



Oakham Church of England Primary and The Parks School

**Passion, Fellowship, Pride, Humility, Perseverance,
Hope, Purpose & Thankfulness**

Complaints Procedure

Date	January 2019
Approved by Headteacher	Stephen Cox
Approved by Chair of Governors	Nick Cooper
Review Date	January 2021

Oakham Church of England Primary School

The Parks School

Complaints Procedure

“In loving Christian **Fellowship** we equip everyone to have a **Passion** for life and learning; to have **Pride** in our local community and be **Thankful** for all the parts which make us whole; building **Hope** and resilience to **Persevere** and develop a sense of **Humility** and **Purpose** in our lives.” Our Vision is at the forefront of our thinking and decision making when writing, reviewing and updating all school procedures and policies.

In order to investigate your complaint as fully as possible the governing body has a staged process. Most issues are sorted out informally and we would recommend that you try this approach first. However, if you feel that there is nothing to be gained and you wish to make a formal complaint you have the right to go straight to stage 1 of the complaints procedure.

Resolving concerns informally

- 1.1 Parents should be advised from the outset that there is a complaints procedure that they can use if the matter cannot be resolved informally. Parents are always welcome to discuss any concerns with the appropriate member of staff, who will clarify with the parent the nature of the concern and reassure them that the school wants to hear about it. The member of staff maybe able to explain to the parent how the situation could have happened straightaway or they may need to request time to investigate further before feeding back to the parent at an agreed time. It can also be helpful at this point to identify what sort of outcome the parent is looking for.
- 1.2 If the member of staff first contacted cannot immediately deal with the matter, s/he will make a clear note of the date, name and contact address or phone number and agree a time to respond by. This should be as promptly as is practically possible, but sufficient time to ensure a full understanding of all factors.
- 1.3 In the first instance most matters raised should be dealt with by the person who knows the most about the child/incident/concern. This is usually the class teacher, then the Teamleaders, Assistant Headteacher and then possibly the Headteacher. All members of staff will know how to refer, if necessary, to the person with responsibility for the particular issue raised by the parent.
- 1.4 If the matter is brought straight to the attention of the Headteacher s/he may decide to deal with the complaint or if they feel it is more appropriate in the first instance they may delegate it to another member of staff. If the complaint is against the Headteacher the parent will be advised to contact the Chair of the Governing Body.
- 1.5 The member of staff dealing with the concern will make sure the parent is clear what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed, putting it in writing if appropriate.

Complaints Procedure Stage 1: investigation by the Headteacher/Senior Leader

- 2.1 Complaints at this stage need to be recorded in writing. A complainant may wish to write in themselves. Complainants may also make their complaint verbally and (if requested) can expect help to put their complaint in writing.
- 2.2 The Headteacher or Senior Leader will acknowledge the complaint in writing within three working days of receiving the written complaint. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the school's complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This should normally be within ten working days. If this proves impossible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date. This will be within a maximum of 20 working days unless it is a particularly complex issue.
- 2.2 The Headteacher or Senior Leader will provide an opportunity for the complainant to meet them to supplement any information provided previously or to record the complaint in writing if it has been made verbally. It will be made clear to the complainant that if s/he wishes s/he might be accompanied to any meeting by a friend, relative, representative or advocate who can speak on his/her behalf or to provide support.
- 2.3 If necessary the Headteacher or Senior Leader will interview other parties and take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil should also be interviewed unless this is judged not to be in the interests of the pupil's welfare. Pupils should normally be interviewed with parents/guardians present, but if this would seriously delay the investigation of a serious/urgent complaint or if the pupil has specifically said that s/he would prefer that parents/guardians were not involved, another member of staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable should be present. If a member of staff is complained against, they must have the opportunity to present their case.
- 2.4 The Headteacher or Senior Leader will keep written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.
- 2.5 Once all the relevant facts have been established as far as possible, the Headteacher will then produce a written response to the complainant, including a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, this will include what action the school will take to resolve the complaint. The complainant will be advised that should s/he wish to take the complaint further s/he should notify the Chair of Governors within 20 working days of receiving the letter.
- 2.6 If the complaint is against the Headteacher, or if the Headteacher has been closely involved in the issue, the Chair of the Governing Body will carry out all the Stage 1 procedures.

