# Complaints Policy

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| **Date:** | **October 2026** |
| **Next review:** | **October 2028** |
| **Approved by:** | **Trust board** |

# How we resolve concerns and complaints

## If something has gone wrong

Your child's experience is important to everyone at our school. We want to work together with you to ensure that your child is happy at school, and that they achieve their best. If you feel something has gone wrong, we want to hear from you.

### Step one: Talk to us

It's always best to begin by speaking with your child's teacher as soon as you can, letting them know what has happened and what you would like us to do to make it better. They will get back to you as soon as they can, usually within two school days.

If there is still more for us to do after an informal conversation, you can make a formal complaint.

### Step two: Write to us

If you still have concerns, you can write to us with a formal complaint. When you write, include brief details of what happened, who was involved, who you've already spoken to, and what you would like us to do next.

You don't need to write a long letter – in fact, keeping it short usually helps us reply more quickly. We have an online form that asks for the details we need Complaint Form – Fill in form. If you prefer to write to us, please make sure you include the details requested in the form in appendix 1.

We will let you know we have received your query within two school days. If your letter is unclear to us, we may request a meeting or call first to ensure we have understood your concern before responding in writing. We will tell you if we need any more information, and who will look after your enquiry. Wherever possible this will be someone not involved in the issues you've asked about.

After considering your complaint, we will then give you a formal reply setting out our response and any actions we have taken or plan to take, usually within another 10 school days.

For more complex concerns we may suggest an additional step of a joint meeting with someone from outside of the school to discuss the issue, to help understand and resolve your concerns.

### Step three: Meet with a review panel

Where we can't reach agreement, you can ask for a formal meeting to discuss your complaint, called a panel hearing.

The panel will include at least three people not directly involved in the complaint, including one person who is independent of the management and running of the school.

You don't have to attend but if you want to, we will do our best to agree a time and date with you for the meeting, usually within 20 school days. The meeting will usually be in person, but it can be held online if that is more convenient for everyone. You can bring someone to the meeting to help you, for example a friend or relative.

After the meeting, the review panel will send their recommendations to you and to anyone you have complained about. The headteacher and the trust will also get a copy.

There are more details about how panels run in appendix 2.

## Other things that are good to know

**Who can raise concerns:** This policy only applies to parents of children at the school. If you are not a parent at the school you can still get in touch but we will consider your concerns outside of this policy.

**The type of concerns we can consider:** This policy is for general concerns about how our school is run. Some areas have particular processes required by law or regulations. This includes admissions, exclusions and suspensions, data protection matters, safeguarding concerns, staff grievances, disciplinary matters, and whistleblowing. If your concern would be better handled through one of these processes, we will let you know and explain the alternative process to you.

**Time scales:** You should let us know about any problem within three months of it happening; we cannot normally look into older problems. We will always try to keep to the time scales set out here, but for complex queries it may take longer to reply. We will let you know if this is the case.

**Help from other organisations:** We understand you might want to raise concerns with other organisations that oversee the work we do, such as the Government or Ofsted. It is best to talk to us first and go through the steps in this guide because it helps us put things right more quickly and avoids duplicating work for you and for us. In most cases external organisations will expect you to have completed our complaints policy before getting involved.

**Duplicate enquiries:** We will usually consider and reply to concerns individually. If we receive lots of similar concerns at the same time – for example from a campaign group – we may decide to deal with them together and send you a shared reply that responds to common concerns.

**Mutual respect:** We want to hear parents' concerns and to resolve them fairly, and this policy sets out how we will do that. We recognise that emotions can run high, and we ask that communication remains respectful on all sides. Where behaviour becomes unreasonable, abusive, or intimidating, or where there is a refusal to engage with the policy and process, it can be harder for us to support a resolution. In these cases, we may suspend consideration of a complaint, or place proportionate restrictions on how we manage contact.

**Confidentiality:** Some complaints may involve confidential details of pupils and staff. We will share as much information as possible with you, while respecting their privacy and legal rights. We will keep a written record of written complaints and review panels, and actions we take as a result. We will keep details confidential, but we may need to share them with the Secretary of State for Education or an inspection organisation like Ofsted if they ask to see them.

## If you need help raising concerns

We want this process to be easy for everyone to use. If you need help to set out your concern or complaint, the school office can give advice or suggest sources of independent support. We will consider requests for things like interpreters, accessible venues, and alternative formats.

## Using AI

Some people like to use AI tools to help organise their thoughts. We recommend against using public AI tools because they can store and republish personal information, such as sensitive details about your child. AI tools can also introduce inaccurate information, like old rules or laws from other countries. This can delay us responding to you. You should always carefully check the output to make sure it is accurate.

If we are finding it difficult to clearly identify the key concerns from what you have shared, we may suggest a meeting or call to help us focus on what matters most and respond as accurately and helpfully as possible.

## Help with special educational needs

We work together with the local authority to provide support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We will always try to help, but for some things that are outside of our control we will refer you to the local authority.

- **What we are responsible for:** We provide teaching, with reasonable adjustments to help your child, and support from our own resources (known as SEN support). We monitor your child's progress, put support plans in place, and review these with you.
- **What the local authority is responsible for:** The local authority decides whether to assess a child for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), issues and maintains the EHCP, and provides the funding and services specified within it.
- **What an EHCP sets out:** An EHCP describes your child's needs, the provision required to meet those needs, and who must deliver it. Schools must implement the parts of the plan that fall within their control, and the local authority must provide the provision it is responsible for.

