



Complaints Policy

Trust Based

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1 Aims

- 1.1 This is the Complaints Policy of North Star Academy Trust, individual schools have separate complaints policies.

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- 1.2 This Policy relates to complaints about the action or inaction of the Trust.
 - 1.3 Each school in the Trust has a separate Complaints Policy. If a complaint is made under this Policy in error but relates to a school, the Trust will refer the complaint to the school for resolution under that school's complaints policy.
 - 1.4 The aims of this Policy and related procedures are to provide a framework for the resolution of complaints which:
 - 1.4.1 allows for their resolution informally and sets out the Trust's formal procedures where this is not achievable;
 - 1.4.2 is easily accessible and publicised, simple to understand and use, and impartial and non-adversarial;
 - 1.4.3 enables a full, fair and transparent investigation where appropriate;
 - 1.4.4 respects people's desire for confidentiality;
 - 1.4.5 addresses all the points at issue and provides an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
 - 1.4.6 provides information to the Trust's leadership / management team so that services can be improved and any systemic issues can be identified and addressed;
 - 1.4.7 helps promote a whole school culture of safety and equality.

2 **Application**

- 2.1 This Policy applies to the Trust Leadership Team, CEO and Trust Board.
- 2.2 Each school has separate grievance and whistleblowing policies to cover concerns that a member of staff may have.
- 2.3 This Policy applies to any expression of dissatisfaction or concern about actions taken, or a lack of action, by the Trust.
- 2.4 This Policy does not apply to matters for which there are separate statutory procedures:
 - 2.4.1 Admission appeals - see Admissions Appeals policy;
 - 2.4.2 Representations about exclusion - see Behaviour Policy and/or Suspensions and Exclusions Policy.
 - 2.4.3 Appeals in relation to Education Health Care Plans which are dealt with by Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (**SENDIST**);
 - 2.4.4 Subject access requests - see Data protection policy and privacy notices;
 - 2.4.5 Freedom of Information requests which will be dealt with in line with guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office;
 - 2.4.6 Safeguarding and welfare issues - see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 2.5 This Policy applies to complaints from each of the following:
 - 2.5.1 Parents of current pupils at the Trust;

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- 2.5.2 Parents of former pupils at the school, if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was registered as a pupil at the school, or within **3 months** of the pupil being removed from the register provided that the fact of the complaint relates to the time the pupil was registered at the school.

Other Complainants who have concerns about the Trust's operation or site to raise them directly with the Trust.

- 2.6 The scope and application of this Policy for Other Complainants is outlined at [Appendix 4](#).
- 2.7 The Trust will not normally consider anonymous complaints, unless it is appropriate to do so.
- 2.8 Requests for financial awards, such as claims for compensation or damages are beyond the scope of this Policy.
- 2.9 All Parents should be aware that, regardless of the nature of a complaint and whether or not it is upheld, Parents are not entitled to details of any related sanctions imposed on staff or pupils other than their child, or measures in respect of other Parents, for data protection and confidentiality reasons.
- 2.10 There may be occasions when it is necessary to deviate from this complaints procedure if this is reasonable and justified, subject to the Trust continuing to meet the statutory requirements under Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Complainants will be notified of any changes.

3 Definitions

- 3.1 Where the following words or phrases are used in this Policy:
- 3.1.1 The Complaints Policy for complaints against the Trust is referred to as **this Policy**.
- 3.1.2 **Trustees** mean the company directors and charity trustees who sit on the Trust Board of the Trust;
- 3.1.3 **School days** mean Monday to Friday, when the schools are open to pupils during term time. The dates of terms are published on the school websites;
- 3.1.4 **Parents** mean the natural or adoptive parent(s) of the pupil (irrespective of whether they are or have ever been married, with whom the pupil lives, or whether they have contact with the pupil) as well as any person who is not the natural or adoptive parent of the pupil, but who has care of, or parental responsibility for, the pupil (e.g. foster carer / legal guardian);
- 3.1.5 **Other Complainants** mean any third party other than Parents of registered pupils. The complaints procedures for Other Complainants are dealt with under this Policy at Appendix 4;
- 3.1.6 **complainants** (with a small "c") refer to Parents (as defined at paragraph 3.1.4) and **Other Complainants** (as defined at paragraph 3.1.5).
- 3.1.7 **Investigating Officer** refers to the individual investigating the complaint by providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of it. The Trust may choose to appoint a suitable Investigator that is an external party if appropriate.
- 3.1.8 **Decision Maker** refers to the individual appointed to make a decision on the complaint. The Trust may choose to appoint a suitable Decision Maker that is an external party if appropriate.