Stage 2: Review by the Governing Body

- 3.1 The Chair of the Governing Body will write to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the written request for the governing body to review the complaint. The acknowledgement will inform the complainant that three members of the school's governing body will hear the complaint within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. The letter will also explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. These must be received in time for the documents to be sent to the three members.
- 3.2 A meeting of the Governors' Complaints Panel will be convened. No governors with prior involvement in the issues complained about will be included on the panel and it may be necessary to use reserves (previously agreed by the Governing Body) to ensure the Panel can meet within the set time. Governors should bear in mind the advantages of having a parent governor on the panel, and will also be sensitive to issues of race and gender. The Headteacher or Senior Leader will not sit on the Panel. An experienced governor will chair the panel meeting.
- 3.3 The Chair of the panel will ensure the Panel hears the complaint within twenty working days of receiving the letter. All relevant correspondence relating to the complaint will be given to each Panel member as soon as the composition of the panel is confirmed. If the correspondence is extensive, the Chair may prepare a thorough summary for sending to Panel members.
- 3.4 The Chair or clerk will write and inform the complainant, Headteacher or Senior Leader, any relevant witnesses and members of the Panel at least five working days in advance of the date, time and place of the meeting. The notification will also inform the complainant of his/her right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/advocate/interpreter and explain how the meeting will be conducted and the complainant's right to submit further written evidence to the Panel.
- 3.5 The Headteacher or Senior Leader will be invited to attend the Panel meeting and will be asked to prepare a written report for the Panel in response to the complaint. All attendees including the complainant should receive a set of the relevant documents including the Headteacher or Senior Leader's report and the agenda, at least five working days prior to the meeting.
- 3.6 Submission of additional documents or requests for additional attendees will be at the discretion of the Chair of the panel.
- 3.7 At the panel hearing:
 - The complainant will have the opportunity to present their complaint.
 - The Headteacher or Senior Leader will explain the school's position.
 - Those present will have the opportunity to ask questions.
 - Panel members will have the opportunity to make a final statement to the panel.
 - The complainant will be given the opportunity to make a final statement to the panel.
 - The chair will ask the complainant if he or she feels they have had a fair hearing.

The Chair of the Panel has responsibility to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted.

- 3.8 The Chair of the Panel will explain to the complainant and Headteacher that the Panel will consider its decision and that a written decision will be sent to both

parties within 15 working days. The complainant, Headteacher, other members of staff and witnesses will then leave.

- 3.9 The Panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and:
- Agree a decision on the complaint;
 - Decide upon the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint; and
 - Where appropriate, suggest recommended changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
- 3.10 A written statement clearly setting out the decision of the Panel must be sent to the complainant and Headteacher or Senior Leader. The letter to the complainant should also advise how to take the complaint further (Stage 3) if they still feel it is not resolved.
- 3.11 The school should ensure that a copy of all correspondence and notes are kept on file in the school's records. These records should be kept separately from the pupil's personal records.

Stage 3: The DfE School Complaints Unit (SCU)

