



COUNDON COURT

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Agreed by Governors: 22nd September 2020

Frequency of Review: 3 Yearly

Date of Next Review: September 2023

GENERAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The academies nominated Complaints Co-ordinator is **Linda Phillips**.

STAGE 1 - THE FIRST CONTACT: GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS INFORMALLY

If you have a concern/complaint you may register it, either verbally, or in writing. If the member of staff first contacted cannot immediately deal with the matter, they will make a clear note of the date, name, contact address, phone number and brief details of the concern/complaint. This information will be relayed to the Complaints Co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity and a check made later to make sure that action is being taken and that it has been recorded in the school's log.

An opportunity will be given to discuss your concern/complaint with an appropriate member of staff, who will clarify the nature of the concern/complaint and the outcome required.

The Complaints Co-ordinator will identify the appropriate procedure and either conduct the investigation themselves, or nominate an appropriate colleague to do so. The Co-ordinator will make sure that you are clear about what action or monitoring of the situation has been decided on, only putting this in writing if this seems the best way to make things clear.

Where no satisfactory solution has been found within **10 working days** at the latest, the Complaint Co-ordinator will ask if you want a formal complaint to be registered.

STAGE TWO - FORMAL REFERRAL TO THE HEAD TEACHER

If the complaint is about the Head teacher, or the Head teacher has been so involved as not to be impartial, you must put your complaint in writing, address it to the Chair of the Governing Body and send it to the Academy address.

Otherwise:

The complaint should be submitted in writing to the Head Teacher. (*The complaint form Appendix B may be used*).

Where the Head Teacher has acted as Complaint Co-ordinator at Stage One, another senior member of staff may be designated to collect some of the information from the parties involved, or another senior member of staff may be nominated to be the Investigator.

Your complaint should be acknowledged in writing within **three working days**, giving the name and telephone number of the person who will conduct the investigation and a target date for providing a response - this should normally be within **10 working days**. If there is any delay, a written explanation and revised target date should be sent.

The investigator may ask you to meet with them, to give extra information, or to explain any information provided previously. Every effort will be made to arrange a time and date convenient to you, with a minimum of 3 days' notice. You will be able to take a friend, relative, representative or advocate who can speak on your behalf. Interpreting facilities will be made available if needed. The venue will be suitable for those with special needs, e.g. wheelchair access, hearing loop.

The investigator will interview witnesses and take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres around a pupil, the pupil should also be interviewed.

Written records of the complaint, the process of investigation, meetings, telephone conversations and other documents will be kept for two years. These are confidential to the school and Local Authority, but will be the basis of a report of the investigation if you request one.

Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Head teacher or designate will produce a report and a written response to you. They may meet with you to discuss the outcome and resolve any outstanding concerns.

The written response will include:

- a full explanation of the decision reached and the reasons for it, including clarification of any misunderstandings by any of the parties involved.
- where applicable, what action the academy will take to address the complaint and prevent recurrence, which might include an undertaking to review academy policies.
- an apology if appropriate.
- information on how and the timescale to request a review by the governing body, if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

STAGE THREE - GOVERNING BODY REVIEW OF HEAD TEACHER'S OR CHAIR'S INVESTIGATION

A request to review a complaint investigation should be made in writing to the Chair of the Governing Body, within **28 days** of receipt of the outcome letter and should give the grounds for a review.

These grounds are limited to:

- a claim that material information was not taken into account in investigating the complaint
- a claim that procedures have not been properly applied in handling the complaint
- a claim that there has been an incorrect interpretation of Academy's policy

The Governing Body will then nominate three members to form a Complaint Panel to review the complaint and any further documents submitted by you. These must be governors who have had no prior involvement with the complaint.

If the Chair of the Governing Body has not previously been involved, they should chair the Panel, otherwise the Vice-Chair should do it. The Head teacher, or others involved in the original investigation should not have a place on the panel. If the complaint is from a parent, Governors will bear in mind the advantage of having a parent governor on the Panel and will also be sensitive to issues of race, gender and religious affiliation, to ensure a fair and balanced hearing of the case.

The Clerk convenes the Complaints Panel within 28 days of receipt of the review request and at the same time provides panel members with copies of all relevant correspondence and documentation. If this is extensive, the Chair of the Panel should prepare a thorough summary for the other members.

You, the Head teacher and other witnesses will be given a minimum of **5 working days'** notice of the hearing. You will be advised of your right to bring a friend, or to be represented by someone of your choice.

The Panel meeting will be kept as informal as possible. A round table type of meeting will be adopted where possible.

The Outcome of a Review may be to:

- uphold the result of the original investigation, in which case a full explanation will be given.
- find the complaint was justified and overturn the original decision. In this case the Review Panel will issue an apology and if the provision of a service or other remedial action is required, will ensure this is put in hand quickly and consider implications for procedures, staff training etc.
- find there has been no malpractice or failure of service, but that policies or resources did not permit what the complainant wanted. In this case, the Review Panel will consider whether or not it is appropriate for the policy or allocation of resources to be reviewed and give a full explanation of what action will be taken.

