



Leodis
Academies
Trust

COMPLAINTS POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This policy should be used within the context of the vision and values of Leodis Academies Trust. It sets out the procedures that the Trust and all Academies within the Trust must adhere to. The policy is available to staff and parents electronically or on request.
- 1.2. We believe the Trust and our Academies provide an excellent education for all our children, and that the Trust, its Principals, and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and the local community.
- 1.3. If you have a concern, please let the Academy or Trust know as soon as possible. We will carefully consider all feedback, whether positive or negative, and will review our policies and practices accordingly.
- 1.4. We aim to be fair, open, and honest, and will aim to resolve any concern or complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, put the interests of pupils/ students above all other issues. By following this policy, we provide sufficient opportunity for a concern and complaint to be fully discussed and then resolved. Please note that even when a complaint has been made, it can be resolved or withdrawn at any stage.
- 1.5. We will treat all concerns and complaints seriously and courteously and will advise you and others of Trust/ Academy policies/ procedures for dealing with your concerns. In return, we expect you to behave respectfully towards all members of the Trust and Academy community. In particular, any disagreement with the Trust or Academy should not be expressed inappropriately or in front of pupils/ students and in the public domain including social media and the press and that this policy is followed before escalating to others.
- 1.6. We will deal with a concern or complaint at the most appropriate stage of this Policy in the first instance.
- 1.7. Whilst we will seek to resolve concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties, we acknowledge that it may not be possible to achieve this in every case.
- 1.8. The Trustees are responsible for the overall Complaints Policy and ensuring adoption by each Academy Local Committee (LC). They are responsible for ensuring a Panel is completed in line with Stage 3 of this policy.
- 1.9. The CEO Principal is responsible for the oversight of the Complaints Policy across the Trust. They are responsible for ensuring that the Stage 2 response is completed in line with this policy.
- 1.10. The CEO Principal will appoint a named Trust Complaints Co-ordinator who will oversee the Trust Complaints processes and procedures in line with this Policy.
- 1.11. The LC and Principal of each Academy are responsible for the implementation of the Complaints Policy within their Academy. They are the responsible for ensuring that a Stage 1 Complaint response is completed in line with this policy.

1.12 In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable you to access and complete the procedures in this policy. For instance, this may mean providing information in alternative formats, assisting you in raising a concern or complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations/via Teams.

2. RAISING A CONCERN

2.1. Who can raise a concern?

2.1.1. Raising a concern is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at any Academy in the Trust. Any person, including members of the public, may raise a concern to us about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a parent, pupil or other stakeholders, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

2.1.2. Unless concerns are dealt with under separate statutory procedures as identified at [Section 2.8](#), we will use this policy.

2.1.3. It is in everyone's interest that concerns are addressed as soon as possible after they are raised. If a concern is not addressed satisfactorily and it leads to a complaint, we aim to review all complaints at the most appropriate stage.

2.2. Anonymous concerns

2.2.1. When a concern is raised anonymously, it may not be possible to consider it without further information. The Trust Complaints Team will determine whether any action is necessary.

2.3. Timescales

2.3.1. You should raise your concern within 3 months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 3 months of the last of these incidents. This is so matters can be dealt with in a reasonable timeframe. We will only consider concerns raised outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

2.3.2. Other timescales that apply within this policy and procedures are detailed at the appropriate stage. Where investigations need to take place, these timescales are guidelines. There may be circumstances when timescales need to be extended. We will ensure we communicate these to you throughout the process.

2.3.3. Where timescales relate to a complainant moving to a further stage of the complaints process, the complainant should ensure that they respond within the notified timescales, otherwise the complaint will not be considered further.

2.4. **Concerns or complaints received outside of term time**

2.4.1. We will consider concerns or complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

2.5. **Concerns or complaints raised outside of procedures**

2.5.1. All concerns and complaints should be raised in line with this policy.

2.5.2 If contact is made with individuals or email addresses outside of the contacts given at Section 3 and Appendix One of this policy, we cannot guarantee that your concerns or complaint will be responded to.

2.5.3. You should not approach an individual Governor, Trustee or Member to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis, and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage Three of the process.

2.6. **The role of the Academy and the role of the Trust**

2.6.1 Where a concern is about an Academy, you should allow the Academy to address your concerns in the first instance and if appropriate, respond to your Stage 1 complaint.

2.6.2 Matters should only be raised directly to the Trust either

2.6.2.1 to escalate a Stage 1 complaint to Stage 2 of the complaints process or,

2.6.2.2 to raise a complaint directly with the Trust for matters detailed at section 8 of this policy.

2.6.3 Please note that if the Trust is copied into any correspondence to an Academy relating to concerns or Stage 1 complaints, a response will not routinely be provided as the Academy will be expected to respond.

2.7 Should you require any assistance with our Complaints Policy Procedures you can contact Leodis Academies Trust on info@leodis.org.uk. The Trust Complaints Co-ordinator will be able to advise you appropriately.

2.8 **Scope of this Complaints Procedure**

2.8.1 This policy covers all concerns and complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Leodis Academies Trust and its Academies, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below:

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions	We are part of Leeds City Council Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. Concerns about admissions are handled through a separate procedure – please see the Academy

	Admissions Policy and Leeds City Council Admissions Processes. School admissions Leeds.gov.uk
Child Protection Matters	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). During office hours (9.00am – 5.00pm) on 0113 2224403.
Data Protection Matters	Complaints about data protection matters are handled under our data protection policy and in accordance with relevant guidance from the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). If you have serious concerns you may wish to contact the ICO directly, but the ICO will usually expect you to have raised your concerns with our Data Protection Officer in the first instance.
Freedom of Information Matters	Complaints about our compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 are handled under our Freedom of Information Policy and in accordance with relevant guidance from the ICO. If you have serious concerns you may wish to contact the ICO directly, but the ICO will usually expect you to have raised your concerns with us in the first instance.
Governance grievances	Complaints from or about members of the governance structure (Governors, Trustees, Members) will be dealt with under the Trust’s internal governance procedures. This does not preclude Governors, Trustees or Members from raising their concerns in their capacity as a parent.
National curriculum content	Please contact the Department for Education www.education.gov.uk/contactus
School re-organisation proposals	Where concerns are not adequately addressed by the Academy, complaints can be raised directly with the Department for Education.
Complaints about services provided by other organisations who use school premises or facilities	Other organisations who use the school premises or facilities will have their own complaints procedures. Please contact them directly.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Trust’s internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Trust’s internal disciplinary procedures, as appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint.

	The complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Statutory assessment of SEND	Concerns about statutory assessment of SEN should be raised directly with Leeds City Council (SEND Assessment) – Education, health and care needs assessments and plans Leeds.gov.uk
Suspensions and permanent exclusions	The process for challenging suspensions and permanent exclusion decisions is set out in the DfE’s statutory guidance Further information can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion and in the Trust Exclusions Policy.
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Trust has appointed a Whistleblowing Trustee: Mr C Stribley who can be contacted at c.stribley@leodis.org.uk The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise the matter directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus
Withdrawal from the curriculum	Parents and carers can withdraw their child from any aspect of Religious Education (RE), including the Daily Act of Collective Worship (DACW). They do not have to explain why. The right of withdrawal does not apply to other areas of the curriculum where religious matters may be spontaneously raised by pupils or arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

2.9 Involvement with/ of other bodies

- 2.9.1 You should look to raise your concerns and complaints using this policy before contacting any third parties.
- 2.9.2 If similar concerns have been raised with other bodies, or if other bodies are investigating matters related to the concern, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or tribunals, local councillors or the MP, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, we will inform you that this is the case and where possible of a proposed new timescale for our response.
- 2.9.3 If you commence legal action against Leodis Academies Trust or our Academies in relation to a concern or complaint, we will consider whether to suspend procedures until those legal proceedings have concluded. If this happens, we will inform you that this is the case and will, when possible, of a proposed new timescale for our response.

- 2.9.4 If the concern suggests that a child has been at risk of significant harm, for example through physical abuse/ violence, emotional abuse, sexual abuse/ interference, or neglect, it may be referred without further notice to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Children's Social Care and/ or the social services authority for the area in which the child lives.
- 2.9.5 If a social services authority decides to investigate a situation, this may postpone or supersede any other investigation. If this happens, we will inform you that this is the case and where possible of a proposed new timescale for our response.
- 2.9.6 If you have approached external organisations such as the DfE or Ofsted directly without following the steps outlined in our policy, we reserve the right to contact you to discuss directly your concerns. We will inform the external organisation that you have not raised your concerns with us directly.

2.10 Use of AI

- 2.10.1 While we understand that AI tools may appear to help you in raising a concern or pursuing a complaint, in practice this has had the opposite effect and can lead to unnecessary complexity and a lack of clarity. As a result, they require significant time to interpret and respond to. This is a noticeable shift from the constructive and efficient communication we have valued with families over many years.
- 2.10.2 If you would like to raise a specific concern, please outline it clearly and concisely in your own words.
- 2.10.3 If correspondence appears to have been generated using AI tools, we reserve the right to contact you in writing or by phone to request that you reword it concisely in your own words. Where a complainant refuses to do this, we may be unable to process your complaint fully.

2.11 Resolving concerns

- 2.11.1 At each stage in this complaints procedure, Leodis Academies Trust and our Academies want to resolve the concern or complaint. Where the school feel it would support a resolution, a face-to-face meeting may be requested.
- 2.11.2 The Trust follows guidance provided by Parentkind (CLEAR) to ensure that concerns and complaints are handled in an appropriate and consistent manner. This includes
- **Categorise:** What type of issue is it?
 - **Listen:** Why is this an issue?
 - **Empathise:** How does this feel?
 - **Ask:** Where can we agree?
 - **Respond:** When can we action?

2.11.3 If appropriate, we will acknowledge the concern or complaint. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- An explanation.
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- An assurance that we will try to ensure the matter will not recur.
- An explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made.
- An undertaking to review Academy/ Trust policies
- A co-constructed plan to address the concern or complaint.
- An apology.

2.12 **Withdrawal of a concern or complaint**

2.12.1 If you wish to withdraw your concern or complaint, we will ask you to confirm this in writing.

2.13 **Record keeping**

2.13.1 We will keep a record of your concern and any subsequent complaint, including records of meetings and interviews held in relation to it, and any decisions/ recommendations. Records will be kept for all concerns and complaints.

2.13.2 The Trust Board and relevant LC will be informed of any complaint which reaches Stage 1 of this complaints policy.

2.13.3 The record relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where:

2.13.3.1 Access is requested by the Secretary of State

2.13.3.2 Disclosure is required in the course of an academy inspection

2.13.3.3 An individual has a legal right to access their own personal data contained within such documentation or

2.13.3.4 Under other legal authority or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

2.13.4 Full Complaints records do not routinely form part of a pupil's educational record but a record of the date of the complaint and a record of any response(s) sent will be saved to a pupil's electronic file. record. Further details can be found in the Trust Retentions Schedule.

2.14 Unreasonable Complaints

- 2.14.1 Leodis Academies Trust is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will take complaints seriously and will do everything possible to address and resolve the complaint, including considering the complaint through the full scope of the complaints policy on occasion. There may be a justifiable case for formally closing a complaint if deemed unreasonable or in line with 2.10.3.
- 2.14.2 Leodis Academies Trust defines unreasonable complaints, also defined as 'vexatious', 'persistent', 'habitual', 'protracted' or 'serial', as those who, because of the frequency or nature of the contact with the Academy/ Trust, hinder the consideration of this or other people's complaints.
- 2.14.3 We do not normally limit the contact complainants have with the Academy/ Trust. However, we do not expect staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action, including limiting contact, to protect staff from behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, repetitive or threatening.
- 2.14.4 In addition, there may be rare occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, you remain dissatisfied. If you try to re-open an issue which has already been dealt with under this policy, the Trust/ Academy will inform you, in writing, that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is closed. Where further correspondence is received on the same matter, this may be considered vexatious and there will be no obligation on the part of the Trust/ Academy to respond.

3 How to raise a concern

- 3.1 Initially, concerns should be raised with the relevant member of staff by telephone, email, or by letter. You may also ask a third party to raise a concern on your behalf, as long as they have your consent to do so.

Full details of each Academy's contact details can be found on their websites:

- 3.1.1 [Blackgates Primary Academy](#)
- 3.1.2 [East Ardsley Primary Academy](#)
- 3.1.3 [Hill Top Primary Academy](#)
- 3.1.4 [Westerton Primary Academy](#)
- 3.1.5 [Woodkirk Academy](#)

- 3.1.6 Alternatively, please see Appendix One for main contact details of each Academy and the Trust
- 3.1.7 If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, you should contact the Academy Reception, who will be able to advise you on the best person to deal with your concern. They may well refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

- 3.1.8 The Academy will aim to acknowledge receipt of a concern within 3 school days.
- 3.1.9 The Academy is committed to addressing the concern to the satisfaction of all parties as soon as possible. In most cases, a response to a concern will be offered within 10 school days of receipt. If more time is believed to be necessary, you will be informed.
- 3.1.10 The Academy is committed to responding as quickly as possible and, following enquiries, we may contact you by telephone, in writing, or ask you to come into the Academy. Please do not ask to see a member of staff without an appointment as it is unlikely they will be able to see you to discuss your concerns.
- 3.1.11 Dependent on the nature of your concern, this will be considered by the most appropriate member of staff, which could be a class teacher, form teacher or a middle or senior leader in consultation with other colleagues involved in the specific matter. Attempts will be made to gather as much information as possible and this may include discussions with pupils, staff and reviewing other relevant evidence.
- 3.1.12 Depending on the nature of the concern, at the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the concern may arrange for a meeting with you and provide a written response/summary (by email or post).
- 3.1.13 If you feel your concerns have not been addressed, you should follow the Academy's concern escalation process. This is usually to a member of the Senior Leadership team.
- 3.1.14 If you remain dissatisfied with the way in which your concern has been dealt with within the Academy, then the next step is to make a complaint to the Principal of the Academy (Stage One).
- 3.1.15 Recordings that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded will not be accepted as evidence in any stage of the complaint process

4 Stage One Complaints

4.1 How to raise a Stage One complaint

- 4.1.1 If you remain dissatisfied with the way in which your concern has been dealt with within the Academy, then the next step is to make a complaint to the Principal of the Academy (Stage One).
- 4.1.2 A Stage One Complaint is the final stage of our complaints process at Academy level. The Principal will usually only consider a Stage One Complaint if the concern has already been reviewed through the Academy

complaints escalation process. This usually means that you have followed the Academy escalation procedures as outlined in section 3.1 of this policy and believe that your concerns have not been sufficiently addressed.

- 4.1.3 You can make a Stage One complaint in writing (post or email). You can contact us by telephone/ in person to arrange assistance to make a complaint in writing. You may also ask a third party to raise a Stage One Complaint on your behalf, as long as they have your consent to do so.
- 4.1.4 To ensure that we are able to understand your complaint, we ask that details are completed on a Stage One complaint form. Please complete this using the headings on the form, in a concise manner and in your own words.
- 4.1.5 The Stage One complaint form can be found on our websites in a word document and is also included at Appendix Two of this policy.
- 4.1.6 If you require help in completing the form, please contact the Academy Reception. You can also contact the Trust Complaints Co-ordinator. You can also ask a third-party organisation for example like the Citizens Advice to help you.

