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Complaints Procedure



The **HENRY**
BEAUFORT *School*

At The Henry Beaufort School, there are no limitations to success.

Complaints Procedure

Policy Amended by:	Headteacher	September 2023
Consultation by:	Headteacher / Chair of Governors	September 2023
To be Reviewed	Annually	September 2024

www.beaufort.hants.sch.uk



The Henry Beaufort School is dedicated to providing the best possible education and support for its pupils. This means having a clear, fair and efficient procedure for dealing with any complaints to or against the school, so that any issues that arise can be dealt with as swiftly and effectively as possible.

This procedure explains the steps that will be followed whenever an issue arises that causes concern. Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about provision of facilities or services that our school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply.

This procedure does not apply to complaints about:

- Admissions to school
- Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEND)
- School re-organisation proposals
- Matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation
- Exclusion of children from school
- Whistleblowing
- Staff Conduct
- National Curriculum content
- Staff grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use the school's premises or Facilities [Please note: providers must have their own complaints procedure]

In these cases, there are other separate and statutory procedures.

The school will not respond to anonymous complaints under this procedure, however, the Headteacher and/or chair of governors will consider whether the issue and fear of identification are genuine or the issue is one of child protection.

You must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident or where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 3 months of the last of these incidents. The school will take into account exceptional circumstances when deciding to accept or progress a complaint outside this timeframe.

The school will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by **The Henry Beaufort School**, 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	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Hampshire Local

¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered



<ul style="list-style-type: none">School re-organisation proposals	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: HCC Safeguarding Unit 01962 876364 Child.protection@hants.gov.uk</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. [Our Behaviour Policy is available on the school website]</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.</p> <p>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 Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff conduct	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>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.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

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

The Henry Beaufort School knows there may be times when parents or guardians wish to clarify something or even make a complaint. This information will guide you through that process. For more information please read the Hampshire County Council's leaflet, "Sharing your concerns about your child's education" www3.hants.gov.uk/sharing_concerns.pdf

For more information on our school's provision for protecting our pupils, please refer to our child protection policy and our allegations of abuse against staff policy, both of which are available on the school website.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'.

A complaint may be defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. The Henry Beaufort School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

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

When an issue or concern first arises

If you have a concern that you would like to take up with the school you should initially inform a member of staff either in person, over the telephone or in writing.

We encourage parents to approach staff with any concerns they may have, and aim to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding. We will take your concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

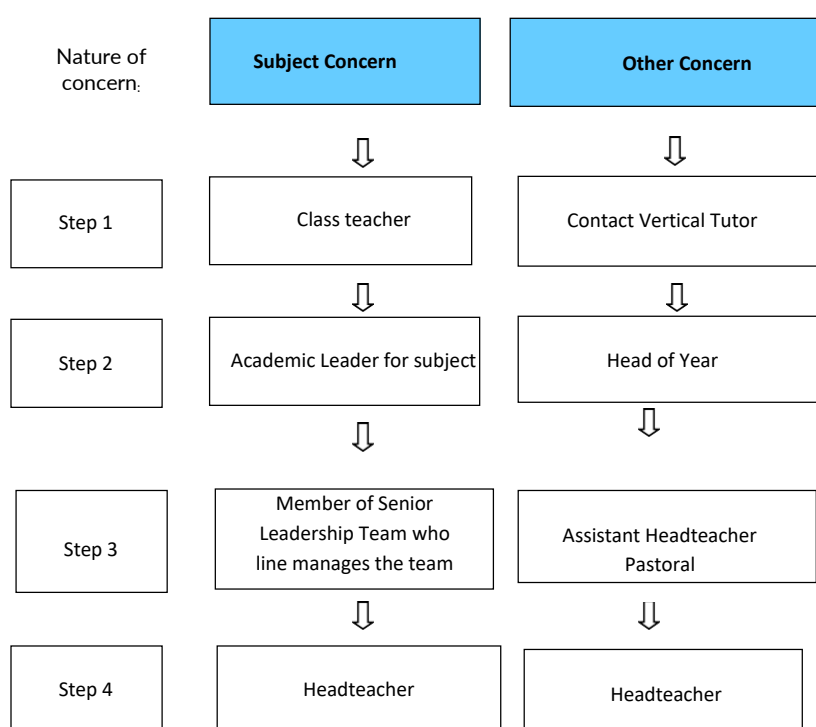
¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered



Please note complaints regarding community facilities should be addressed in the first instance to the Community Manager. If it is a complaint about the provider who uses the School's facilities, then this must be addressed to the provider through their complaints procedure.

Most concerns are best resolved through conversations with the relevant member of staff. Please see the 'Keeping in touch' information on the school website.

Please follow the steps in the diagram to raise your concern. If you are not happy with the outcome then please proceed to the next step.



The Chair of Governors reserves the right to refer complaints that are taken straight to them back to the appropriate member of staff if it does not warrant the governing body's involvement at that point.

Initial informal meeting

When a concern has been received, you may receive a telephone call from the member of staff or Headteacher to discuss your concerns, or you may be invited to attend a meeting with a member of staff or the Headteacher to discuss your concerns.

If invited to a meeting, you are welcome to bring a friend, partner or, in the case of a student who has raised a concern, a parent along for support. It may be appropriate for a student to attend the meeting if their parent has raised a concern, depending on the nature of the issue.

¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered



Staff have a responsibility to ensure that you understand any future points of action that have been agreed and will make a record of what has been discussed, as well as any outcomes and a plan of action, if one has been agreed.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

All staff will do their best to ensure your concerns are dealt with appropriately and efficiently, but if an agreement cannot be reached, or if you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you can make a formal complaint to the Headteacher. If your complaint is about the Headteacher you should make your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors. It is preferable for you to make your formal complaint in writing, but complaints can be made in person or by telephone. Complaints should be made through the Clerk to the Governing Body.

There is no prescribed timescale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue and informal discussion, although we expect to resolve most issues within 10 school days. If a delay beyond the 10 school days is required then the school will write to inform you explaining why there is a delay and establishing a new deadline.

Formal Complaints

Please use the Complaints Form available on the school website.

Resolving complaints

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

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

Withdrawal of a Complaint

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

In order to ensure complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively, The Henry Beaufort School deals with formal complaints in three stages.

¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered



Stage 1 – Complaint heard by the Headteacher

If you feel that your concern has not been dealt with as you would like, are unhappy with the outcome of your informal meeting or feel that the issue is serious enough that it warrants it, you can make a formal complaint to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will acknowledge your complaint in writing or offer a full response within 5 school days. If further investigation is required, the Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 school days and will advise you that a full response will be provided within 20 school days.

Please Note: The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

The Headteacher may invite you to attend a meeting to discuss your complaint and possible solutions, or to explain what has happened or will happen as a result of your complaint. If the school has made reasonable attempts to accommodate complaints with dates for complaints meetings and these are refused by the complainant the school will:

- Convene meetings in the complainants absence
- Reach a conclusion in the interests of drawing the complaint to a close.

The Headteacher will keep a record of all interactions with you and other staff, meetings and decisions made in reference to your complaint.

If your complaint is about a member of staff, the Headteacher will talk to that employee and invoke the relevant procedure if required. It will not be appropriate to inform you of the outcome of any investigation in relation to an individual member of staff.

The Headteacher will respond to you in writing within 20 school days of receiving your complaint outlining their full response to your concern, and any action that has or will be taken. If the Headteacher has decided not to take any further action, they will explain what they have decided and how they reached the decision. You will also be advised of your right to take the matter further if you are not satisfied with the Headteacher's response.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about the Headteacher or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body or.

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At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with members of the governing body's complaints committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, governors available. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from The Henry Beaufort School available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through their LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure.

Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 10 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting.

¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered



Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 3 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and The Henry Beaufort School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by The Henry Beaufort School.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent governors.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions The Henry Beaufort School will take to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

Complaints should be made through the Clerk to the Governing Body

Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or

¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered



overturn any decisions made by The Henry Beaufort School. They will consider whether The Henry Beaufort School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

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

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

Unreasonable Complaints

The Henry Beaufort School 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 the school. Operating from a position of mutual respect, 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.

The Henry Beaufort School defines unreasonable complaints as “those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s complaints”.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the school’s complaints procedure or with good practice`
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified comments 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 a 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, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with

¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered



A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face- to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously
- aggressively
- using threats, intimidation or violence
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- knowing it to be false
- using falsified information
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a 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 asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact The Henry Beaufort School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from The Henry Beaufort School.

Duplicate complaints

If a complaint is made about the same subject, the school will inform the new complainant that it has already considered that complaint and the local process is complete.

Governing Body review and monitoring of complaints

The Headteacher will report annually to the governing body on the number of formal complaints received and the levels at which they have been resolved. No details identifying the complaint or any member of staff will be published.

The governing body will review and evaluate all complaints no matter how far they are taken or what the outcome to ensure that similar problems are avoided in the future or to see if they could have been managed any more efficiently.

Staff Complaints

¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered



Staff who have a concern about a colleague or volunteer in school should refer to the whistleblowing policy which is available in the staff handbook.

The procedure for dealing with any other staff complaint or employment grievance is set out in the School's staff discipline, conduct and grievance policies which are available in the staff handbook.

Complaints Procedure Review

The School will review this procedure every 2 years or sooner if there are any legislative changes. The governing body of The Henry Beaufort School will also review this procedure following a complaint panel meeting to ensure that it met the requirement to provide a clear, fair and efficient complaints procedure.

Contacts

The contact details you might need are:

Miss S Hearle
Headteacher 01962 880073
admin@beaufort.hants.sch.uk

Head's PA 01962 880073
admin@beaufort.hants.sch.uk

Chair of Governors

Write c/o Jackie Finney, Clerk: jackie.finney.clerk@gmail.com

Address:

The Henry Beaufort School, Priors Dean Road, Winchester Hampshire SO22 6JJ

Date reviewed: September 2023

Date for next reviewed and revised September 2024

¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered



Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher or Headteacher's PA / Clerk to Governors / Community Manager* *[delete as appropriate]* who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Student's name (if relevant):

Your relationship to the student (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.

¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered



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:

¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered



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 complaints co-ordinator 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 committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

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

Complaints Co-ordinator (*Headteacher or Headteacher's PA/ Clerk to Governors/ Community Manager*)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the 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.

Clerk to the Governing Body

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

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (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 committee's decision.

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Committee Chair

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

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, 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 committee is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.

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

- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the committee is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one).

Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so

No governor may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.

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

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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 committee 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 committee 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 committee 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 committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.
- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

Reviewed and revised in accordance with government guidelines September 2023

¹ Exceptions to this time frame may be considered