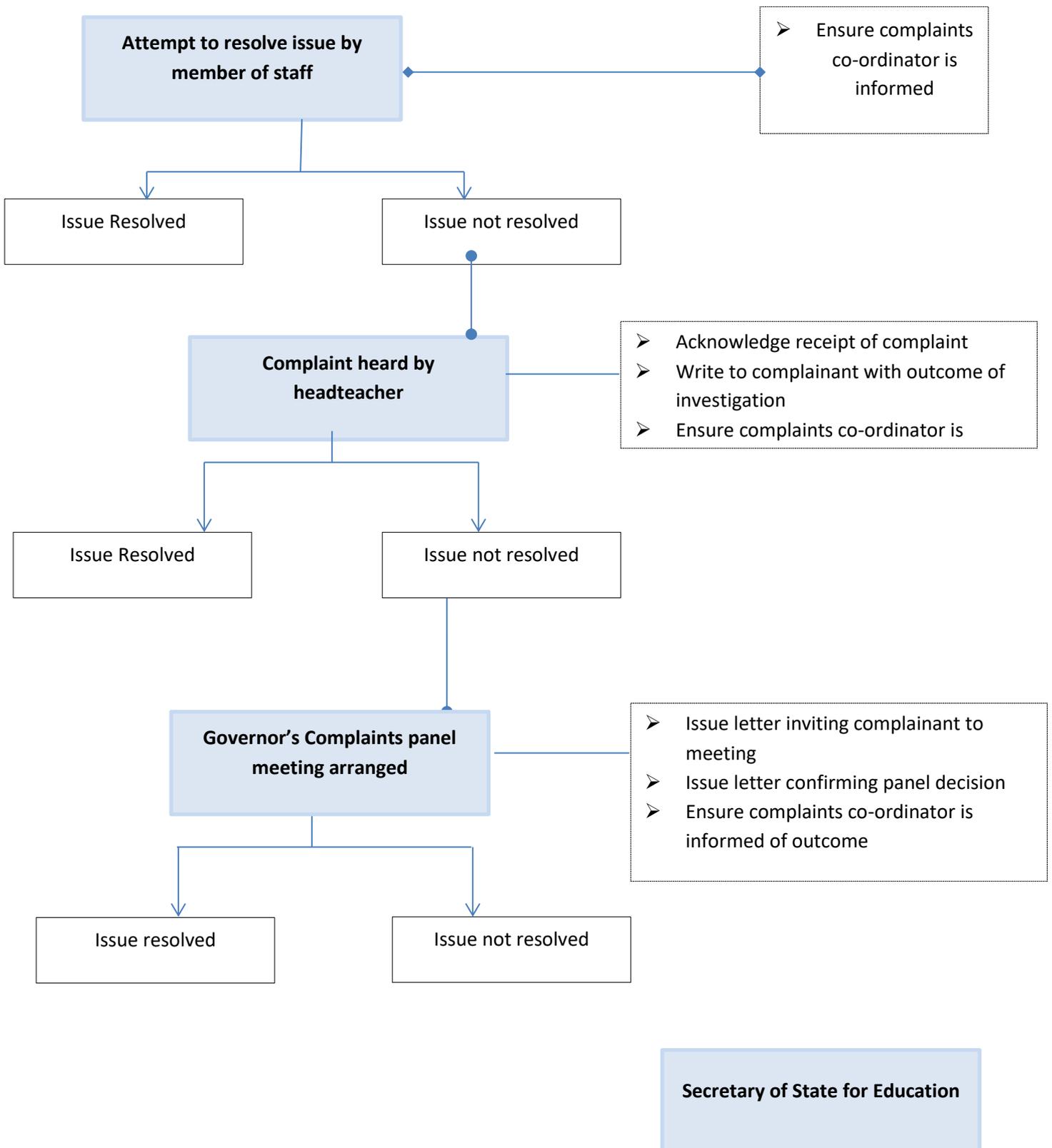
4.1 If a complainant wishes to go beyond the governors' complaints panel, they should contact 'The School Complaints Unit (SCU). The SCU considers complaints relating to LA maintained schools in England on behalf of the Secretary of State. The SCU will look at whether the complaints policy and any other relevant statutory policies were adhered to.

Further information can be obtained from the SCU by calling the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288 or going online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus or by writing to:

Department for Education
School Complaints Unit
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Appendix A

Flowchart of complaints



Complaints Form**Appendix D**

Please complete and return to who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken	
Your Name	
Pupil's Name	
Your relationship to the Pupil	
Address	
Postcode	
Daytime Tel Number	
Evening Tel Number	
Please give details of your complaint here	
What actions, if any have you taken to try and resolve your complaint?	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem?	
Are you attaching any paperwork?	
Signature	
Date	
For Office Use only	
Date acknowledgement sent	By Whom
Complaint referred to:	Date: