WARRINGTON
Borough Council



School Complaints Procedure

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This model procedure has been produced by Warrington Borough Council based on the Department for Education Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020, last updated January 2021 for local authority maintained schools.

1. This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint about any facilities or services that the school provides. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), the school will use this complaints procedure. Any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes of this will be confidential and will not be shared with the complainant. The scope of this complaints procedure is covered in more detail in Appendix A.

   Complaints made on behalf of a group will not be accepted. They must be made individually.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

2. For the purposes of this policy, we will make the following distinctions:

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

   Any concerns should be addressed on an informal basis and complaints must be addressed as formal beginning with Stage 1.

Duplicate Complaints

3. After closing a complaint at the end of the complaints procedure, we may receive a duplicate complaint from:
   - a spouse
   - a partner
   - a grandparent
   - carer
   - other relative or friend

4. If the complaint is about the same subject, we will inform the new complainant that the school has already considered that complaint and the local process is complete.

5. We will take care not to overlook any new aspects to the complaint that may not have previously been considered. These will be investigated and dealt with to the full extent of the complaints procedure.

6. If a complainant believes that school has not handled their complaint in accordance with this policy or has acted unlawfully or unreasonably they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed stage 2 of the process.

Complaint campaigns

7. Occasionally, schools can become the focus of a campaign and receive large volumes of complaints:

- all based on the same subject
- from complainants unconnected with the school

Where this is the case, school will either:

- send a template response to all complainants
- publish a single response on the school's website

If complainants remain dissatisfied with our response, we will signpost complainants to the Department for Education.

Safeguarding

8. Complaints that involve or raise concerns about child protection matters should be handled:
    - Under the school's child protection and safeguarding policy
    - In accordance with relevant statutory guidance

Timescales

9. Complaints must be raised within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. The school will only consider complaints made outside of this time frame if the chair of governors and headteacher, having taken advice, are of the view that exceptional circumstances apply.

10. References to "school days" in this procedure refer to school working days for this school, excluding school holidays, In Service Training (Inset) days and bank holidays.

11. Any complaints made outside of term time will be considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Anonymous complaints

12. Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated. However, the headteacher or chair of governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Serial or Unreasonable Complaints

13. Where the school judges a complaint to be unreasonable or where a complainant is making serial complaints or raising issues again that have previously been addressed under the final formal stage of the school's complaints procedure, the procedure outlined at Appendix E may be invoked.

14. A complaint can be made initially in person, in writing or by telephone. It may also be made by a third party acting on someone else's behalf, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

15. In the first instance parental concerns should normally be raised with the class teacher or, if the concern is about the class teacher, with a member of the senior leadership team or the headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint under Formal Stage 1 of this procedure.

16. Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise a concern or a complaint. Governors have no power to act on an individual basis and this may also prevent them from considering a complaint if it reaches Stage 2 of this procedure.

17. A formal complaint against a member of school staff (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance to the headteacher via the school office and should be marked as private and confidential.

18. For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure (Appendix B). Help in completing the form can be accessed via the school office. The school office can be contacted at Cherry Tree Primary School, Hardy Road, Lymm, Warrington, WA13 0NX, by telephone on 01925 755885 or by email at cherrytree_primary@sch.warrington.gov.uk.

19. In accordance with equalities law, the school will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. This may include, but is not limited to, providing information in alternative formats, assisting individuals in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Resolving complaints

20. It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. The school aims to take all complaints seriously and will make every effort to resolve issues raised as quickly as possible.

21. If an individual has difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff, the school will respect this. In this case the complainant will be referred to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a complaint, the complainant will be referred 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.

22. At each stage in the procedure, the school will hope to be able to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, it will be acknowledged that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, one or more of the following may be offered:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently, and/ or better
- an assurance that the school will try to ensure the event complained of 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 school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology

23. School would hope and expect to be able to deal with most concerns raised on an informal basis, and a complainant is therefore generally expected not to raise a formal complaint before discussing their concerns informally with an appropriate member of staff. It is understood, however, that there are occasions when people remain dissatisfied and would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, every attempt will be made to resolve the issue through the formal stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

24. For the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved please see appendix D

Withdrawal of a Complaint

25. If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, they will be asked to confirm this in writing.

How to raise a complaint against a member of staff

(Complaints against the headteacher can be found in Point 35)
(Complaints against the chair of governors or an individual governor can be found in Point 44)
(Complaints against the whole governing body can be found in Point 47)
(Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures)

Formal Stage 1

26. Formal complaints may be made in person or in writing, preferably on the complaints form provided at Appendix B, to the headteacher.