4 Responsibility for this Policy

- 4.1 The Trust has overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this Policy.
- 4.2 The Trust will be responsible for providing suitable training to all staff on all matters related to this Policy. The Trust ensures that regular guidance and training is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this Policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.
- 4.3 The level and frequency of training depend on the role of the individual member of staff.

5 Timescales

- 5.1 The Trust aims to resolve all complaints efficiently and promptly and complainants are encouraged to bring any matter causing concern to the Trust's attention as soon as possible.
- 5.2 A complaint must be raised within **3 months** of the concern arising or, where a series of associated concerns have occurred, within **3 months** of the last of these concerns. We may consider complaints made outside of this timeframe where exceptional circumstances apply. A complaint raised outside this timeframe should therefore confirm the reasons for the delay in raising it. Complaints which are raised in the school holidays will be deemed to have been received on the first school day after receipt.
- 5.3 If complainants commence legal action against the Trust in relation to their complaint, the CEO will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those proceedings have been concluded.
- 5.4 Indicative timescales for each stage of the Trust's complaints procedure are set out below. It is expected that the management of every complaint will progress in a timely manner.
- 5.5 Where further investigations are necessary and timescales cannot be met, the Trust will notify complainants and inform them of the new timescales and explain the delay as soon as possible.

6 Reasonable adjustments

- 6.1 This Policy can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required and the Trust will make other reasonable adjustments required to enable complainants to access and complete this procedure.
- 6.2 If assistance with making a complaint or participating in the Trust's complaints procedure is required, for example because of a disability, please inform the Trust Complaints Handler who will make appropriate arrangements where reasonable.
- 6.3 Complaints raised should be in writing using the complaints form in the appendix, unless a reasonable adjustment is requested by the complainant to amend in which case a member of staff will assist the complainant to complete the form.

7 Management of complaints

- 7.1 Under this Policy complaints can be considered at three stages:
 - Stage 1: Complaint. Further details of this procedure are set out in [Appendix 1](#).
 - Stage 2: A formal complaint. Further details of this procedure are set out in [Appendix 2](#).
 - Stage 3: Review of a formal complaint by a Complaint Panel Hearing. Further details of this procedure are set out in [Appendix 3](#).

7.2 The roles and responsibilities of those involved in the Trust's complaints procedures are outlined at [Appendix 8](#).

8 Expected standards of behaviour by complainants

8.1 It is the intention of the Trust to deal with concerns and complaints fairly and work constructively with complainants towards resolving them.

8.2 As concerns and complaints will be dealt with confidentially, and the Trust will not discuss these publicly either at the time of the complaint or thereafter. The Trust has a firm expectation that complainants will not publicise the fact or content of their complaint in social media or any other public forum whilst the complaint is being considered under this Policy, or on completion of the process.

8.3 The Trust discourages complainants from using AI tools to generate written complaints. AI-generated submissions often fail to reflect the complainant's own voice and specific concerns, and may contain inaccurate or out-of-date information, which can hinder the complaints process. If complainants require assistance in formulating their complaint, the Trust can provide reasonable adjustments or support as appropriate.

8.4 While the Trust will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school, attention is drawn to the information included in [Appendix 5](#) on serial and persistent complaints.