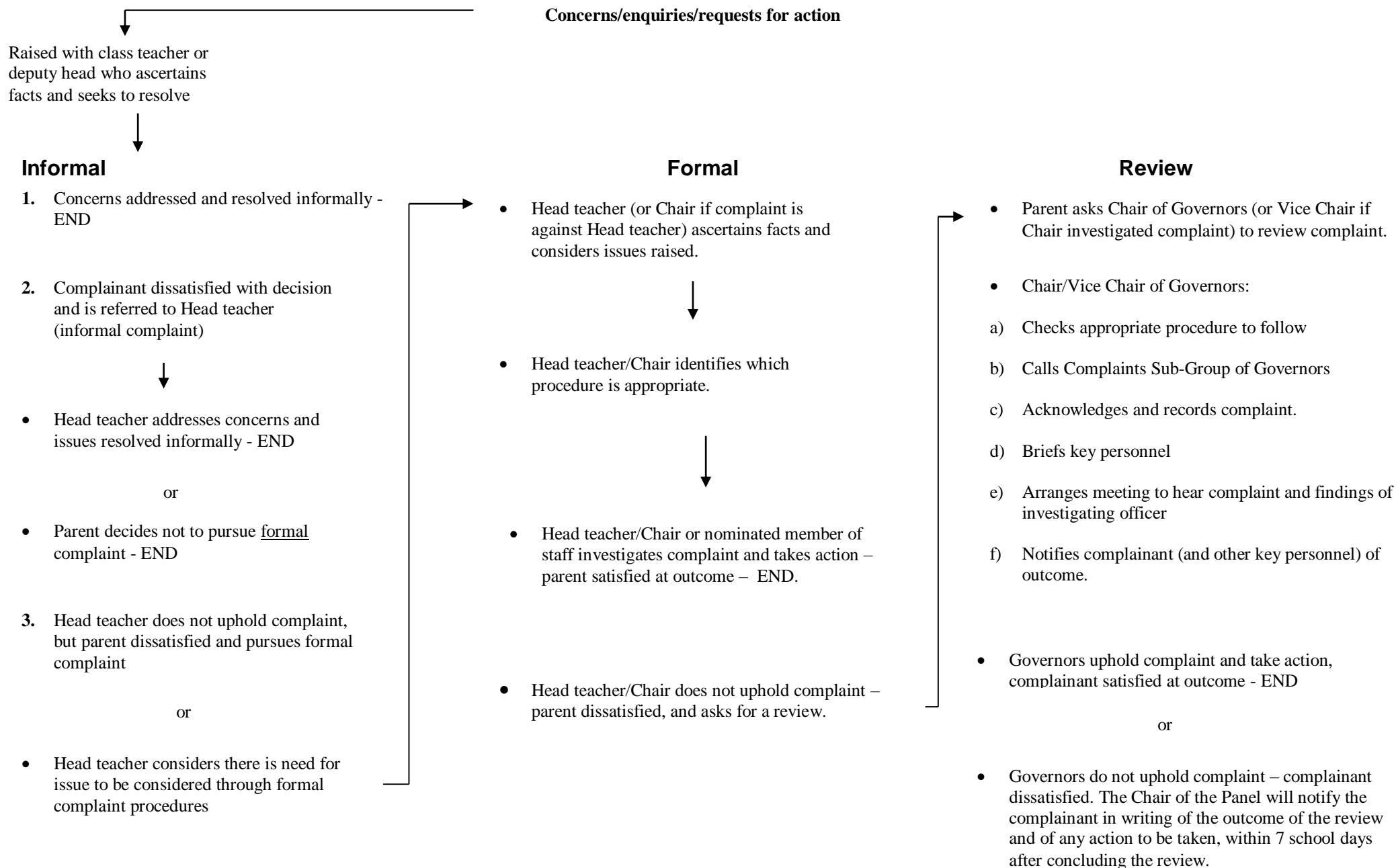
The Chair of the Panel will notify the complainant in writing of the outcome of the review and of any action to be taken, within 7 school days after concluding the review.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Investigator will record the outcome in the academy's complaints log and identify who is responsible for carrying out and monitoring any recommended action.

The Head teacher will produce a regular analysis of complaints received for the Governing Body.

FLOW CHART FOR COMPLAINTS RAISED WITH ACADEMIES - Appendix A



Academy Complaints Policy – Appendix B
Complaint Form

Data Protection Act 1998

The personal data that you provide will be used for the purposes of investigating your complaint and for producing statistical data, to enable the school's management to monitor access to and the effectiveness of the school's complaint procedure. The information you give will be held securely and in confidence.

Please complete and return to Linda Phillips (Complaints Co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/ Ms/Other)

First Name:

Last Name:

Your Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

If your complaint relates to a pupil, please give:

Pupil's name:

And your relationship to the pupil:

Please give details of your complaint.

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

What would you like us to do to make improvements or put things right?

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

Signature:

Date:

Please also complete and return the attached Equal Opportunities monitoring form.

For Office Use

Date received:

Date acknowledgement sent:

By Who:

Date complaint logged:

By Who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: