



Complaints Policy Reviewed January 2017

All policies at GSSC are written to reflect Statutory Requirements or National Guidance and updated in accordance with this. There are times when the Government or Local Authority provide updates to policies that are outside of the policy review schedules. In such instances, an appendix will be added to policies to reflect these updates until the Governing Board can ratify these amended policies. These appendices will supersede previously issued Statutory Requirements or National Guidance.



Policy Written by/date:	Signed/Date: Chair or Vice Chair	Policy due for review:
Tracy Phillips: November 2014	Jane Brand 1 st December 2014	November 2015
Lisa Atack January 2017		January 2018

This Policy is linked to the following School Policies and/or Procedures

Curriculum Policies	School Policies	School Business/Finance Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • SEN • English (incl Library) • Art • DT • Forest Schools • Humanities • Maths • P.E • PSHE • ICT/Computing • R.E • Collective Worship • Science • Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) • Careers • Post 16 (inc Consortium) • Communication • ASD • Music • School Council • Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural including promoting fundamental British Values • Teaching and Learning • Conductive Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection and Safeguarding • Inclusion Policy and SEN Info • SEN Report • Positive Intervention • Prospectus • Pupil Attendance • Anti—Bullying • Designated Teacher (LAC) • Exclusions Policy • Volunteers • Animal Visits • Educational Visits • Exams/Accreditation • Staff Dress Code • First Aid Health and Medications • Intimate Care • Manual Handling/Mobility • Initial Teacher Training • Planning, Preparation and Assessment • Continuing Professional Development • Teaching Assistants • Well-Being of Staff and Student • SEF • SDP • Bereavement • Use of Photography and Video • Acceptable Use • E-Safety • Non-Smoking/Electronic Cigarettes Policy • Complaints • Assessment, Recording and Reporting • Parental Involvement • Student Participation • Home School Agreement • Healthy Eating • Transition • Pupil Premium • Supporting pupils in school with medical conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection • Confidentiality • Pay Policy • Register of Business interests of HT and Governors • Accessibility Plan • Charging • Freedom of Information • Publication Scheme • Staff Grievance • School Companies • School Income • Lettings • Code of Conduct for all Staff • Governor Allowances • Allegations of abuse against staff • Health and Safety • Retention of data • Recruitment and Selection Policy (Safer Recruitment) • Governing Board Succession Planning • Whistleblowers • Instrument of Government • Staff Discipline, Conduct and Grievance procedures • Equal Opportunity Policy • Equality Duty • Staffing Structure • Staff Attendance Planned • Staff Attendance Unplanned • Anti-Harassment • School Emergency Plan • Critical Incidents • Transport • Pool Safety and Procedures • Lone working • Capability Policy • Visiting speakers policy • Appraisal

GSSC COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY

Introduction

This revised policy was written by Lisa Atack Head teacher in January 2017 based on the DfE Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016 and a previous policy revised by the Deputy Head in November 2014 based on a previous policy written by the School Business Manager in January 2013. It was approved and adopted by governors and will be monitored and reviewed annually as part of the school's cycle of policy review or sooner if required.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of complaints and compliments at the school.

Aims

The aims and objectives of the complaints policy and procedures at GSSC are:

- The complaints procedure should be easily accessible and well publicised, so that everyone knows how to raise concerns.
- It is desirable for any concern/complaint to be addressed by a member of staff/governor at a level closest to the cause for the concern.
- Procedures should be as speedy as possible, consistent with fairness to all.
- A complaint is distinct from any formal disciplinary procedure. Staff who may be questioned as part of a complaints procedure must be treated fairly and have an opportunity to put their case. They should be offered support in responding to any investigation into a complaint.
- If it becomes apparent to the Head teacher or Chair of Governors that the concern/complaint has the potential to be a disciplinary issue, advice should immediately be sought from School's HR.
- Confidentiality is important in securing the confidence of all concerned. Conversations and correspondence must be treated with discretion. However, the parties to a complaint should realise that some information may have to be shared to carry out a thorough investigation.
- If the investigation of a complaint shows that it is justified, then the school should consider how to make amends in an appropriate way.
- Staff and governors in schools should have the opportunity to take part in training or briefing to raise their awareness of the procedures and develop their skills in dealing with people who wish to complain.
- All complaints should be recorded and monitored to identify issues and allow any lessons to be learned by the school.
- Every complaint should be acknowledged as "genuinely felt" by the complainant.

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 generally defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal

procedures. Schools should take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

There are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, the school's formal procedure should be invoked through the stages outlined within their procedure.

Who can make a complaint?

Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions). Schools must not limit complaints to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school.

Rationale

To maintain close working relationships between parents/carers, staff, community and governors. The aim are:

- To investigate and resolve complaints as quickly and smoothly as is practical
- To be fair, just and objective in the resolution of any issue
- To have a simple and clear procedure

Raising concerns and resolving complaints

- From time to time parents, and others connected with the school, will become aware of matters which cause them concern. To encourage resolution of such situations the Governing Body has adopted a "School Complaints Procedure".
- The procedure is devised with the intention that it will:
 - Usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means
 - Be simple to use and understand
 - Be non-adversarial
 - Provide confidentiality
 - Allow problems to be handled swiftly through the correct procedure
 - Address all the points at issue
 - Inform future practice so that the problem is unlikely to recur.
- Full details of the procedure are detailed below

Complaints

We take all complaints seriously.

The underlying principle of this policy is that, if at all possible, any issues, concerns and complaints ought to be handled and resolved informally (usually by the staff directly concerned) without the need to invoke a formal referral and process. It is expected that most concerns will be resolved without the need to go any further.

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing and all complaints received will be investigated and responded to.

The procedure explains what to do if you or your child feels unhappy about something and how to arrange to talk to someone or to go on to make a formal complaint.

Schools are not responsible for complaints about the behaviour of young people outside of school hours, unless the young person is involved in extra-curricular activities provided by GSSC at that time.

Safeguarding and child protection, disciplinary or legal proceedings will take precedence over complaints procedures and timescales.

Complaints may be received about any of the following:

- a. Teaching and learning
- b. Provision of extra-curricular activities
- c. Bullying issues
- d. Policies and procedures and their application
- e. How behaviour management systems are applied
- f. The behaviour or attitude of staff at the school
- g. Community facilities or services that the school provides

The above list is not exhaustive, however there may be occasions when a complaint is received, but due to the nature of the complaint it will need to be referred to and responded to outside of the complaints process.

GSSC would not normally be expected to progress complaints which refer to the following matters:

- a. A previously withdrawn complaint
- b. A repeat complaint that can be evidenced as having already been fully investigated by GSSC
- c. Complaints relating to matters subject to legal proceedings, grievance or disciplinary proceedings or child protection matters
- d. Matters for which there is a statutory appeal process in place
- e. Complaints relating to matters over 12 months old, that cannot be fairly or reasonably investigated because of the delay
- f. A complaint which is unclear, frivolous or vexatious

Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints and Unacceptable Behaviour

Occasionally GSSC may encounter a small number of complainants whose behaviour is unacceptable, for example is abusive, offensive or threatening. In these circumstances GSSC will take action to protect staff from this behaviour.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All information relating to a complaint will be handled in a sensitive way ensuring that confidentiality is maintained. Any personal information obtained in relation to a complaint is only used for that purpose.

GSSC will ensure that personal information is dealt with correctly and securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Advocacy and Support

GSSC will only respond to complaints and representations made by a representative or an advocate where they are eligible, or have permission to act on the pupil, parent or carer's behalf. Where an advocate is seeking to progress a complaint, GSSC will ensure appropriate written permission is obtained before progressing matters or releasing any information.

GSSC understands that for some families making a complaint can be difficult and at times stressful. If you wish to receive support in making a complaint please contact the Family Support Manager or if you or your child requires an interpreter to support you through the stages of the complaints process.

Publicising this Policy

It is a legal requirement that this policy is publicised. GSSC will ensure that this policy is included in:

- a. The information given to new parents when their children join the school
- b. Guidance notes on Compliments and Complaints
- c. Newsletters
- d. GSSC School website

How to make a complaint

We encourage any complainant to make every effort to resolve any concerns informally.

Please help us to resolve any concerns or complaints that you may have by following the stages below.

You can have a representative accompany you at any stage in the complaints process.

An individual wishing to make a complaint can do so either:

- a. In person
- b. Via an advocate
- c. By telephone
- d. By letter
- e. By email to office@greenfields.northants.sch.uk

- f. By writing message in home/school book
- g. Via website office@greenfields.northants.sch.uk

The GSSC Complaints Procedure has three stages:-

1. Initial Approach
2. Formal Complaint (to Head Teacher or Chair of Governors)
3. Appeal (to Governor Committee)

Stage 1 – Initial Approach

Guidelines

- The vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally, often straight away by the Class Teacher, Assistant Head teachers, Deputy Head of School or Head Teacher.
- The school aims to ensure that parents feel able to raise concerns with staff without undue formality, either in person, by telephone or in writing. There may be occasions when it is appropriate or helpful for someone to accompany or act on behalf of a parent.
- Parents may not be clear at first that they are making a complaint. They may wish to ask a question or express an opinion. A preliminary discussion with school staff will usually clarify the issue and help parents to decide whether they wish to take the matter further.

Procedure

1. Parents will have an opportunity for informal discussion of their concerns with an appropriate member of staff. This discussion will aim to clarify the nature of the parent's concern and assure them that the school wishes to hear about it. The discussion will also aim to clarify what kind of outcome the parent is seeking.
2. If the member of staff first contacted cannot deal with the matter immediately he/she should make a firm arrangement to deal with it at a future date or refer the matter to the Head Teacher or another appropriate member of staff. In either case a note of the name, date and contact details of the complainant should be taken. The first contact should check to make sure the referral has been successful.
3. The Head Teacher will ensure that staff have guidelines about when to refer a matter and to whom.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint to Head Teacher or Chair of Governors

Guidelines

- The Head Teacher will determine who has responsibility for responding to a formal complaint, including the decision about his/her own involvement at various stages.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the action of the Head Teacher as has been very closely involved informally, the Chair of Governors should carry out all the Stage Two procedures, with support if necessary from another governor, and with advice from the academy legal team and/or H R provider if required.
- Individuals on the governing body should not become involved at this stage to avoid prejudicing their possible future involvement.

Procedure

1. Parents who wish to pursue a formal complaint at Stage Two will be asked to put the complaint and their desired outcome in writing to the Chair of Governors or Head Teacher. The Chair of Governors/Head Teacher (or designated member of staff), will acknowledge the complaint orally or in writing within three days of receipt giving a brief explanation of the complaints procedures and a target date for providing a response. Ideally, this will be within ten days. If it is not possible to deal with the matter in this time, the complainant should be informed of when it is likely to be concluded.
2. The Chair of Governors/Head Teacher (or a designated member of staff) may offer an opportunity for the complainant to meet him/her. The complainant will, if she/he wishes, be allowed to be accompanied by a friend or relative who can speak on his/her behalf. Interpreting facilities should be made available if required.
3. If necessary the Chair of Governors/Head Teacher (or a designated member of staff) will interview any witnesses or take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil may also be interviewed, normally with a parent/guardian present. In some circumstances this may not be possible or appropriate and a senior member of staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable will attend with him/her. If a member of staff is complained against, the needs of that person should be borne in mind. Advice may need to be sought from the academy's Human Resources provider.