9 Complaint meetings

9.1 The Trust may use recording devices to record complaints meetings at any stage in the Trust's complaints procedure where there are communication difficulties with the complainants. The recording will only take place if all parties confirm they do not have any objections.

9.2 Complainants are not permitted to record complaint meetings or discussions with staff, whether openly or covertly. If, on the balance of probabilities, the panel believes that a complainant is recording the proceedings, the hearing will be adjourned and reconvened in the complainant's absence.

9.3 Unless exceptional circumstances apply, the DfE will support the Trust if it refuses to accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without informed consent of all parties being recorded. Covert recordings are not permitted under any circumstances.

9.4 If the Trust has made reasonable attempts to accommodate the Parents with dates for complaints meetings at any stage of the Trust's complaints procedure and they refuse or are unable to attend, the Trust can:

9.4.1 convene meetings in the Parents' absence; and

9.4.2 reach a conclusion in the interests of drawing the complaint to a close.

10 Complaints to the Department for Education (DfE)

10.1 Complainants who are dissatisfied with the way the Trust has handled their complaint may contact the DfE, which will consider the complaint on behalf of the Secretary of State.

10.2 The DfE cannot overturn the decision about a complaint. The DfE's role is to make sure the complaint is handled properly in line with the regulatory framework relating to complaints.

10.3 Further information about making a complaint to the DfE, including an online enquiry form, can be accessed on the DfE's website here - [How DfE handles complaints about academies](#).

11 Record keeping and confidentiality

11.1 All records created in accordance with this Policy are managed in accordance with the Trust's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

11.2 The Trust keeps a written record of all complaints resolved at any stage under the Complaints Policy including what action was taken by the Trust as a result of the complaint.

11.3 Trust staff will ensure that they follow the Trust's data protection policies and procedures when handling personal data created in connection with this Policy. This includes the Trust's data protection policy and information security policy.

11.4 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of an inspection or under other legal authority or court order.

12 Publication, availability and feedback

12.1 This Policy is published on the Trust's website.

12.1 This Policy is available in hard copy on request, including in accessible formats.

Appendix 1 Stage 1 - Complaint

1 Resolution of a complaint

- 1.1 We hope and expect that most complaints can be resolved informally without the need to use the formal stages of the complaint's procedure.

2 Who to contact

- 2.1 If Parents wish to make an complaint it should be raised initially with the Trust's Complaints Handler who can be contacted via this email address: Northstar240@northstar-school.co.uk with an FAO for the Communications Lead, who will work constructively with parents to resolve them, in person, in writing or via a phone call as follows:
- 2.2 If Parents wish to make an complaint about the Headteacher, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), members of the Executive Team of the Trust, a Trustee and /or a Local Governor of the Trust, Parents should contact the Trust's Complaints Handler who can be contacted via this email address: Northstar240@northstar-school.co.uk with an FAO for the Communications Lead who will respond in writing as to next steps.

3 Timelines for dealing with complaints under Stage 1

- 3.1 The Trust will acknowledge a complaint within **5 school days** and will seek to resolve the matter under this Stage 1 by means of direct conversation or a meeting with the Parents, to be held within **15 school days** of the complaint form being received.
- 3.2 If the Parents are dissatisfied with the response to the complaint at Stage 1, the Parents may make a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure as set out in [Appendix 2](#).

Appendix 2 Stage 2 - Formal complaint

1 How to make a formal complaint

- 1.1 Complaints will usually only progress to Stage 2 after first being considered at the informal stage, and only where the Parents wish to escalate the complaint or part of the complaint to the formal stage.
- 1.2 A request that a complaint be considered at Stage 2 must be in writing addressed to the Clerk to the Trust Board and should include:
 - 1.2.1 the original Stage 1 Complaint Form;
 - 1.2.2 The Stage 1 Outcome Letter.
- 1.3 The Trust will aim to acknowledge the complaint within **5 school days**, indicating the action that is being taken, the likely timescales and who the Investigator and Decision Maker will be. However the timescales provided can be subject to change depending on the circumstances of the complaint, and Parents will be notified of any changes to these.
- 1.4 If the complaint is about the Headteacher or a Local Governor, including the Chair of Local Governors, or Vice Chair, a suitably skilled Trustee will be appointed as the Decision Maker.