Some support depends on national or local funding decisions that are outside out control. We will always do our best within the resources available to us. If you are unsure about who is responsible for a particular aspect of SEND support, please ask.

This policy meets the requirements of Part 7 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and follows the Department of Education's expectations for school trusts to have a clear and accessible way for parents to raise concerns.

# Appendix 1

## Something gone wrong? Let us know

| | |
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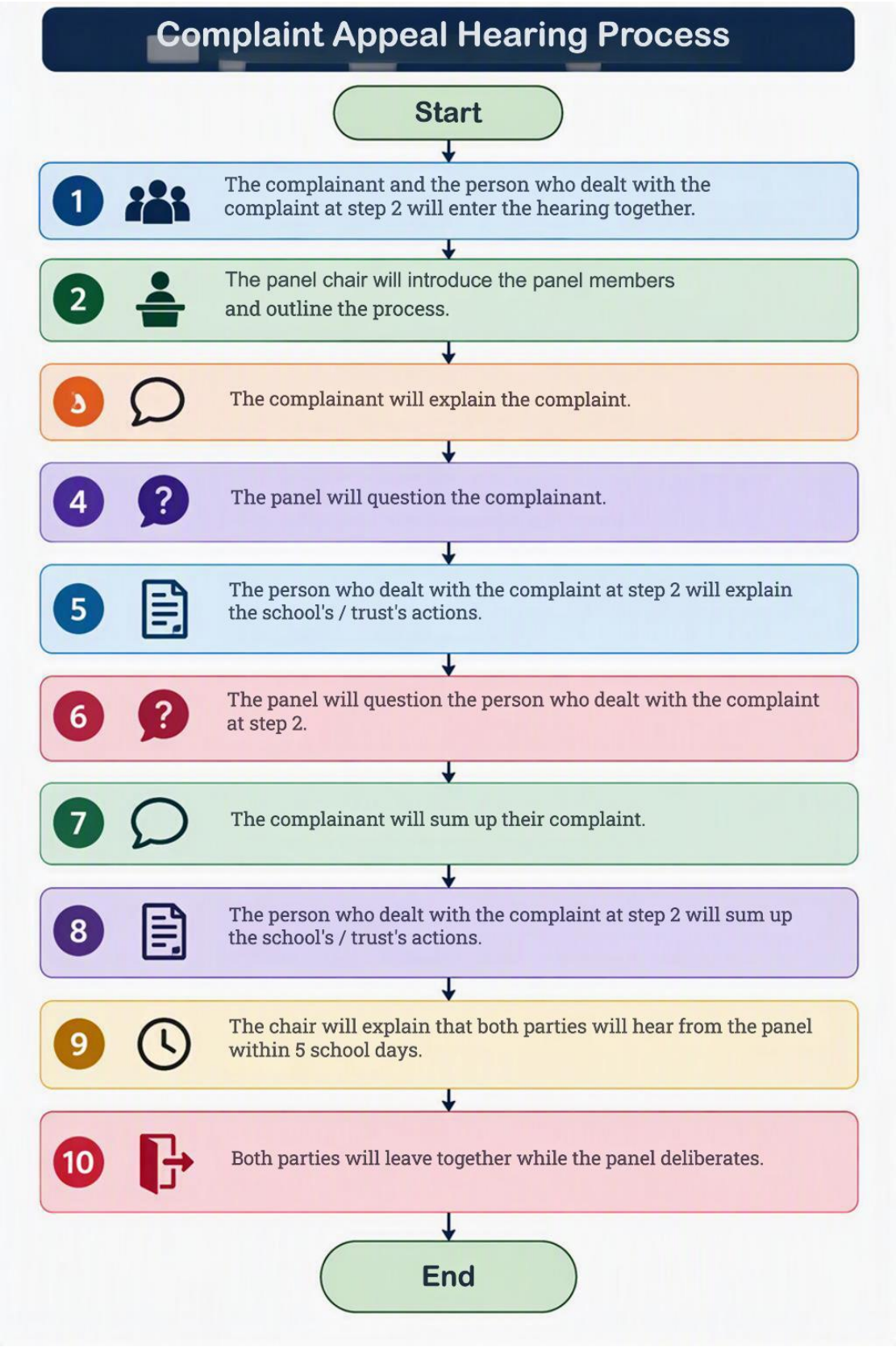
| **Your name:** | **Pupil name:** |
| **Your relationship to the pupil:** | **Pupil date of birth:** |
| **Address and postcode:** | **Daytime phone:** |
| | **Evening phone:** |
| | **Email:** |
| **What are you concerned about? Include the names of any people involved and the dates and times of relevant events.** | |
| **Who have you spoken to at the school or trust about your concerns?** | |
| **What can we do to help put things right?** | |
| **Signature:** | **Date:** |

## Appendix 2


Complaint Appeal Hearing Process
Start
1
The complainant and the person who dealt with the complaint at step 2 will enter the hearing together.
2
The panel chair will introduce the panel members and outline the process.
3
The complainant will explain the complaint.
4
The panel will question the complainant.
5
The person who dealt with the complaint at step 2 will explain the school's / trust's actions.
6
The panel will question the person who dealt with the complaint at step 2.
7
The complainant will sum up their complaint.
8
The person who dealt with the complaint at step 2 will sum up the school's / trust's actions.
9
The chair will explain that both parties will hear from the panel within 5 school days.
10
Both parties will leave together while the panel deliberates.
End