Stage 3 – Appeal to Panel of Governors

Guidelines

- Complaints rarely reach the appeal stage, but it is important that governing bodies are prepared to deal with them. At this stage, the Chair of Governors may wish to seek advice from the legal team/H R provider.
- The aim of the appeal to a panel of governors is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it may only be possible to establish the facts of a situation and make recommendations about future action, and to satisfy the complainant that their complaints have been taken seriously.
- It is important should a complaint reach the appeal stage that the governing body is impartial and independent and is seen to be so. Individual complaints should not be considered by the full governing body. The governing body should therefore establish a panel to deal with complaints, by nominating a pool of five governors from which three, non-staff, can be drawn for any hearing.
- Panel members should have had no prior involvement with the complaint. Generally, the Chair of Governors is not on the panel as she/he may be involved at the earlier stage. The Governing body should have regard to the advantages of having a mix of types of governor on the panel and be sensitive to issues of equal opportunity in the composition of the panel.
- Individual governors should not get involved in looking into complaints before this stage to avoid prejudicing their potential involvement. If individual governors are approached by parents or others with complaints, they should refer the complainant to the schools complaints procedure, making the necessary introduction to a member of staff or Head Teacher if appropriate.
- Complaints that reach the appeal stage will do so because the complainant is not satisfied with the response so far. In this situation it is perhaps helpful for the governing body to view any complaint as being against the school rather than an individual staff member whose actions may have led to the original complaint.
- All except for the governor's panel and any advisers should then withdraw and the panel should consider the evidence. This should include a judgement about the validity of the complaint; appropriate action to be taken by the school and/or the parent; and where appropriate, recommendations on

changes to the schools' systems or procedures to ensure similar problems do not arise in the future.

- The school should ensure that a copy of all correspondence and notes is kept confidentially on file in the school. This should be separate from pupils' personal records.
- The broad outcomes recommended by the panel can be reported to the next full governing body or appropriate committee with the identity of all those taking part kept confidential. The governing body should monitor implementation of the recommendations.

Stage 4 – Complaining to the EFA and Ofsted

If you feel that the Governing Body or GSSC have acted unreasonably about your concerns, you can write to the Education Funding Agency. Where possible you will need to put your complaint in writing and list the steps you have already taken and the responses you have received.

Complaints about GSSC should be sent to:

- Via the Department for Education's school complaint form (using the link below)

<https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/school-complaints-form>

or

- By post to:

Department for Education, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2GJ

Alternatively, you may wish to complain to OFSTED. You should contact the helpdesk on 0300 1234 234 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Staff on the help desk will discuss your concerns with you, advise you about whether to put your complaint in writing or suggest other ways to deal with your concerns.

To make a formal complaint to OFSTED you will need to write to:

Enquiries, National Business Unit, OFSTERD, 5th, 6th and 7th Floors, Piccadilly Gates, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD. Further information can be found on the OFSTED website:

www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/complaints-ofsted-about-schools-guidance-for-parents

General Principles

- The resolution of a complaint provides the potential opportunity for the school to improve its practice and develop a strong partnership with parents.
- The complaints procedure should be easily accessible and well publicised so that parents know how to raise concerns.
- It is desirable for any concern/complaint to be addressed by a member of staff/governors at a level closest to the cause for the concern.
- Procedures should be as speedy as possible, consistent with fairness to all (suggested timescales are provided in the model for schools to adopt or adapt to suit their circumstances).
- A complaint is distinct from any formal disciplinary procedure. Staff who may be questioned as part of a complaints procedure must be treated fairly and have an opportunity to put their case. They should be offered support in responding to any investigation into a complaint.
- If it becomes apparent to the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors that the parent's concern/complaint has the potential to be a disciplinary issue, advice should immediately be sought from the H R provider (EPM).
- Confidentiality is important in securing the confidence of all concerned. Conversations and correspondence must be treated with discretion. Parents need to feel confident that a complaint will not disadvantage their child. However, the parties should realise that some information may have to be shared to carry out a thorough investigation.
- If the investigation of a complaint shows that it is justified, then the school should consider how to make amends in an appropriate way.
- Staff and Governors in schools should have the opportunity to take part in training or briefing to raise their awareness of the procedures and develop their skills in dealing with people who wish to complain.
- All complaints should be recorded and monitored to identify issues and allow any lessons to be learned by the school.
- Every complaint should be acknowledged as 'genuinely felt' by the complainant.

APPENDIX I – Model procedure for the Conduct of a Stage 3 Governors Panel Hearing

1. The Chair of the committee should invite all parties (except any witnesses) into the room, introduce them and explain the role of each person.
2. The Chair should explain to all present that the purpose of the hearing is to review the complaint and try to resolve it and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it may only be possible to establish the facts of a situation and make recommendations about future action.
3. The Chair should then ascertain whether the proposed procedure is acceptable. If so, the meeting will proceed along the following lines.
 - The complainant describes his/her complaint and may call witnesses
 - The Head Teacher may seek clarification from the complainant and any witnesses.
 - The Governors' Committee or its advisers may seek clarification from the complainant and any witnesses.
 - The Head Teacher will respond to the complaint and may call witnesses.
 - The complainant may seek clarification from the Head Teacher and any witnesses.
 - The Governors Committee (including any Advisers) may seek clarification from the Head Teacher and any witnesses.
 - The Head Teacher will be given the opportunity to sum up.
 - The complainant will be given the opportunity to sum up.
 - Both parties will leave the room to allow the Committee to deliberate but any advisers may remain to offer technical and procedural advice.
4. The Committee should make a decision or judgement on:-
 - the validity of the complaint
 - appropriate action to be taken by the school and or/parent
 - and where appropriate, recommendations on changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure similar problems do not arise in the future.
5. The decision or judgement will be confirmed in writing within five days.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

STAGE 1

If you have any concern or complaint about the matters within the school, please let the Head Teacher know straight away. It will be investigated fully, with the help of appropriate members of the school staff. Every effort will be made in an informal way, to settle the matter quickly and you will then be asked to say whether you are satisfied with the result. If the complaint involved the Head Teacher you should initially write to the chair of Governors and then to a Governor Committee if this is not resolved.

STAGE 2

Should you, for any reason, not be satisfied, an opportunity will be provided for you to take your complaint to the School's Governing Body. You may also express your views in person at a meeting with governors. You may bring a friend with you, if you choose to attend the meeting, and you will be sent written details explaining how the Governors will hear your complaint. Your complaints will be fully investigated and the decision which the governors reach will be sent to you in writing.

STAGE 3

If you are still dissatisfied, you may complain to the Local Education Authority. The procedures will be almost the same as those described at Stage Two, except that your complaint will be by a panel not connected with the school.

STAGE 4

We expected that very few complaints would reach Stage 3. If they do and you are still not satisfied parents/carers may take the matter up with the Secretary of State for Education.

If a complaint is made about Religious Education or Collective Worship, Sex Education or Drug Education Stages 1 and 2 are also followed. The most important part of this procedure is Stage 1, which asks parents and GSSC to do everything possible to settle complaints in an informal way, and thus avoid the need for more formal steps.

Recording Complaints

Schools must ensure that they comply with their obligations under the Equality Act 2010. It is common practice to ask for complaints to be made by using a complaint form or in writing, however the complainant may have communication preferences due to disability or learning difficulties and schools must allow alternative methods of contact:

- A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing;
- In order to prevent any later challenge or disagreement over what was said, brief notes of meetings and telephone calls should be kept and a copy of any written response added to the record. Where there are communication difficulties, schools may wish to use recording devices to ensure the complainant is able to access and review the discussions at a later point;
- Schools should record the progress of the complaint and the final outcome. The headteacher or complaints co-ordinator should be responsible for these records and hold them centrally.

- Schools should be aware that complainants have a right to copies of these records under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

Governing Body Review

- Complaints should not be shared with the whole governing body, except in very general terms, in case an appeal panel needs to be organised;
- If the whole governing body is aware of the substance of a complaint before the final stage has been completed, schools should arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint. They may approach a different school to ask for help or the local Governor Services team at the LA;
- Complainants have the right to request an independent panel, if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. Schools should consider the request but ultimately, the decision is made by the governors;
- The process of listening to and resolving complaints can contribute to school improvement. When individual complaints are heard, schools may also identify underlying issues that need to be addressed. The monitoring and review of complaints can be a useful tool in evaluating a school's performance. The governing body may wish to consider using complaints and review their handling at regular intervals to inform improvements and the effectiveness of the complaints procedure;
- It is the governing body which determines how often the complaints procedure is reviewed however the department suggests as good practice that it is reviewed regularly; every two to three years is quite typical. This will enable the school to take into account any new guidance issued by the Department for Education or legislative changes.

Responsibility for reviewing the procedure may be delegated to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the Head Teacher. If projected review dates are published on the policy document they should be adhered to. Failure to do so could constitute a failure to adhere to a policy.

Complaints not in scope of the procedure

A complaints procedure should cover all complaints about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides with the **exceptions** listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) • School re-organisation proposals • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities (LA). For school admissions, it will depend on who is the admission authority (either the school or the LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.</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>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures 	<p>These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities. 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.</p>

Serial and Persistent Complainants

- Schools should do their best to be helpful to people who contact them with a complaint or concern or a request for information. However, in cases where a school is contacted repeatedly by an individual making the same points, or who asks them to reconsider their position, schools will need to act appropriately.
- There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaint procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. It is important for schools to recognise when they really have done everything they can in response to a complaint. It is a poor use of schools' time and resources to reply to repeated letters, emails or telephone calls making substantially the same points. If a complainant tries to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governors can inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.
- If the complainant contacts the school again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and the school may choose not to respond. However, schools must be careful that they do not mark a complaint as 'serial' before the complainant has completed the procedure.
- **Note:** The Department for Education does not itself use the term 'vexatious' when dealing with serial or persistent correspondents as it could potentially be inflammatory. However, it is a recognised term. In the context of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, the Upper Tribunal concluded that 'vexatious' could be defined as the '*...manifestly unjustified, inappropriate or improper use of a formal procedure.*' An exemption therefore exists in Section 14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, this exemption can only be applied to requests themselves, and not the individuals who submit them.

- More information about dealing with vexatious requests for information is available on the [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\) website](#).
- Under no circumstances should an individual be marked as serial for exercising their democratic right to refer their complaint to their local MP regardless of which stage the complaint has reached. The application of a 'serial or persistent' marking should be against the subject or complaint itself rather than the complainant.

Nature of Contact	Appropriate Person to receive contact	Relevant policy/procedure
Request for published information	School office	FOI Act Charging Policy
Request for personal pupil information	Head or Deputy	DPA Charging Policy
Complaint about GB Policy (content or application of)	Clerk/Chair of Governors	General Complaints Procedure
Concern about provision of facilities or services by the school	Head or Chair of Governors (if allegation against head)	General Complaints Procedure
Allegation of verbal or physical assault by employee on pupil	Head (Designated Senior Lead) or in Head's absence Deputy Chair of Governors if allegation is against the Head	School Staff Discipline Procedure (Confidential to school and employee)
Allegation about capability of a member of staff	Head or Chair of Governors (if allegation against head)	Local Child Protection Procedures (Confidential to school, CPO and parents of alleged victim)
Conduct of another pupil (e.g bullying)	Head or Deputy	School Behaviour and Discipline procedures (Confidential to School and parents of alleged perpetrator)
Discipline of a pupil	Head or Deputy	School Behaviour and Discipline (Confidential to School and parent of pupil)
Content of/Failure to maintain a Statement of SEN or EHC Plan	Head or Deputy Local Authority	LA Procedures
Admission	Local Authority	Admissions Procedures Admissions Appeal Procedure
Exclusions	Local Authority	Exclusions Appeal Procedure
Failure to provide NC Entitlement or inappropriate curriculum	Head Chair of Governors LA	LA Procedure
Extended Services	School Business Manager	Procedures of Service Provider
Decision to remove licence for a person to enter school premises (banning)	Chair of Governors	Governing Body Appeal Committee

GSSC: Meeting Request Form

Please complete this form and return it to the school office for attention of Administration Manager

I wish to meet to discuss the following matter:

Brief details or topic to be discussed:

Dates/times when it would be most convenient for a meeting:

Your name:

Relationship with school (eg parent of a pupil on the school roll):

Pupil's name (if relevant to the matter to be discussed)

Your address:

Telephone Numbers:

Daytime:

Evening:

Email address:

Signed.....

Date.....

School Use:

Date form received:

Date response sent:

Received by:

Response sent by:

GSSC: Formal Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it via the school office to the head teacher or (clerk to the governing body) who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage of the procedure

Your name:

Relationship with school (eg parent of a pupil on the school roll):

Pupil's name (if relevant to the matter to be discussed)

Your address:

Telephone Numbers:

Daytime:

Evening:

Email address:

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

You may continue on separate paper, or attached additional documents if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached =

What action if any have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

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

Signed.....

Date

School Use:
Date form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to: Date:			
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GSSC: Complaint Review Request Form

Please complete this form and return it via the school office to the head teacher or (clerk to the governing body) who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage of the procedure

Your name:

Your address:

Telephone Numbers:

Daytime:

Evening:

Email address:

Dear

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed.

My complaint was submitted to and I received a response fromon

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and the response(s) from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out because:

You may continue on separate paper, or attached additional documents if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached =

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

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Signed.....

Date

School Use: Date form received: Received by: Date acknowledgement sent: Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to: Date:			
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Governing body meetings

a) Complaints panel

If the school receives a formal complaint about one of the limited number of matters, that is not dealt with by another statutory process, it may be necessary to convene a governing body panel to consider the matter and formulate a response.

The complaint is likely to relate to matters such as:

- the content or the application of a governing body policy;
- school facilities;
- services that the school provides.

If a governing body committee already has delegated power with respect to a policy that is being complained of, a panel of members from that committee should be convened. Otherwise the clerk should convene a panel of 3 governors, who have not previously been involved with the complaint.

The complainant should submit the details of their concerns, in writing, to the clerk. The clerk will seek similar written responses from the school, where this is necessary.

A meeting of the panel will take place, usually within 10 school days, to consider the matter. The complainant (who may be accompanied by a friend if they wish) and representative(s) from the school (who may also be accompanied by workplace colleagues or representatives from their professional associations) may be invited to attend this meeting in order to clarify the matter. As the panel meeting is intended to be investigatory, rather than adversarial, the persons giving evidence or making representations to the panel will normally attend separately.

When the panel has collected sufficient information, it will deliberate and then inform the complainant, the head teacher and the governing body of the outcome, in writing.

Consideration of the complaint by the governing body and the school, save for any actions that are agreed, will terminate at this point.

If the complainant is not satisfied that the appropriate procedure has been followed, they may request a review of that process by another panel of the governing body.

b) Review meeting

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the governing body. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of a written request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests, from any of the parties, to make oral representations should be considered sympathetically.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant.

The panel will then invite representatives of the school (usually the head teacher or the chair of the governing body panel that has considered the matter), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

The complainant and the school representative(s) will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting.

The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.

Model Letters

a) Response to spurious complainant

Following receipt of your communications and careful consideration of the same, I regret that I am unable to deal with this matter under the Governing Body's complaints procedure as:

(It will be appropriate to include SOME of the following statements)

- You have not identified any specific actions of which you might complain.
- Your concerns are presented as conclusions rather than specific actions of which you complain.
- The concerns that you identify relate to historical actions and any evidence which might have enabled an objective investigation of your complaint is no longer available.
- The substance of your complaint has been addressed under this procedure already.
- The concerns that you raise do not fall within the scope of this procedure.
- You have not identified any potential sources of evidence which might allow the matter to be investigated.

If you wish my decision to be reviewed then you may take advantage of the procedure set out in the school's formal complaint procedure, by writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body.

Yours sincerely,
Head Teacher
Or Chair of Governing Body

b) Acknowledgement of receipt of formal complaint and invitation to meet

Dear

I have received your formal complaint, dated I am grateful that you have brought this to my attention.

The school and governing body take any complaint most seriously. Therefore I would like to meet with you, as soon as possible, so that I may understand the details of your concerns more clearly. You are welcome to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, if you would find this helpful. Please telephone in order to arrange an appointment./ I can offer you an appointment at on Please let me know if this is convenient.

I hope that we will be able to resolve your concerns through our meeting, but if not I will ensure that the appropriate investigation takes place. This should begin within 5 days of our meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Head Teacher or Chair of Governing Body

**c) Acknowledgement of receipt of formal complaint referred by a third party
(e.g. LA, MP)**

Dear

I have received a copy of the documentation that you sent to setting out a complaint about This has been passed to the school as it has responsibility for these matters.

The school and governing body take any complaint most seriously. Therefore I would like to meet with you, as soon as possible, so that I may understand the details of your concerns more clearly. You are welcome to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, if you would find this helpful. Please telephone in order to arrange an appointment./ I can offer you an appointment at on Please let me know if this is convenient.

Meanwhile I would be grateful if you would complete and return the formal complaint form that is enclosed, along with details of the school's complaints procedure.

I hope that we will be able to resolve your concerns through our meeting, but if not I will ensure that the appropriate investigation takes place. This should begin within 5 days of our meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Head Teacher
Or Chair of Governing Body

d) Acknowledgements of receipt of formal complaint and advising complainant that the matter has been referred

Dear

I have received your formal complaint, dated I am grateful that you have brought this to my attention.

However, the matters that are of concern to you are the responsibility of the governing body/pupil discipline committee/LA/service provider, so I have forwarded your documentation to You should be contacted, in the near future, to be advised of how they intend to proceed.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,
Head Teacher

e) Acknowledgements of receipt of formal complaint and advising complainant that the matter is being dealt with under a confidential school procedure

Dear

I have received your formal complaint, dated I am grateful that you have brought this to my attention.

The school and governing body take any complaint most seriously. Therefore I have initiated an immediate investigation. It is possible that the investigator will wish to meet with you to clarify the evidence that you have provided so far. If so, he/she will write to you to make suitable arrangements.

As your concerns relate to the conduct/capability of a member of staff, the investigation will be carried out under the school's personnel procedures. This means that the detail of the procedure and its outcome must remain confidential to the school and the member of staff concerned.

OR

As your concerns relate to the behaviour of a pupil, the investigation will be carried out under the school's pupil conduct and disciplinary procedures. This means that the detail of the procedure and its outcome must remain confidential to the school and the parents of the child concerned.

In due course, I may be able to provide you with some information about the outcomes of the investigation and the processes that have been followed, but in any event will let you know when the matter has been concluded.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,
Head Teacher Or Chair of Governing Body

f) Notification of decision regarding formal complaint

Dear

Following receipt of your complaint and careful consideration of all the available relevant evidence, I/the panel have/has concluded that:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld. If you are able to provide additional evidence forthwith I/we will reconsider this decision.

OR

- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence in that

OR

- The concern was substantiated in part/in full, as The school will review its practices/procedures with the intention of avoiding any reoccurrence. Parents will be informed in due course of any policy changes.

OR

- In order to address fully the matters investigated, the school has initiated appropriate internal procedures. Due to the nature of these procedures, their outcome must remain strictly confidential. We are confident, however, that the circumstances that gave rise to your complaint should not recur

OR

- In order to address fully the matters of concern that you identified, the panel recommended that the governing body should review its policy, as a matter of urgency. We are confident that this should prevent similar concerns arising in future.

I hope that we may now put this matter behind us and work together for the benefit of your child's progress.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher/Chair of Governing Body/Chair of Panel

g) Review outcome notification

Dear

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint.

Summary of reasons

Therefore, the matter is now closed as far as the school is concerned.

Or

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint except

Therefore, the following action will be taken

Once this action has been completed the school will consider the matter to be closed.

Or

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint except

However the panel determined that this procedural failure did not affect the outcome of the consideration of your complaint so, while we regret this error, we will now consider this matter to be closed as far as the school is concerned.

Yours sincerely,
Chair of Complaints Review Panel
c.c. Head Teacher
Chair of Governors