4.2 Stage One – What can you expect from the Principal

- 4.2.1 When a Principal receives a Stage One Complaint form, they will review the complaint you have made.
- 4.2.2 An acknowledgement will be sent to you within **five school days**. The acknowledgement will confirm whether the complaint can now be investigated under Stage One of this Complaints Policy and if so, will confirm the date for providing a response to you.
- 4.2.3 If your complaint is being dealt with under other policies or procedures as detailed at 2.8 of this Policy, you will be advised at this point.
- 4.2.4 If the matter has not followed the Academy concerns escalation process, the Principal will refer the matter to an appropriate member of staff to deal with the concern at section 3.1 of this policy. The Principal will inform you of this decision. If this is the case, once you have received a response in line with section 3 of this policy, you will then be able to escalate to a Stage One if you do not feel your concern has been addressed.
- 4.2.5 If the Principal agrees that the matter is a Stage One complaint, then they will initiate an investigation.
- 4.2.6 The Principal may ask another senior member of staff who has not been involved in the Academy concern escalation process, to be the Investigating Officer. Nevertheless, the Principal will make the decision on the outcome of the complaint.

- 4.2.7 A Stage One complaint form should be completed to enable the investigation to progress. Where necessary, the Principal/ Investigating Officer will seek to clarify the nature of your complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome you would like to see. If the Complaint Form has not been completed, you will be asked to complete it at this point of the investigation. The timescale of the investigation will not start until the form is completed.
- 4.2.8 The Principal/ Investigating Officer may consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this. If you wish, you can ask someone to accompany you to help you explain the reasons for your complaint. The Principal/ Investigating Officer may also be accompanied by a suitable person if they wish.
- 4.2.9 The Trust follows guidance provided by Parentkind (CLEAR) to ensure that concerns and complaints are handled in an appropriate and consistent manner. This includes:
- **Categorise:** What type of issue is it?
 - **Listen:** Why is this an issue?
 - **Empathise:** How does this feel?
 - **Ask:** Where can we agree?
 - **Respond:** When can we action?
- 4.2.10 The Principal/ Investigating Officer, if necessary, will interview those involved in the matter allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- 4.2.11 The Principal/ Investigating Officer will keep a written record of any meetings/ interviews in relation to their investigation.
- 4.2.12 At the conclusion of the investigation, the Principal will provide you with a formal written response, usually within 15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint form.
- 4.2.13 If this is not possible, the Academy will write to explain the reason for the delay and let you know when it hopes to be able to provide a full response.
- 4.2.14 The response will detail any actions (if any) taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the Academy will take to resolve the complaint which may include:
- An explanation.
 - An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
 - An assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not reoccur.
 - An explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made.
 - An undertaking to review Academy/ Trust policies in light of the complaint.

- An offer to co-construct a solution.
- An apology.

4.2.15 The Principal will advise you of how to escalate the complaint should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage One.

4.2.16 You have **10 school days** to consider the outcome of your complaint at Stage One and instigate Stage Two.

4.2.17 If no request for a Stage Two Trust review is received within **10 school days** it will be deemed that the decision is accepted, and the complaint will be closed.

5 Stage Two – Trust Review

5.1 How to raise a request for a Stage Two – Trust Review

5.1.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage One and wish to take the matter further, you can escalate the complaint to Stage Two. This should be done within **10 school days** of your Stage One response.

5.1.2 You can make a Stage Two complaint in writing (post or email). You can contact us by telephone/ in person to arrange assistance to make a complaint in writing. You may also ask a third party to raise a Stage Two Complaint on your behalf, as long as they have your consent to do so.

5.1.3 To ensure that we are able to understand your complaint, we ask that details are completed on a Stage Two complaint form (Appendix 2b). Please complete this using the headings on the form, in a concise manner and in your own words.

The Stage Two complaint form can be found on our websites in a Word document and is also included at Appendix 2b of this policy.

5.1.4 If you require help in completing the form, please contact the Trust Complaints Team. You can also ask a third-party organisation for example like the Citizens Advice to help you

5.2 Stage Two – Trust Review – What to expect from the Trust Complaints Team

5.2.1 When the Trust Complaints Team receives a Stage Two Complaint form, they will review the complaint you have made.

5.2.2 An acknowledgement will be sent to you within **five school days**. The acknowledgement will confirm whether the complaint can now be investigated under Stage Two of this Complaints Policy and if so, will confirm the date for providing a response to you.

5.2.3 A Stage Two complaint form should be completed to enable the investigation to progress. Where necessary, Trust Complaints Team will seek to clarify the

nature of your complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome you would like to see. If the Complaint Form has not been completed, you will be asked to complete it at this point of the investigation. The timescale of the investigation will not start until the form is completed.

- 5.2.4 If your complaint is being dealt with under other policies or procedures as detailed at 2.8 of this Policy, you will be advised at this point.
- 5.2.5 The Trust Complaints Team will review the Stage Two complaint.
- 5.2.6 The Stage Two review will consider the Academy's Stage One response to determine whether
- The Academy followed the correct procedures at Stage One;
 - The Stage One investigation and response was fair, balanced and in line with Trust and Academy policy; and
 - Your concerns were understood and responded to appropriately.
- 5.2.7 The Stage Two process is not a rehearing of the original complaint, nor to review any additional evidence or new complaints. New complaints will be referred back to the Academy, if appropriate.
- 5.2.8 The Trust Complaints Team may ask a Principal of another Trust Academy or a member of the Trust Central Team to complete the actions at 5.2.4 and 5.2.5.
- 5.2.9 At the conclusion of the investigation, the Trust will provide you with a formal written response, usually within **15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint**.
- 5.2.10 If this is not possible, the Trust will write to explain the reason for the delay and let you know when it hopes to be able to provide a full response.
- 5.2.11 The response will detail one of the following recommendations and the reasons for this.
- 5.2.11.1 **Option 1:** Direct the Principal to reinvestigate at Stage One
 - 5.2.11.2 **Option 2:** Uphold complaint and direct action to resolve
 - 5.2.11.3 **Option 3:** Do not uphold complaint
- 5.2.12 A copy of the response will be provided to the Academy Principal.
- 5.2.13 The Trust Complainants Team will advise you of how to escalate the complaint should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage Two.
- 5.2.14 You have **10 school days** to consider the outcome of your complaint at Stage Two and instigate Stage Three.

5.2.15 If no request for a Stage Three Procedural review is received within **10 school days** it will be deemed that the decision is accepted, and the complaint will be closed.

6. Stage 3 – Governor Procedural Review Panel

6.1 How to raise a request for a Stage Three – Governor Procedural Review Panel

- 6.1.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage Two and wish to take the matter further, you can escalate the complaint to Stage Three.
- 6.1.2 A request for a Governor Procedural Review Panel (Panel) at Stage Three must be made to the Trust Complaints Team marked Private and Confidential, via the Academy Reception, Trust office or info@leodis.org.uk within **10 school days** of receipt of the Stage Two .
- 6.1.3 The request must detail the reasons for the request for a Panel. A Panel request form is available at Appendix 2c.
- 6.1.4 A Stage Three Panel is the final stage of the Trust complaint's procedure. The purpose of the Panel is not to rehear the complaint. It is to review how the complaint has been investigated; to determine whether it has been conducted fairly and objectively, including any reconciliation measures. It will review the procedures undertaken by the Trust at Stage Two of this procedure in reaching their Stage Two decision. This is a formal procedure, and the ultimate recourse at Trust level.
- 6.1.5 The request for a Stage Three Panel will be acknowledged in writing (either by letter or email) within **five school days**.
- 6.1.6 The Trust will take reasonable steps to convene the Panel at a time and date mutually convenient to all parties.
- 6.1.7 The Trust will aim to convene a Panel within **20 school days** of receipt of the Stage Three request. If this is not possible, they will provide an anticipated date and keep you informed.
- 6.1.8 The Trust will seek to arrange a convenient time and date for the Panel. However, where **two** attempts have been made to schedule a convenient hearing and it has not been possible to accommodate you, the Panel reserves the right to conduct the hearing in your absence and on the basis of the written evidence submitted by you. This is intended to ensure that your complaint is considered promptly and to avoid unnecessary delays
- 6.1.9 The Trust will inform you at least **five school days** in advance, of the date, time, and place of the Panel, ensuring that the venue and proceedings are accessible.

- 6.1.10 The Panel will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New concerns or complaints must be dealt with in line of the Complaints Policy.

6.2 Stage Three – What to expect at the Governor Procedural Review Panel

- 6.2.1 The purpose of the Panel is not to rehear the complaint. It is to review how the complaint has been investigated; to determine whether it has been conducted fairly and objectively, including any reconciliation measures. It will review the procedures undertaken by the Trust at Stage Two of this procedure in reaching their Stage Two decision. This is a formal procedure, and the ultimate recourse at Trust level.
- 6.2.2 The Panel will comprise of three panel members, one of whom will be independent (see 6.2.2 & 6.2.3) and a Clerk to the Panel, you and any representatives, and the Stage Two Trust Representative and if appropriate the Principal who responded at Stage One of the process. It will follow the outline Agenda at Appendix Four.
- 6.2.3 None of the three members of the Panel will have been involved in the incidents or events which led to the complaint or have been involved in dealing with the complaint in the previous stages or have any detailed prior knowledge of the complaint.
- 6.2.4 In line with DfE guidance, as this is the last stage of the Trust's complaint procedure, the Trust must ensure that there is an Independent Panel member who is independent of the management and running of the Academy. This may be a Governor of a different Leodis Academies Trust LC. They will not be an employee of Leodis Academies Trust.
- 6.2.5 The Chair of the Panel will usually be appointed by the Panel members. The roles of each of the participants in the Panel (and complaints procedures) are detailed at Appendix Four.
- 6.2.6 You may bring someone along to the Panel hearing to provide support. This can be a relative or friend and must not be in a legal capacity. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend. You should inform us in advance if you intend to bring anyone to the hearing, providing their name. If the Trust has not been made aware of the names of third parties in attendance, the Panel reserves the right to refuse attendance at the Panel meeting.
- 6.2.7 If it is necessary in the interests of ratifying the investigation process, the Trust Representative may, with the agreement of the Chair of the Panel, invite relevant witnesses directly involved in matters raised by you to attend the hearing.
- 6.2.8 As a general rule, no evidence, or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced into the Panel by any of the participants. If the Chair deems additional evidence to be allowed from either party, the discretion remains

with the Chair to adjourn the Panel so that the other party has a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence.

- 6.2.9 The Panel will be held in private. Electronic recordings of hearings or conversations are not permitted unless your own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before hearings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.
- 6.2.10 Full details of how a Stage Three Panel will be conducted can be found at Appendix Four.

6.3 Stage Three - What to expect after a Governor Procedural Review Panel

- 6.3.1 The Panel will consider the evidence presented in line with section 6.2.1 of this policy.
- 6.3.2 The Panel can decide to:
 - Uphold the complaint in whole or in part; or
 - Not uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- 6.3.3 If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the Panel will:
 - Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint including reconciliations.
 - Where appropriate, recommend changes to the Academy/ Trust systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.
- 6.3.4 The Panel, where appropriate, may also provide recommendations to the Academy/ Trust regardless of the outcome of the complaint.
- 6.3.5 The Chair of the Panel will provide you and the Academy/ Trust a full written response of their decision and the reason(s) for it, (including any findings and recommendations) within **five school days**.
- 6.3.6 The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the handling of the complaint procedures and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the Academy and/ or Trust will take to resolve the complaint and any recommendations for reconciliation.
- 6.3.7 This letter will conclude the final stage of the Trust complaint's procedure.
- 6.3.8 The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department of Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by the Academy/ Trust.
- 6.3.9 Minutes of the Panel will be provided when requested within **20 school days**.

7. Stage Four – Referral to the Department for Education

- 7.1 If you believe that the Academy/ Trust has not handled your complaint in accordance with this published Complaints Policy, or that it acted unlawfully or unreasonably, in the exercise of its duties under education law, you can contact the Department for Education after you have completed Stage Three Procedural Review.
- 7.2 The Department for Education will usually consider a complaint if it falls into one of the following areas:
- Undue delay or where the Academy did not comply with this policy when considering a complaint.
 - Where the Academy is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State; or
 - Where the Academy has failed to comply with any other legal obligation, unless there is another organisation better placed to consider the matter.
- 7.3 The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Leodis Academies Trust. They will consider whether Leodis Academies Trust and its Academies has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and whether they have followed Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 7.4 You can refer your complaint to the Department for Education online at: [Contact the Department for Education - Contact type - GOV.UK](#), by telephone on 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Ministerial and Public Communications Division
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

- 7.4.1 Please enclose with your letter to the Department for Education, a copy of the complaint outcome. This will save time in that the Department for Education will not need to ask for our view of what has happened.
- 7.4.2 We would advise you that, unless an Academy/ the Trust is shown to have behaved unreasonably or not to have followed their own procedures, there is likely to be little further action that can be taken, as the Trust is empowered to deal with many issues without reference to either the local authority or the Secretary of State.

8. Concerns/Complaints directly to the Trust

If you have a concern about a Principal, member of the Trust Central Team, CEO Principal, Governor, Trustee or Member you should raise this with the Trust Complaints Co-Ordinator in the first instance on info@leodis.org.uk who will advise you on the appropriate procedures to be taken.

Contact Details

Blackgates Primary Academy

Smithy Lane, Tingley, Wakefield, WF3 1QQ

Mrs J Coulson	Principal
Mrs A Gray	Early Years Phase Leader
Miss J Ruse	KS1 Phase Leader
Mrs C Wallis	KS2 Phase Leader
Mrs A Hartigan	SENDCo
Mrs E Elston	SENDCo
Mrs L Rumford	Chair of Governors
Email	info@blackgates.leodis.org.uk

East Ardsley Primary Academy

Fall Lane, East Ardsley, Wakefield, WF3 2BA

Miss T Holdsworth	Lower Years Phase Leader
Mrs M Smith	Middle Years Phase Leader
Mrs E Willans	Upper Years Phase Leader
Mrs C Lynch	Assistant Principal and SENDCo
Mrs E Mullen	Assistant Principal
Mrs S Talbot	Principal
Mr A Gilston	Chair of Governors
Email	office@eastardsley.leodis.org.uk

Hill Top Primary Academy

Batley Road, West Ardsley, Wakefield, WF3 1HD

Miss L Monaghan	Phase Leader KS1/SENDCo
Miss A Scawthorn	Phase Leader KS2
Mrs A Salter	Deputy Principal/EYFS
Mrs J Lancaster	Principal
Revd. Sharon Wilkinson	Chair of Governors
Email	office@hilltop.leodis.org.uk

Westerton Primary Academy

Hesketh Lane, Tingley, Wakefield, WF3 1AR

Mrs E Dufton	Phase Leader EYFS
Miss K Daniels	Phase Leader Y1 & Y2
Mrs L Downes	Vice Principal & Phase Leader Y3 & Y4
Mr T Pool	Vice Principal & Phase Leader Y5 & Y6
Mrs K D'Aubney	Deputy Principal

Mr D Livie
Mrs A Rhodes
Email

Principal
Chair of Governors
office@westerton.leodis.org.uk

Woodkirk Academy

Rein Road, Tingley, Wakefield, WF3 1JQ

Ms M Danby	Head of Year – Year 7
Mr A Grey	Head of Year – Year 8
Mr D Watson	Head of Year – Year 9
Miss N Cavanagh	Head of Year Pastoral – Years 10 and 11
Mrs N Heys-Gaughan	Head of Year Progress – Year 10 and 11
Mr R Ellis	Head of Year – Years 12 and 13
Mrs K Clarke	Assistant Principal – Sixth Form
Mr S McIntyre	Director of Inclusion and Transition
Mr N Cook	Vice Principal (Behaviour & Safety) – Years 7 to 9
Mr D Currie	Vice Principal (Behaviour & Safety) – Years 10 and 11
Mr T Jones	Principal
Mr R Naglis	Chair of Governors
Email	woodkirkreception@woodkirk.leodis.org.uk

Leodis Academies Trust, c/o Blackgates Primary Academy, Smithy Lane, Tingley, WF3 1QQ

Mrs K Stringer	COO
Mrs J Barton	CEO Principal
Mr N O'Donovan	Chair of Trustees
Email	info@leodis.org.uk

Stage One Complaint Form

This Stage One complaint form is intended for use in initiating a Stage One complaint to the Principal, in line with Section 4.1 of the Policy. All concern stages of the policy should have been exhausted before this point, including your concern having been considered by other Academy staff, including a senior member of staff. Those wishing to raise a concern may use this form if it helps, but it would only be considered as a Stage One complaint if other aspects of the policy have been followed.

Academy Name	
Relationship with Academy (for example, parent)	
Student(s) name(s) (if relevant to your complaint)	
Your Name	
Your Address	
Telephone number	
Email address	
Please provide details of your complaint in your own words (including dates, names of witnesses if applicable)	
<i>Please turn over for further questions</i>	

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your concerns – who have you spoken to or written to, and what was the outcome? Have you followed Academy procedures?

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

--

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

--

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Office Use Only

Date Received:	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
By whom:	
Complaint Referred to:	
Date:	

Stage Two Complaint Form

This Stage Two complaint form is intended for use in initiating a Stage Two complaint to the Trust, following a Stage One response, in line with Section 5.1 of the Policy.

Academy Name	
Relationship with Academy (for example, parent)	
Student(s) name(s) (if relevant to your complaint)	
Your Name	
Your Address	
Telephone number	
Email address	
<p>Please detail the date of the Stage One Complaint Response and explain in your own words why you are not satisfied with the Academy Stage One complaint response. This may include details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why you feel your complaint has not been responded to appropriately • What procedures you feel have not been followed • Why you feel the investigation was not satisfactorily completed • Why you feel the response is not fair and balanced 	
<p><i>Please turn over for further questions</i></p>	

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

--

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

--

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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Office Use Only

Date Received:	
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Date acknowledgement sent:	
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By whom:	
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Complaint Referred to:	
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Date:	
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Stage Three Procedural Review Panel Request Form

The completion and submission of this form initiate the Leodis Academies Trust Complaints procedure at Stage Three in line with section 6.1. The completed form and all relevant supporting evidence should be submitted to the Trust Complaints Team, marked Private and Confidential, via the Academy Reception, Trust Office or info@leodis.org.uk within **10 school days** of receipt of the Stage Two response.

Academy name	
Relationship with Academy (for example, parent)	
Student(s) name(s) (if relevant to your complaint)	
Your Name	
Your Address	
Telephone number	
Email address	
Date of Stage One Response Letter	
Date of Stage Two Response Letter	

When completing the form, please use the sections below to clearly state your complaint in your own words focusing on the specific matters in relation to the Stage Two review of your complaint you are raising. A Procedural Review Hearing is to review **how** the complaint has been investigated and to determine whether it has been conducted **fairly and objectively**.

Please detail why you believe that the Stage Two review has not been conducted fairly and objectively and why you think there needs to be a Procedural Review.

Please turn over for further questions

Please detail what reconciliation measures have been proposed by the Academy and Trust and why these are not sufficient.

--

Signature:	Date:
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Office Use Only

Date Received:	
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Date acknowledgement sent:	
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By whom:	
-----------------	--

Complaint Referred to:	
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Date:	
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Unreasonable Complaints

(Protracted, persistent, or serial complaints)

Leodis Academies Trust is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the Academy/ Trust. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening.

Leodis Academies Trust defines unreasonable complainants as *“those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the Academy/ Trust, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s complaints.”* such as if the complainant:

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.
- Refuses to co-operate with the procedures outlined in the Complaints Policy while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the Complaints Policy.
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the Complaints Policy or with good practice.
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be considered and commented on or raises a large number of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales.
- Makes unjustified complaints or contains personally offensive remarks about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeks to have them replaced.
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed).
- Repeatedly makes submissions with only minor differences after the complaint has been fully addressed.
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into the complaint where the complaint procedures have been completed including, where appropriate, referral to the Department for Education.
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- Makes excessive demands on Academy/ Trust time by frequent, lengthy, complicated, and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint either in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- Maliciously.
- Aggressively.
- Using threats, intimidation, or violence.
- Using abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language.
- Knowing it to be false.
- With the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience.

- Using falsified information.
- Publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with the Academy/ Trust while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email, or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Principal or Investigating Officer or Trust Complaints Co-ordinator will discuss, either in person or in correspondence, any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the Principal/ Trust Complaints Co-ordinator will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. In some instances, it will be appropriate for the letter to come from our legal advisers.

For complainants who excessively contact any Academy within Leodis Academies Trust or the Trust causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a written communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from any Academy within Leodis Academies Trust.

Barring from the Academy premises:

Although fulfilling a public function, our Academies are private places, and the public has no automatic right of entry. We therefore act to ensure we remain a safe place for students, staff and other members of our community.

If a complainant or parents' behaviour is a cause for concern, they will be asked to leave Academy premises. In serious cases the Principal will notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on Academy/ Trust premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any written representation that they wish to make.

The decision to bar will be reviewed upon receipt of any representations made and will either be confirmed or lifted. Any decision will be notified in writing with an explanation of how long the bar will be in place.

Should anyone wish to complain about being barred they can do so via letter or email to the Principal or Trust Complaints Team.

The Governor Procedural Review Panel Format

- The room will be set out with a table for the Panel Members and Clerk, a table for the Trust Representative and a table for the Complainant.
- The Panel will be seated in the room.
- The Complainant and the Trust Representative will enter the hearing together, supported by the Clerk.
- The Chair of the Panel will introduce the Panel and outline the Panel procedures.
- The Complainant will be asked to explain why they are dissatisfied with the Stage Two investigation.
- The original complaint will **not** be re-heard by the Panel, and this will be made clear by the Chair at the start of the hearing. The remit of the Panel is to review the way the complaint has been investigated and handled at Stage Two to ensure it was done fairly and objectively.
- The Trust and Panel may question the complainant
- The Trust Representative will explain the details of the investigation that led to the conclusions of their Stage Two investigation
- The Complainant and the Panel may question the Trust Representative
- The Trust Representative will be invited to make a final summation.
- The Complainant will be invited to make a final summation.
- The Chair will explain that both parties will hear from the Panel within **five school days**.
- The Complainant and the Trust representative will leave the hearing.
- The Panel will deliberate with the support of the Clerk.
- The Clerk will send the letter to the Complainant and the Trust Representative once approved by the Panel.

Procedural Review Panel Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will attend the Panel to present their complaint about the Stage Two Trust Review. They should ensure that they:

- Explain the complaint in their own word in full as early as possible using the Complaint Form at Appendix Two.
- Co-operate with the Academy/ Trust in seeking a solution to the complaint.
- Respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint.
- Ask for assistance as needed.
- Treat all those involved in the complaint with respect.
- Refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media or in the press and respect confidentiality.

Trust Representative

The Trust Representative's role is to present the process that has been followed in during the Stage Two Trust Review.

Clerk to the Governor Procedural Review Panel

The Clerk will:

- Ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to Academy/ Trust complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- Set the date, time, and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
- Collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example: Stage One paperwork, and Stage Two paperwork) and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing within an agreed timescale.
- Ensure an accurate record of the Panel is made.
- Notify all parties of the Panel's decision.
- Circulate the minutes of the Panel.

Governor Procedural Review Panel Chair

The Governor Procedural Review Panel Chair, who is nominated by the Panel in advance of the hearing, should ensure that:

- Both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the Panel.
- The Panel is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy.
- Complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a Panel are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/ young person.
- The remit of the Panel is explained to the complainant.
- Written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.
- If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the hearing.
- Both the complainant and the Academy/ Trust are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the hearing or verbally in the hearing itself.
- The issues are addressed.
- Key findings of fact are made.
- The Governor Procedural Review Panel is open-minded and acts independently.
- No member of the Governor Procedural Review Panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure.
- The Panel is minuted.
- They liaise with the Clerk.

Panel Member

Panel members should be aware that:

- The hearing must be independent and impartial and should be seen to be so. No Governor/ Trustee may sit on the Panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- The aim of the Panel should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the Academy/ Trust and the complainant. We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.
- Many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents/ carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/ young person and present during all or part of the hearing.
- Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/ young person does not feel intimidated.
- The Panel should respect the views of the child/ young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
- If the child/ young person is the complainant, the Panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/ young person's parent is the complainant, the Panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, if any, the child/ young person needs to attend.
- The parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/ young person to attend a part of the hearing that the Panel considers is not in the child/ young person's best interests.
- The welfare of the child/ young person is paramount.

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT STAGES

STAGE	ACTION	OUTCOME
Concerns	Complainant raises initial concerns to Academy staff in line with concerns procedure	
	Academy response provided	
	Initial dissatisfaction with the response to the concern maybe considered by a senior member of staff and a further response provided	
	Complainant Satisfied	Concern Closed
	Complainant Not Satisfied	Move to Stage One
Stage One	Complainant requests Stage One Complaint with Principal using the complaint form	
	Principal reviews Complaint	
	Concerns stage not completed	Refer back to Concerns
	Principal initiates an investigation and provides a formal written response at the last stage at Academy level	
	Complainant Satisfied	Complaint Closed
	Complainant Not Satisfied	Move to Stage Two
Stage Two	Complainant requests Stage Two Complaint Review by Trust using the complaint form	
	Trust reviews Complaint	
	Option 1: Direct Principal to reinvestigate	Refer back to Stage One
	Option 2: Uphold Complaint and direct action to resolve	
	Option 3: Do not uphold complaint	
	Complainant Satisfied	Complaint Closed
	Complainant Not Satisfied	Move to Stage Three
Stage Three	Complainant requests Stage Three Procedural Review with Trust using the complaint form	
	Panel Meeting held	
	Panel decision letter sent	
	Complainant Satisfied	Complaint Closed
	Complainant Not Satisfied	Complainant follows next stage of policy as all Academy and Trust procedures exhausted.