

# Complaints Management

**Statement:**

Complaints and compliments may be received informally or formally; verbally, via email or in writing. Complainants may complain directly to the Board of Trustees, Ofsted, DfE or BILD.

**Responsible Staff:** Principal, Senior Leaders/Leadership Team and Trustees.

	ACTIVITY
1	All complaints and compliments will be passed to the Principal, or in their absence, to a member of the Leadership Team (LT)
2	For each and every complaint or compliment, a Complaint/Compliment Record Form will be completed.
3	It may be possible, at this stage, to resolve the complaint verbally/informally but in any case a record of the complaint and the resolution will be kept, as above. The first stage of the procedure is regarded as the 'Informal Resolution' stage. All initial concerns will be acknowledged within two working days.
4	If the complaint remains unresolved after informal discussion, and the complainant chooses to escalate their concerns, acknowledgement of the complaint will be issued to the complainant within two working days. The complainant will receive a full response to their complaint within 20 working days. If the investigation is complex, the complainant shall be advised of any delay and a new timeline agreed between both parties.
5	The Principal (or member of Senior Leadership Team) will be responsible for investigating the complaint. This is the second stage of the complaints procedure – Formal Investigation. If a complaint has been directed to a Local (commissioning) Authority, Ofsted, DfE or BILD, it may be necessary to involve parties from these organisations in the preparation of a response and resolution.
6	On completion of the investigation and the finding of a resolution, the Principal (or member of Senior Leadership Team) will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● generate a response letter to the complainant within 20 working days of the receipt of the complaint;</li> <li>● initiate any corrective/preventative actions or changes required to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that there is no recurrence.</li> </ul> <p>Should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the formal response they have a right to request a review by a panel of Trustees.</p>
7	The Principal/Senior Leader will retain all records and correspondence with regard to the complaint or compliment, confidentially, in the Complaints and Compliments File in the VP Registered Manager's office. nb: statutory bodies may have the right to request to view them during an inspection.
8	If it is not possible to close the complaint at this stage, then the complainant can be referred to the Foundation's Board of Trustees. This Panel Review Stage is the third stage in the Complaints Procedure.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The complainant should make their appeal in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees stating on what grounds they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation and highlighting any remaining concerns for the panel to review.</li> <li>● A panel will be convened of not less than three people independent of the Foundation’s operations and day to day management.</li> <li>● The panel can:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;</li> <li>○ Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;</li> <li>○ Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;</li> <li>○ Recommend changes to the school’s systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The complainant will be invited to attend to make representation and may be accompanied if they wish.</li> <li>● The findings and recommendations of the panel will be communicated to the complainant in writing with copies to the person complained about (if relevant) and to the Principal/Senior Leader for inclusion in the Complaints Log.</li> <li>● All actions will be monitored and recorded in the Log by the Principal/Senior Leader/independent person.</li> </ul> <p>There are several points the panel will be mindful of when reviewing a complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The appeal hearing must be independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so.</li> <li>● No Trustees may sit on the panel if they have had prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.</li> <li>● In deciding the make-up of the panel, Trustees will ensure that a cross section of the skills within the group is convened to hear the appeal and is sensitive to the issues of race, gender and religious affiliation.</li> <li>● The aim of the hearing will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However we recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the panel does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his/her complaint has been taken seriously.</li> <li>● An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents may struggle to articulate issues that are affecting their child due to the emotion of the situation. For this reason the panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.</li> <li>● All Trustees sitting on a panel will be familiar with the complaints policy, procedure and process of recording concerns.</li> </ul>
9	If resolution is still not achieved the complainant can be referred to Ofsted Department for Education, or BILD.

**Reference Documentation:**

Complaints and Compliments Policy

Complaints and Compliments Record Form