body Complaints Panel and the appointed documentation must be treated as confidential by all parties, including yourself.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governing Body Complaints Panel

CModel Complaints Procedure

Introduction

This document sets out the school's procedure for addressing complaints. It should be used only when informal attempts to resolve problems have been unsuccessful. If you have any concerns about the school or the education provided, please discuss the matter first with your child's class teacher at the earliest opportunity. The school considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved at this stage.

Please note that this procedure does not apply to issues concerning the curriculum, collective worship, admissions, exclusion appeals, decisions about your child's special educational needs or grievances by school staff. These are the subject of separate complaints procedures. Copies of these procedures can be obtained from the school.

All other complaints are handled by the school according to the arrangements set out below.

St. Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School prides itself on its good communication with the community and parents. The school hopes to be approachable and clear up any complaints to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Aims and Objectives

The school will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them fairly and honestly. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Our Procedure Aims to

- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to use and understand
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

If you feel that a concern has not been addressed through informal discussion, and you wish to have the matter formally investigated by an appropriate person from the school, please complete a complaint form. If you would like help completing the form, the school will be happy to provide the assistance of someone unconnected with the complaint. The school will acknowledge in writing receipt of the complaint form within **three working days** after receiving it. The school will enclose a copy of the school's complaints procedure with the acknowledgement. Initially your complaint will be dealt with by the Class Teacher/Head of

Year. If you are not satisfied with the result from the Class Teacher/Head of Year then the procedure will be as follows:

If the matter is about:

- the day-to-day running of the school
- the interpretation of school policies
- the actions or inactions of staff at the school

these are concerns/complaints under the Head Teacher's responsibility and will be investigated by the headteacher or by the deputy headteacher. See D1 for flowchart.

If the matter is about:

- school policies as determined by the governing body
- the actions or inactions of the governing body
- the headteacher

these are concerns/complaints under the Governing Body's responsibility and will be investigated by the Chairman of Governors or a governor nominated by the Chairman. It may be necessary to appoint an independent investigator in certain circumstances. See D2 for flowchart.

If the complaint is a staff disciplinary or capability issue, then the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure rather than the complaints procedure. You will be notified if this is the case with your complaint, but you are not entitled to know which procedure or the final outcome.

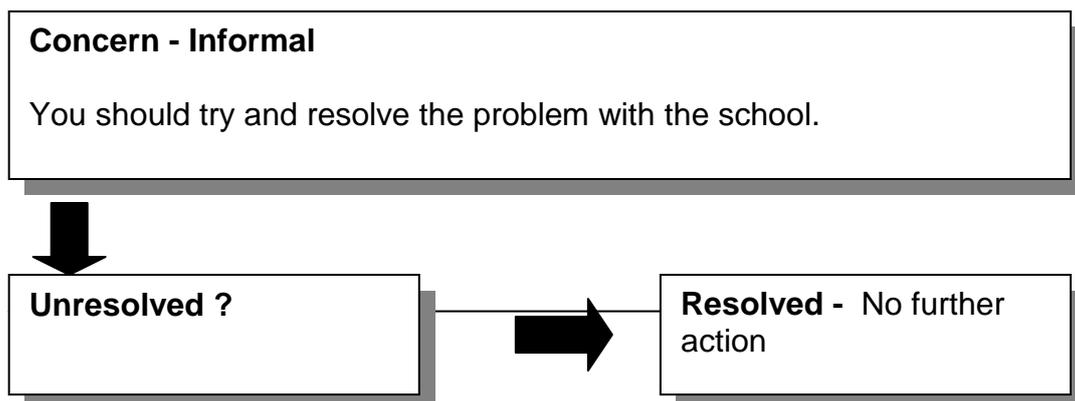
Monitoring and Review

The governing body monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

Availability

A copy of this procedure is available to all parents on request and is also contained in *schools to complete as appropriate*.

D1 Complaint/Concern Under Head Teacher's Responsibility





No.
Formal – Stage 1
You will be given copies of the complaints procedure and complaint form and offered support in completing the form. You will have 3 days to complete and return the form.



Formal – Stage 1
Form received by school

Is complaint about areas of headteacher's responsibility or governing body's responsibility?



Headteacher's responsibility –
Head Teacher deals with matter or designates senior member of staff and write to you with the outcome of the process within 10 working days of receiving the complaint



Resolved?



Yes. No further action



No. Complainant wishes to move to Stage 2 of the procedure and notifies the school in writing within 10 working days.



Formal – Stage 2
Complaint form passes to the Chairman or nominated complaints governor to review whether the complaint has been properly dealt with

Resolved?



Yes. No further action



No. Complainant is given copy of Procedure for Governing Body Complaints Panel Hearing. A governor complaints panel is set up to consider the complaint within 10 working days of the complaint being passed to the governing body. It consists of 3 governors, with no prior knowledge of the complaint, who will consider written and verbal submissions from the complainant and the headteacher



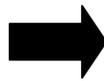
The panel meets to consider the complaint and make a final decision on behalf of the governing body.



Panel writes to complainant with its conclusion within 5 working days of the meeting



Resolved?



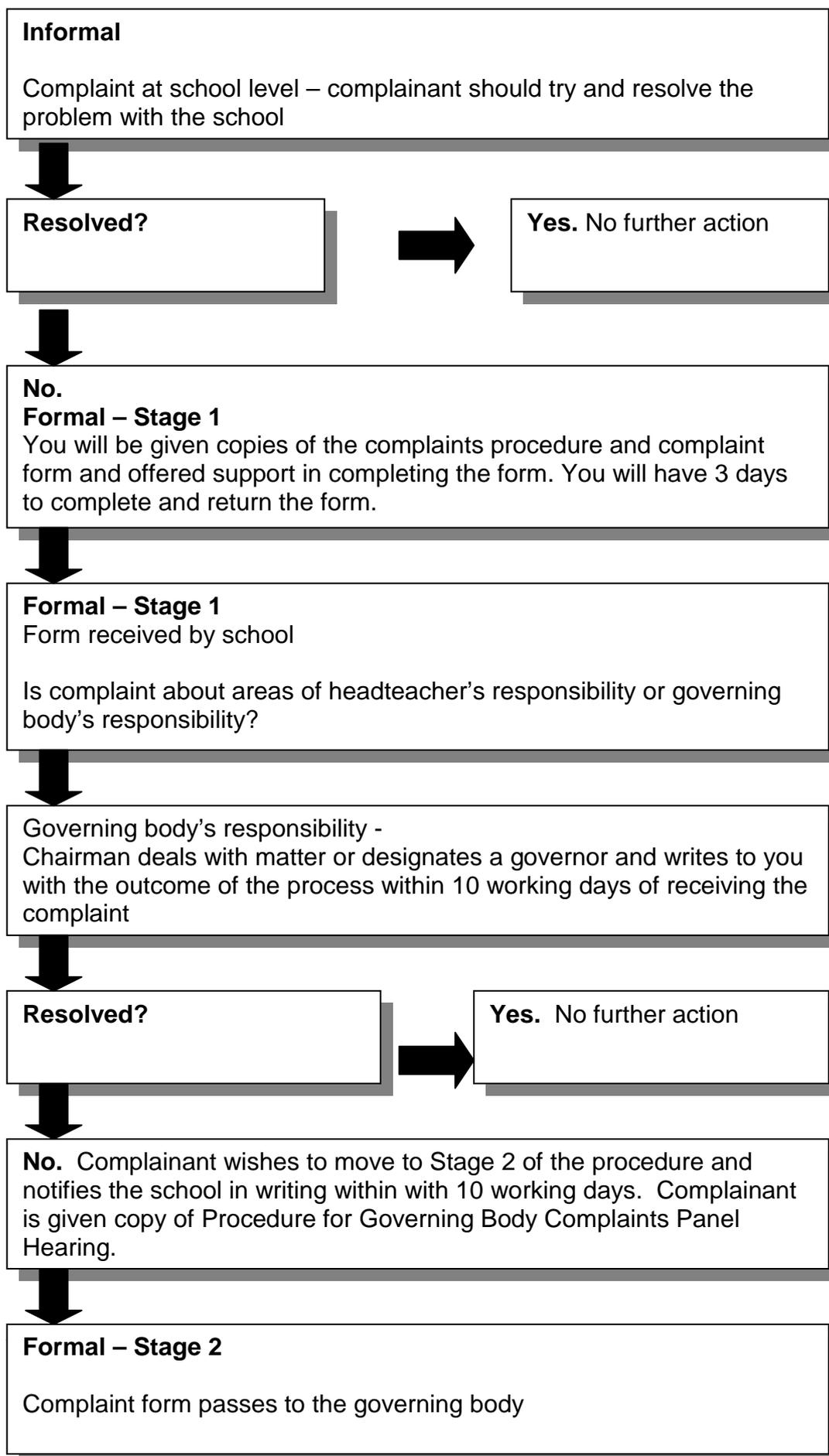
Yes. No further action



No. The complainant may decide to write to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, if they feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures



D2 Complaint/Concern under Governing Body's Responsibility



A governor complaints panel is set up to consider the complaint within 10 working days of the complaint being passed to the governing body. (See Procedure for a Governing Body Complaints Panel hearing). It consists of 3 governors, with no prior knowledge of the complaint, who will consider written and verbal submissions from the complainant and Chairman of Governors (or designated governor)

The panel meets to consider the complaint and make a final decision on behalf of the governing body.

Panel writes to complainant with its conclusion within 5 working days of the meeting

Resolved?

Yes. No further action

No. The complainant may decide to write to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, if they feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

F. Procedure for a Governing Body Complaints Panel Hearing

The Governing Body Complaints Panel operates according to the following formal procedures:

1. The Chair of the Governing Body Complaints Panel will aim to arrange for the panel meeting to take place within **10 working days**.
2. The Chair of the Governing Body Complaints Panel will ask you whether you wish to provide any further written documentation in support of your complaint. You can include witness statements, or ask witnesses to give evidence in person, if you wish.
3. The Head Teacher will be asked to prepare a written report for the panel. Other members of staff directly involved in matters raised in your complaint will also be asked to prepare reports or statements.
4. The Chair of the Governing Body Complaints Panel will inform you, the Head Teacher, any relevant witnesses and members of the panel by letter, at least **five working days** in advance, of the date, time and place of the meeting. We hope that you will feel comfortable with the meeting taking place in the school; but we will do what we can to make alternative arrangements if you prefer.
5. With the letter, the Chair of the Panel will send you all relevant correspondence, reports and documentation about the complaint and ask whether you wish to submit further written evidence to the panel.
6. The letter from the Chair of the Panel will also inform you that you are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting. The choice of person to accompany you is your own, but it is usually best to involve someone in whom you have confidence but who is not directly connected with the school. They are there to give you support but also to witness the proceedings and to speak on your behalf if you wish.
7. With the agreement of the chair of the panel, the Head Teacher may invite members of staff directly involved in matters raised by you to attend the meeting,
8. The chair of the panel will bear in mind that the formal nature of the meeting can be intimidating for you and will do his or her best to put you at your ease.
9. As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced into the meeting by any of the participants. If either party wishes to do so, the meeting will be adjourned so that the other party has a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence.
10. The chair of the panel will ensure that the meeting is properly minuted. Please understand that any decision to share the minutes with you, the complainant, is a matter for the panel's discretion and you do not have an automatic right to see or receive a copy. Since such minutes usually name individuals, they are understandably of a sensitive and, therefore, confidential nature.
11. Normally, the written outcome of the panel meeting, which will be sent to you, should give you all the information you require. If, however, you feel that you would like to have a copy of the minutes it would be helpful if you could indicate this in advance. If the panel is happy for

the minutes to be copied to you, the clerk can then be asked maintain confidentiality in the minutes.

12. During the meeting, you can expect there to be opportunities for:
 - you to explain your complaint;
 - you to hear the school's response from the Head Teacher;
 - you to question the Head Teacher about the complaint;
 - you to be questioned by the Head Teacher about the complaint;
 - the panel members to be able to question you and the Head Teacher;
 - any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to the chair's approval) and all parties to have the right to question all witnesses;
 - you and the head teacher to make a final statement.

13. In closing the meeting, the chair will explain that the panel will now consider its decision and that written notice of the decision will be sent to the head teacher and yourself **within five working days**. All participants other than the panel and the clerk will then leave.

14. The panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented in order to:
 - reach a unanimous, or at least a majority, decision on the complaint;
 - decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
 - recommend, where appropriate, to the governing body changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that similar problems do not happen again.
 -

15. The Chair of the Panel will send you and the head teacher a written statement outlining the decision of the panel **within five working days**. You are entitled to have the handling of the complaint reviewed by the local authority. That process is not strictly an appeal, as the local authority cannot direct the governing body in most general complaints cases. It is, however, an opportunity to seek the view of an official third party and the outcome, including any recommendations, may be helpful to you in seeking resolution of the complaint, through the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families if necessary.

16. We will keep a copy of all correspondence and notes on file in the school's records but separate from pupils' personal records.

Headteacher
Review July 2018
