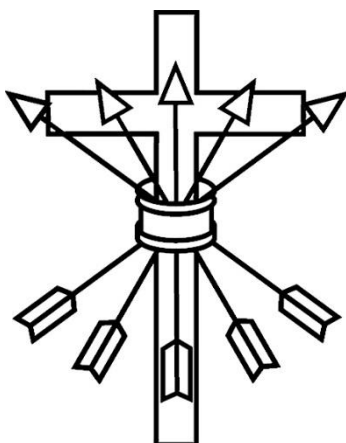


WADDES DON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL



COMPLAINTS & RESOLUTIONS POLICY

STATUS OF POLICY:	Statutory
BASED ON LA PROCEDURE DATED:	Bucks Learning Trust Policy April 2016
COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE:	Personnel & Staff Wellbeing
GOVERNING BODY APPROVAL:	24.02.21
REVIEW DATE:	Spring Term 2022

Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	3
3.	AREAS NOT COVERED BY THIS PROCEDURE	3
4.	STAGE 1 – INITIAL CONCERNS	4
5.	STAGE 2 – FORMAL PROCEDURE	4
6.	INVESTIGATION	5
7.	STAGE 3	5
8.	OUTCOME OF THE PANEL HEARING	6
9.	COMPLAINTS ARISING FROM THE ASSESSMENT AND/OR AWARDING OF GRADES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	6
10.	SERIAL OR UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS	7
11.	MONITORING AND REVIEW	7
12.	FLOWCHART SUMMARY	8
13.	APPENDIX 1 – COMPLAINT FORM	10
14.	APPENDIX 2 – AT THE PANEL HEARING	13

1. Introduction

Our governing body has adopted this procedure to deal with concerns or complaints from members of the school community or general public.

2. Aims and Objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Careful consideration will be given to all concerns and complaints and we will deal with them as swiftly as possible. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed.

In all cases we will put the interests of the child above all other issues.

Our procedure is underpinned by the following **framework of principles**: -

- 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
- 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.

3. Areas not covered by this procedure

This procedure does not apply to issues concerning admissions, exclusion appeals, statutory assessments of special educational needs, or grievances by school staff. These are the subject of separate complaints procedures; more information can be obtained from the school.

In addition, the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) can investigate complaints about academies. Full details about the role of the EsFA can be found on the Department for Education (DfE) website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skillsfunding-agency/about>

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

4. Stage 1 – initial concerns

If you have any concerns about the school, or the education we are providing at any time, please discuss the matter with your child's class teacher/Head of Year at the earliest opportunity.

It is **not** appropriate to publicise any concerns you may have on social networking sites. Please speak, or write, to someone at the school at your earliest convenience, rather than using any other means.

The school considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved following discussion and a shared understanding of the issues. All members of staff work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school and is making good progress and they always want to know if there is a problem so they can help to resolve it.

Most concerns can be resolved at this level, however, if after speaking to your child's class teacher/Head of Year, you are still concerned please discuss the matter with the Headteacher.

5. Stage 2 – formal procedure

Most concerns are resolved at Stage 1, however if you remain dissatisfied and wish to take the matter further you can let us know in person, by telephone or in writing.

There is a complaint form (Appendix 1) attached to this procedure which can be helpful to complete. The aim of the form is to give us as clear an understanding as possible of your complaint and includes a section on what actions you feel would resolve the problem.

If you would like support in completing the form from someone unconnected with the complaint, please let us know and we would be happy to organise this for you.

If you are making your complaint in writing, it should be returned to the headteacher. However, if the complaint is about the headteacher or a governor, it should be returned to the chair of the governing body at the school address, marking the envelope 'FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION'. If your complaint is about the chair of the governing body, your completed form should be returned to the clerk of the governing body.

You will receive an acknowledgement of the receipt of your complaint within 5 school days.

6. Investigation

An investigation will be carried out into the complaint and the way it has been handled by the school. This will include a review of any relevant documentation and information and seeking the views of relevant people, where necessary. The person undertaking the investigation will normally write to you with the outcome of this process within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.

If, at any time, it becomes apparent that the complaint is a disciplinary or capability issue, 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, however, you are not entitled to know which procedure, or the final outcome, because of the right to confidentiality of the member of staff involved.

Following the outcome of the investigation, if you feel your concern has not been resolved, you may choose to move to Stage 3 of the procedure, with the exception of complaints relating to the assessment and/or awarding of grades for or in place of external examinations arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic including allegations of malpractice or administration (see Section 9 below) You must let the school know if you wish to do this within 15 school days of the completion of Stage 2.

7. Stage 3

At this stage the complaint will be considered by a panel, who will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the governing body.

Panel members will have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. The meeting will normally take place within 15 school days of your request.

You will have the opportunity to submit evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel and also to attend, accompanied by a friend/partner if you wish, to put your case. The headteacher will be given the same opportunities. Appendix 2 outlines the process that will be followed at a panel hearing.

The clerk to the panel will minute the hearing. The minutes will not be a verbatim account but will record the important elements of the case, e.g. the nature of the complaint, any action taken and any agreed outcome or solutions. The minutes will be signed off by the panel chair and a copy given to the parties as soon as possible after the meeting.

8. Outcome of the Panel Hearing

The panel will write to you with its conclusion within 5 school days of the meeting, and its decision is final.

If you are still not satisfied, you may refer your complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The ESFA will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the school. The ESFA will not overturn a school's decision about a complaint. However, it will look into:

- Whether there was undue delay, or the school did not comply with its own complaints procedure
- Whether the school was in breach of its funding agreement with the secretary of state
- Whether the school has failed to comply with any other legal obligation

If the school did not deal with the complaint properly, it will be asked to re-investigate the complaint. If the school's complaints procedure is found not to meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

The complaint can be made online. For more information or to refer a complaint, please see the following webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

9. Complaints arising from the assessment and/or awarding of grades for or in place of external examinations arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic (including allegations of malpractice or administration)

Concerns and complaints arising from the assessment and/or awarding of grades for or in place of external examinations arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic (including allegations of malpractice or administration) will follow stages 1 and 2 as set out above. Following the outcome of Stage 2, if you feel your concern has not been resolved, you may choose to appeal or make a complaint to the relevant exam board.

10. Serial or Unreasonable Complaints

Unfortunately, in a small minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the school.

These actions can occur either while the complaint is being investigated, or once the school has concluded the complaint investigation.

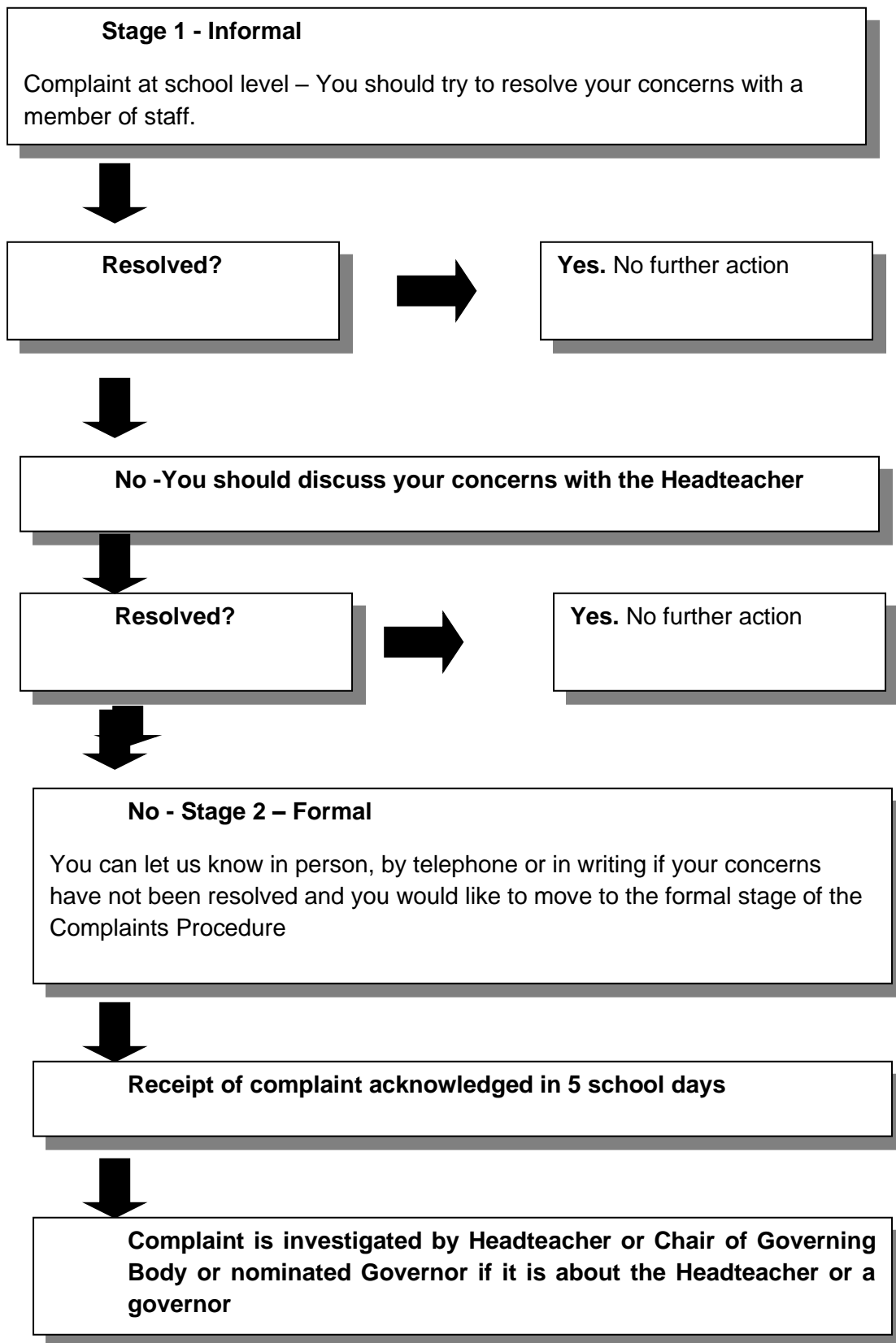
In such cases, the school will follow advice from the Department for Education and the Local Government Ombudsman and follow its policy for managing unreasonable complaints/behaviour.

11. 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.

12. Flowchart Summary*

* Please refer to the procedure for more detailed information





You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.



Resolved?



Yes. No further action



No - If you wish to take your complaint to Stage 3 of the procedure you will be asked to confirm this within 15 school days of the completion of Stage 2.



Governor Complaints Panel meets to consider your complaint with 15 school days. If you wish to submit evidence to the panel you will be invited to do so in advance of the meeting. You will also be invited to attend the panel meeting to explain the nature of your complaint



Panel will make a final decision on behalf of the Governing Body and writes to you within 5 school days

Resolved?



Yes. No further action



No - You can write to the Secretary of State of Education and Skills if you feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures.

13. Appendix One - Complaint form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your Name.....

Pupil's Name.....

Your relationship to the pupil.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Please give concise details of your complaint, including dates, names of witnesses etc, to allow the matter to be fully investigated

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.

(Who did you speak to/write to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

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

Signature:.....

Date.....

<p>Office Use:</p> <p>Date acknowledgement sent.....</p> <p>By whom.....</p> <p>Complaint referred to.....</p> <p>Date.....</p>
--

14. Appendix Two - At the panel hearing

- After introductions, the complainant will be invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses (if any).
- The headteacher/Chair of Governors may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The headteacher/Chair of Governors is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses (if any).
- The complainant may question both the headteacher/Chair of Governors and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The headteacher/Chair of Governors is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- The Chair of the panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within five school days.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The clerk remains to support the panel.