2 Investigation

- 2.1 The subject matter of the complaint will be investigated by the Investigator in the most appropriate manner, which may include some or all of the following steps:
 - 2.1.1 request for additional information from the Parents, and;
 - 2.1.2 request for a conversation and / or a meeting with the Parents and / or others with relevant knowledge of the circumstances to define the scope of the complaint and / or assist in the investigation.
- 2.2 Where appropriate, the Decision Maker may delegate the investigation to another member of staff or third party.
- 2.3 The Investigator will establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:
 - 2.3.1 providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
 - (a) sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved;
 - (b) interviewing staff and children / young people and other people relevant to the complaint;
 - (c) consideration of records and other relevant information;
 - (d) analysing information; and
- 2.4 The Investigator should:

- 2.4.1 review all relevant documentation;
 - 2.4.2 conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
 - 2.4.3 ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal;
 - 2.4.4 be mindful of the timescales to respond; and
 - 2.4.5 where the investigation has been delegated, prepare a comprehensive report for the Decision Maker that sets out their findings on the facts and lists all documents considered and interviews held as an appendix to their report.
- 2.5 Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Personal data may be redacted, and names anonymised or cyphered in line with data protection principles.

3 **Decision**

- 3.1 The Decision Maker will carefully consider the investigation findings and will determine whether to uphold, partially uphold or dismiss the complaint based on these and all of the evidence that has been considered as part of the investigation.
- 3.2 The Decision Maker will notify the Parents via the Clerk to the Local Governors by email or letter of their Stage 2 decision and the reasons for it within **15 school days** from receipt of the Stage 2 Investigation Report, unless further time is deemed necessary.
- 3.3 If the Parents are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response, they may request that the complaint be referred to a Stage 3 Complaint Panel. The Panel will consider any parts of the complaint that were not upheld, or were only partially upheld, at Stage 2, along with the evidence obtained and the outcome reached at that stage, using the procedure set out in [Appendix 3](#).

Appendix 3 Stage 3 - Complaint Panel Hearing

1 Complaint Panel Hearing

- 1.1 If Parents are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response to the complaint, the Parents can request a Complaint Panel Hearing.
- 1.2 A Panel Hearing is a hearing to consider those elements of the Stage 2 response to the Parents' complaint with which were not upheld or partially upheld. The Complaint Panel is not obliged to consider any new complaints which have not been previously raised. The Panel will consider the evidence obtained during the Stage 2 investigation, and the outcome reached at that stage.

2 How to request a Panel Hearing

- 2.1 A request for a Panel Hearing must be put in writing to the Clerk to the Trust Board and will only be considered if the procedure at Stage 2 has been completed.
- 2.2 The written request should usually be made within **5 school days** from receipt of the Stage 2 decision and include:
 - 2.2.1 the original complaint form;
 - 2.2.2 the Stage 2 outcome letter.
 - 2.2.3 whether the Parents propose to be accompanied to the Panel Hearing (see paragraph 3.4 below).
- 2.3 In the event that the request is received late, the Trust will not consider the complaint unless there are exceptional circumstances for the delay. It will be at the discretion of the Trust whether to consider it taking into account the reasons for the delay and the extent of the delay, and the Trust's decision on whether to consider the complaint late will be final.
- 2.4 The Clerk to the Trust Board will aim to acknowledge the request for a Panel Hearing in writing within **5 school days** of receipt unless further time is deemed necessary.
- 2.5 Every effort will be made, using all reasonable endeavours, to arrange the Panel Hearing to take place within **15 school days** of receipt of the request.
- 2.6 Parents may withdraw their request for a Panel Hearing at any point up to and including the intended date of the Panel Hearing.

3 Planning the Panel Hearing

- 3.1 The Clerk to the Trust Board will endeavour to send written notification to each party of the date, time and place of the Panel Hearing **5 school days** before the date of the Panel Hearing.
- 3.2 The Clerk to the Local Governors will endeavour to circulate a copy of the bundle of documents to be considered by the Complaint Panel to all parties at least 3 school days before the Panel Hearing, where possible. The bundle will include the original complaint form, the Stage 2 Investigating Officer's report, and the Stage 2 outcome letter.

- 3.3 The Parents may be accompanied at the Panel Hearing, for example by a relative or friend. The Panel Hearing is an internal process, not legal proceedings, and legal representation is unnecessary.
- 3.4 If the Parents wish to be accompanied by a relative or friend who is legally qualified or a legal representative, the Parents must notify the Clerk to the Trust Board in the initial request for a Panel Hearing. The Complaint Panel will decide whether it is appropriate for such person to participate in the meeting and the extent to which they will be allowed to participate. The decision on the Complaint Panel on this point will be final and will be entirely at their discretion.
- 3.5 A person will be appointed to take a written record of the Panel Hearing.

4 Composition of the Complaint Panel

- 4.1 The Complaint Panel will comprise at least three individuals who have no detailed prior knowledge of the circumstances of the complaint, and will include at least one person who is independent of the management and running of the Trust (i.e. not a Trustee, not a Local Governor at the School that received the complaint, and not an employee of the School).
- 4.2 The Complaint Panel members will appoint one of their number to be the Chair of the Complaint Panel throughout the proceedings.

5 Role of the Complaint Panel

- 5.1 The role of the Complaint Panel is to review the decision reached at Stage 2 and to consider, on the balance of probabilities and in light of the evidence provided in the Investigating Officer's report, whether to uphold any parts of the complaint that were previously not upheld or only partially upheld.

6 The Panel Hearing

- 6.1 Unless prior to the commencement of the Panel Hearing, Parents confirm they are satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, the Panel Hearing will proceed notwithstanding that the Parents may decide not to attend. In these circumstances, the Complaint Panel will consider the Parents' complaint in their absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint.
- 6.2 The panel will usually hear representations from the Stage 2 decision-maker, the Investigating Officer where deemed appropriate, and the Parents.
- 6.3 During the Panel Hearing, the parties shall have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments in an appropriate manner. The Panel Hearing is not a legal process.
- 6.4 All those present during the Panel Hearing are expected to show courtesy, respect and good manners or, after due warning, the Panel Hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chair of the Complaint Panel, then reconvened and held in the absence of the complainant.
- 6.5 The Chair of the Complaint Panel may, at their discretion, adjourn the Panel Hearing if they consider it appropriate to do so, for instance for welfare reasons or to allow additional information to be provided to the Panel.

- 6.6 The discussions during a Panel Hearing are private. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed can be published or otherwise made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media (including social media).
- 6.7 When the Chair of the Complaint Panel is satisfied that sufficient consideration has been given to the documentation provided and any representations made by the parties, they will conclude the Panel Hearing.

7 **Decision**

- 7.1 The Complaint Panel will make findings about each complaint on the balance of probabilities and may make recommendations.
- 7.2 The Complaint Panel cannot make any financial award or impose sanctions on the Trust's staff, pupils or other Parents.
- 7.3 The Complaint Panel will aim to provide its written decision to the Parents and, where relevant, the person(s) complained about, within **5 school days** of the Panel Hearing unless further time is necessary.
- 7.4 The Trust will ensure that the Complaint Panel decision is recorded appropriately and that any recommendations made in the course of a complaint are properly considered and actioned as appropriate.
- 7.5 The Complaint Panel's findings and any recommendations will also be made available for inspection on the Trust's premises.
- 7.6 The decision of the Panel is final. There will be no further opportunity within the Trust for consideration of the complaint. The completion of Stage 3 represents the conclusion of the Trust's complaints procedure.
- 7.7 If a duplicate complaint is received by a new complainant following completion of the Stage 3 procedure, the Trust will inform the new complainant that the matter is closed.

Appendix 4 Complaints procedure for persons other than Parents - Other Complainants

- 8 The Trust encourages persons other than Parents (**Other Complainants**) who have concerns about the Trust's operation or site to raise them directly with the Trust.
- 1 They should do so by writing to the Trust Communications Officer at North Star 240 setting out their concerns.
- 2 A complaint must be raised by Other Complainants within **one month** of the concern arising or, where a series of associated concerns have occurred, within **one month** of the last of these concerns. We may, consider complaints made outside of this timeframe where exceptional circumstances apply. A complaint raised outside this timeframe should therefore confirm the reasons for the delay in raising it. Complaints which are raised in the school holidays will be deemed to have been received on the first school day after receipt.
- 3 On receipt of a complaint under this Appendix the Trust may attempt an exploration of an informal resolution if appropriate.
- 4 If these cannot be informally resolved, any concerns raised will be investigated and responded to under a single formal stage which will mirror Stage 2 of this procedure as set out in Appendix 2. However, following the conclusion the single formal stage, there will be no further opportunity within the Trust for consideration of the complaint. The completion the single formal stage for Other Complainants represents the conclusion of the Trust's complaints procedure, and there can be no request for further review at Stage 3 which does not apply to Other Complainants.
- 5 The Decision Maker will aim to send the decision within **20 school days** from receipt of the request to resolve the complaint at the single formal stage unless further time is deemed necessary.
- 6 The decision letter is final and represents the conclusion of the Trust's complaints procedure for Other Complainants.
- 7 If, at the conclusion of the review, a duplicate complaint is made the Trust will inform the Other Complainants that the matter is closed.
- 8 Other Complainants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint may contact the Department for Education (**DfE**) (see How DfE handles complaints about academies).

Appendix 5 Serial and persistent complaints

- 9 Serial and persistent complaints are taken seriously by the Trust as they put a strain on valuable resources and hinder the progress of proper investigations.
- 10 If a complainant tries to re-open the same issue, the Trust will inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.
- 11 If the complainant contacts the Trust again on the same issue, the correspondence may be viewed as "serial" or "persistent" and the Trust may choose not to respond further.
- 12 The Trust may consider a complaint to be "frivolous" or "vexatious" if:
- 12.1 complaints are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
 - 12.2 there is insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and / or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
 - 12.3 there is insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner;
 - 12.4 complaints are designed to cause disruption or annoyance; or
 - 12.5 demands for redress lack any serious purpose or value.
- 13 Complainants should try to limit their communication with the Trust about the complaint while it is being progressed, as it is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) which is likely to delay an outcome being reached.
- 14 For complainants who excessively contact the Trust causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify particular methods of communication, provide a single point of contact and / or limit the number of communications which may be made with the Trust in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after three months.
- 15 The Trust will stop responding to a complainant where:
- 15.1 the Trust has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns;
 - 15.2 the complainant has been given a clear statement of the Trust's position and their options; and
 - 15.3 the complainant contacts the Trust repeatedly.
- 16 The Trust is likely to stop responding if it agrees with any of the following statements:
- 16.1 the complainant's letters, emails, or telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive;
 - 16.2 the complainant makes insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff; and / or
 - 16.3 the Trust has reason to believe the individual is contacting the Trust with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience.
- 17 In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the Trust will immediately report this to the police for criminal investigation. The Trust may also withdraw the complainant's implied permission to enter or be on the Trust site(s).

- 18 If the complainant's behaviour is a cause for concern, a Headteacher or the CEO can ask them to leave the School site(s) and bar individuals from entering. If the School or Trust makes the decision to bar a complainant from the School site(s), it will provide the complainant the opportunity to express formally their views on a decision to withdraw permission to access or remain on the School site(s).
- 19 The Headteacher or CEO's decision to bar will be reviewed by the Chair of Local Governors or a Trustee. If the decision is confirmed, the complainant will be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place and when the decision will be reviewed.

Appendix 6 Complaint campaigns

- 20 Where the Trust becomes the focus of a campaign and receives a large volume of complaints all based on the same subject, particularly if these complaints come from complainants unconnected with the Trust, the Trust may respond by:
- 20.1 sending a consistent response to all complainants; and
 - 20.2 publishing a single response on the Trust website.
- 21 The normal procedures will apply if the complainant is not satisfied with the Trust's response, depending on the type of complainant.

Appendix 7 Complaint form

(Please continue on additional pages if necessary)

Complaint Form				
Name of complainant(s)				
Address:		Telephone:	Mobile:	Email:
Name and role of the person(s) that you wish to complaint about if relevant				
Date(s) when the concern(s) arose				
Reason for complaint (Please include as much information as possible about what specifically you are unhappy about and why)				
Desired outcome				
List of relevant documents enclosed with the complaint form				
Have you used AI to generate this complaint?				

Declaration

The information included in this complaint form is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I agree to cooperate fully with the complaints procedures and acknowledge my ongoing obligation to treat the Trust and its staff in a reasonable manner at all times.

Signed:**Dated:**

Appendix 8 Roles and responsibilities

1 Complainants

- 1.1 Complainants will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:
- 1.2 explain the complaint in full as early as possible;
- 1.3 co-operate with the Trust in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- 1.4 respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint;
- 1.5 treat all those involved in the complaint with respect;

2 Clerk to Local Governing Body

- 2.1 The Clerk is the contact point for the Parents and the Complaints Panel and should:
- 2.2 ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of the relevant policy and procedures;
- 2.3 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 meetings are accessible;
- 2.4 collate any written material relevant to the complaint and send it to the complainant, Decision Maker and Panel in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale;
- 2.5 take an accurate record of the meetings;
- 2.6 circulate the minutes of the meeting; and
- 2.7 notify all parties of the Complaints Panel's decision.

3 Complaint Panel Chair

- 3.1 The Complaint Panel Chair, who is nominated in advance of the Panel Hearing, should ensure that:
 - a) 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;
 - b) Parents who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease;
 - c) the remit of the Complaints Panel is explained to the Parents;
 - d) written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to data protection¹;
 - e) both the Parents and the Trust are given the opportunity to make representations and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself;

- f) the issues are addressed;
- g) key findings of fact are made;
- h) the Complaints Panel is open-minded and acts independently;
- i) no member of the Complaints Panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- j) a record of the meeting is taken; and
- k) they liaise with the Clerk and adjourn the hearing if the complainant is unable to conduct themselves reasonably, or if there is a reasonable belief that the proceedings are being recorded.

4 **Complaint Panel Member**

4.1 Complaint Panel members should be aware that:

- a) the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so no Local Governor or Trustee may sit on the Complaint Panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it;
- b) the aim of the meeting is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the Trust and the Parents. It is recognised that the Parents might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour.
- c) many Parents may feel nervous and anxious in a formal setting, particularly when discussing an issue that affects their child;

Appendix 9 Regulatory framework

- 1 This Policy has been prepared to meet the Trust's responsibilities under:
 - 1.1 Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
 - 1.2 *National minimum standards for boarding schools* (Department for Education, September 2022)
 - 1.3 Children Act 1989
 - 1.4 Childcare Act 2006
 - 1.5 UK GDPR; and
 - 1.6 Equality Act 2010.
- 2 This Policy has been developed having regard to:
 - 2.1 Best practice guidance for academies complaints procedures (DfE, March 2021)²;
 - 2.2 Controlling access to school premises (DfE, November 2018).