27. The headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within five school days.

28. Within this response, the headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The headteacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

29. The headteacher may delegate any investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but will not delegate the decision about the merits of the complaint.

30. During an investigation, the headteacher (or designated member of staff) will, if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish, and will keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to the investigation. Staff members may be accompanied at these meetings by a colleague or trade union representative, if they wish.

31. At the conclusion of the investigation, the headteacher will provide a formal written response, within twenty school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

32. If the headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

33. The response will detail any actions 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 school will take to resolve the complaint.

34. The headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Formal Stage 1.

Formal Stage 2 can be found in Point 50

How to raise a complaint against the headteacher

35. If the complaint involves, or is about the headteacher, it should be addressed to the chair of governors, via the school office, and should be marked as private and confidential. Preferably using the proforma in Appendix B.

36. The chair of governors (or a suitably qualified governor) will complete the Formal Stage 1 process.

37. The chair/governor will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within five school days.

38. Within this response, the chair/governor will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The chair/governor can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

39. During an investigation, the chair/governor will, if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish, and will keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to the investigation. Staff members may be accompanied at these meetings by a colleague or trade union representative, if they wish.

40. At the conclusion of the investigation, the chair/governor will provide a formal written response, within twenty school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

41. If the chair/governor is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

42. The response will detail any actions 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 school will take to resolve the complaint.

43. The chair/governor will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Formal Stage 1.

Formal Stage 2 can be found in Point 50

How to raise a complaint against the chair of governors or an individual governor

44. A formal complaint about the chair of governors or an individual governor should be addressed to the clerk to the governing body via the school office and should be marked as private and confidential.

45. Formal Stage 1 will be completed by a suitably skilled governor.

46. If this proceeds to Formal Stage 2 and there are insufficient governors to make up the panel, the clerk of the governing body or the minute clerk of the hearing will seek to source independent governors through another local school or through the Warrington Governor & Advisory Support Team. Alternatively, an entirely independent panel may be convened to hear the complaint.

Formal Stage 2 can be found in Point 50

How to raise a complaint against the whole governing body

47. A formal complaint about the whole governing body should be addressed to the clerk to the governing body via the school office and should be marked as private and confidential.

48. Formal Stage 1 will be completed by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

49. If this proceeds to Formal Stage 2 the clerk of the governing body or the minute clerk of the hearing will seek to source an entirely independent panel through the Warrington Governor & Advisory Support Team.

Formal Stage 2 can be found in Point 50

Formal Stage 2

50. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Formal Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Formal Stage 2 – a meeting with a panel of three members of the governing body convened for this purpose. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

51. A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the clerk to the governing body, via the school office, within twenty school days of receipt of the Formal Stage 1 response. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if the clerk to the governing body, having taken appropriate advice, considers that exceptional circumstances apply.

52. The clerk to the governing body will record the date the request to escalate the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt in writing (either by letter or email) within five school days.

53. The clerk to the governing body will aim to convene a meeting of the governors' complaints panel which is within twenty school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed. If the governors' panel appoints someone other than the clerk to the governing body to minute the governors' complaints hearing, this individual should make the arrangements for the meeting.

54. The complaints panel will comprise at least three impartial governors with no prior involvement with the complaint. The complainant will be informed in advance of the meeting of the membership of the panel and asked whether they wish to raise any objections to individual members. If objections are raised the panel will give them reasonable consideration. If the ability of a panel member to give the case a fair hearing is called into question the reasons given will be considered and that panel member may be replaced.

55. If there are fewer than three governors from this school available, the clerk to the governing body, or the minute clerk for the hearing, will seek to source additional, independent governors through another local school or through the Warrington Governor and Advisory Support Team, in order to make up the panel. Alternatively, an entirely independent panel may be convened to hear the complaint at Formal Stage 2.

56. If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the clerk to the governing body, or the minute clerk for the hearing, will decide when to hold the meeting, in consultation with the governors' panel. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

57. A suitable venue must be provided for the meeting which includes separate waiting areas for the two parties and refreshments for all involved.

58. At least ten school days before the meeting, the clerk to the governing body, or the minute clerk for the hearing, will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- request copies from both parties of any further written material to be submitted to the panel at least five school days before the meeting
- request that both parties provide names of any witnesses to be called and the nature of the evidence which they will be providing, at least five school days in advance of the meeting. The panel has the discretion not to admit a witness if they do not consider their evidence to be relevant to the complaint. Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least five school days before the date of the meeting

59. The complainant may bring someone with them to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

60. If a school employee is called as a witness in a complaints meeting, they may wish to be supported by a representative of their trade union. Any such representative will be present in a supportive capacity only and will not be allowed to speak on the member of staff's behalf.

61. Minutes of the meeting will be taken by the clerk to the governing body, or a minute clerk appointed specifically for the hearing by the governors' panel.

62. There will be no audio or visual recording of the proceedings by any party unless a complainant's own disability or individual needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before recordings of meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken. A copy of the minutes of the meeting, once approved by the governors' panel, will be shared with all parties.

63. The panel will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

64. The panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or allow evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints will be dealt with informally from the beginning of this procedure.

65. The meeting will be held in private and proceedings will be treated as confidential.

66. The meeting will follow the process outlined in Appendix C.

67. The governors' panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The panel can:
    - uphold the complaint in whole or in part
    - dismiss the complaint in whole or in part

68. 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
    - where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

69. The chair of the panel will provide the complainant and the headteacher with a full explanation of the panel's decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within five school days. The response will also detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and, where appropriate, will include details of actions the school will take to resolve the complaint.

70. The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by the school.

Next Steps

71. If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with this complaints procedure or it acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of its duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Formal Stage 2.

72. The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the school. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

73. The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education, or by writing to: Ministerial and Public Communication Division, Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

Appendix A: Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints other than those that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below. As noted below, school employees may not use this procedure to raise concerns relating to their employment.

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Warrington Borough Council
• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	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 Children's Safeguarding/Social Work Team on: 01925 443322 Outside of office hours: 01925 444400
• Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions. **complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through this procedure.*
• Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
• Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
• Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being

	addressed.
• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about services. Please contact them direct.
• National Curriculum – content	Please contact the Department for Education at: form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, 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 a complainant commences legal action against the school the complaints procedure may be suspended until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Appendix B: Complaints Form

Please complete and return to the school office (Cherry Tree Primary School, Hardy Road, Lymm, Warrington, WA13 0NX) marked private and confidential for the attention of the headteacher or chair of governors as appropriate, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
Signature: Date:
Official use
Reference number:
Date acknowledgement sent:
By whom:
Complaint referred to:
Date:

Appendix C: Arrangements and Procedure for Governors' Panel Hearing

1. The governors' panel will agree a chair from amongst their number

2. Although this procedure may appear formal, the hearing should be conducted in as informal a way as possible, and the chair of the panel should make every effort to make all parties feel comfortable

3. The chair of the panel will introduce all the parties present and explain the procedure to be followed, and that every effort will be made to keep the process as informal as possible

4. The complainant will outline their complaint and explain why they are dissatisfied with the school's response at Formal Stage 1. The complainant may call any witnesses in support of their complaint who will attend the meeting only for the time that they are providing information and may be questioned by all parties.

5. The headteacher and/or chair of governors and the governors on the panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant

6. The headteacher and/or chair of governors will explain their involvement in the complaint and the reasons for their decisions at the informal and first formal stage. The headteacher and/or chair of governors may call any witnesses in support of their statement who will attend the meeting only for the time that they are providing information, and may be questioned by all parties

7. The complainant and the governors on the panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the headteacher and/or chair of governors

8. Both parties will be given the opportunity to sum up their statements, ending with the complainant. No new material may be introduced at this stage

9. The governors may decide to adjourn the hearing pending further investigation at any stage, if this seems necessary

10. Both parties will leave the meeting and the governors will consider the information that has been put to them. The clerk will remain for this part of the meeting in order to clarify anything if necessary, but the governors' deliberations will not be minuted

11. The governors' panel must reach a unanimous or majority decision as to whether or not to uphold the complaint wholly or in part, and what action (if any) the school needs to take to resolve the complaint. This may include referring the matter to another formal process, whether in relation to a complaint against a governor or a member of the school staff. Normally the governors will reach a decision at this point but they may feel the need to take further advice. Where this is the case they should endeavour to reach a decision as soon as possible

12. The governors will communicate their response to both parties in writing as soon as possible but, in any case, within five school days of reaching their decision

Appendix D: Roles and Responsibilities

The complainant

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school 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 and respect confidentiality.

The investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
  - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
  - consideration of records and other relevant information
  - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the Headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The complaints co-ordinator

The complaints co-ordinator can be:

- The Headteacher
- The designated complaints governor
- Any other staff member providing administrative support

The complaints co-ordinator will:

- Keep the complainant up to date at each stage in the procedure
- Make sure the process runs smoothly by liaising with staff members, the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, and clerk
- Be aware of issues relating to:
  - Sharing third party information
  - Additional support needed by complainants; for example, interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- Keep records

Committee Chair

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, 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 meeting
- the meeting 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 meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the committee 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 meeting
- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the committee is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator).

Clerk to the complaints panel

The clerk will:

- Be the contact point for the complainant and the complaints panel, including circulating the relevant papers and or evidence before the meeting
- Arrange the complaints hearing
- Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the hearing

Please note support to clerk and arrange the hearings can be purchased from the Local Authority Governor Clerking Team if required.

Appendix E: Policy for Managing Serial or Unreasonable Complaints

1. This school 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 our school. 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.

2. This school defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, 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 complaints investigation process
    - refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
    - insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
    - introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
    - raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
    - makes unjustified complaints 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)
    - refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
    - seeks an unrealistic outcome
    - makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
    - uses threats to intimidate
    - uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
    - knowingly provides falsified information
    - publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums

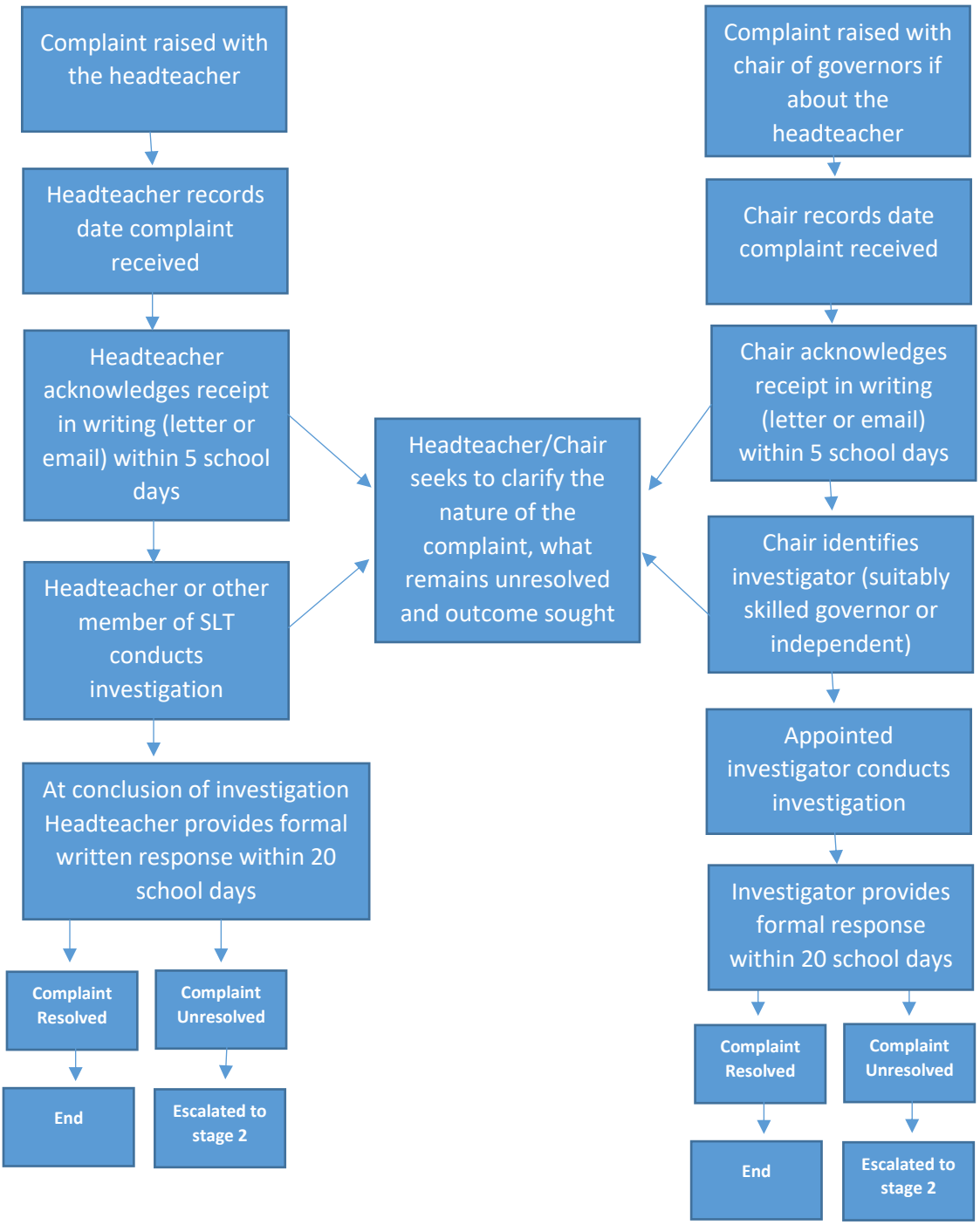
3. Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

4. Whenever possible, the headteacher or chair of governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

5. If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it.
For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

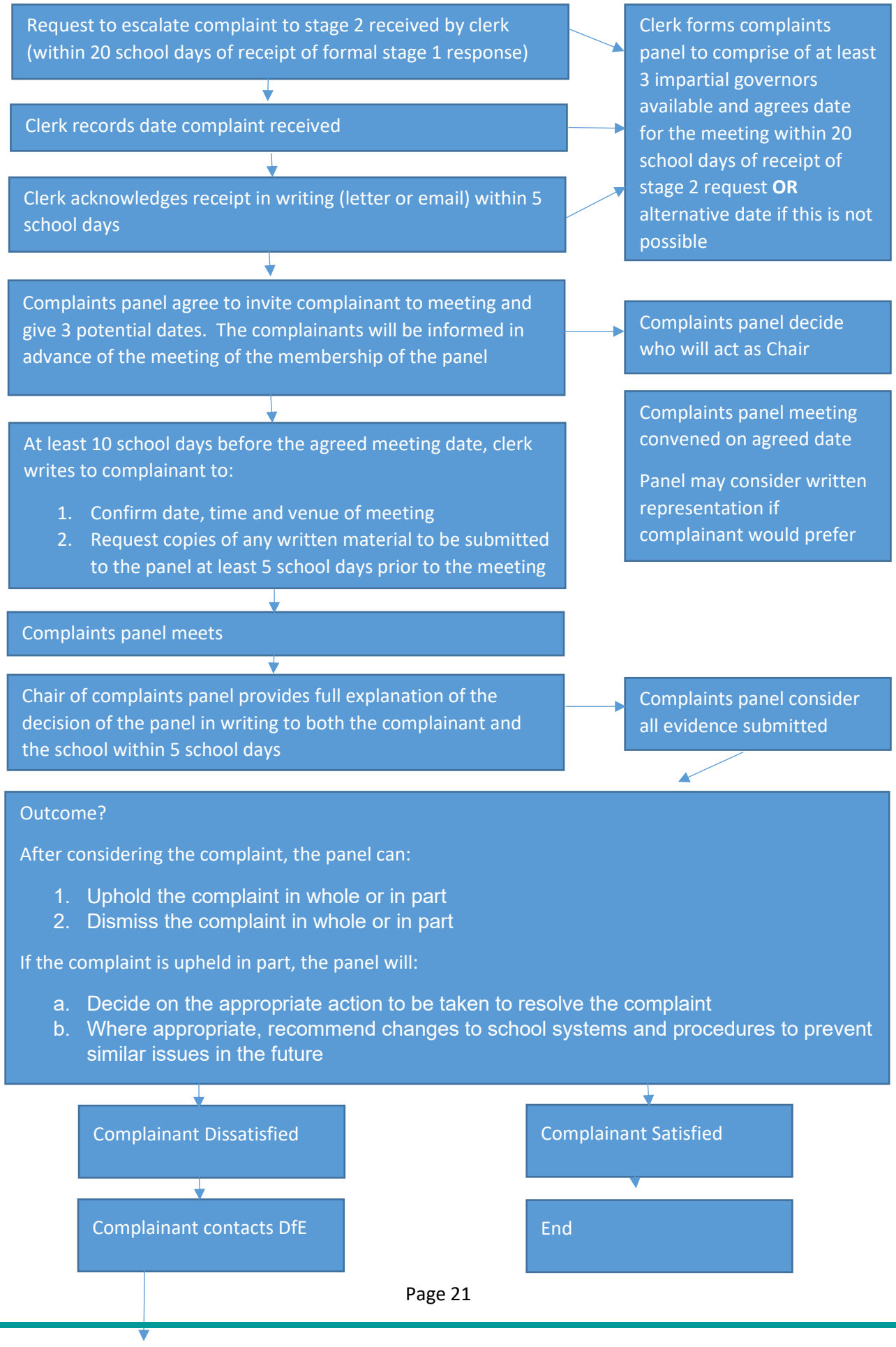
6. In response to any incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police, where appropriate, and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the school premises.

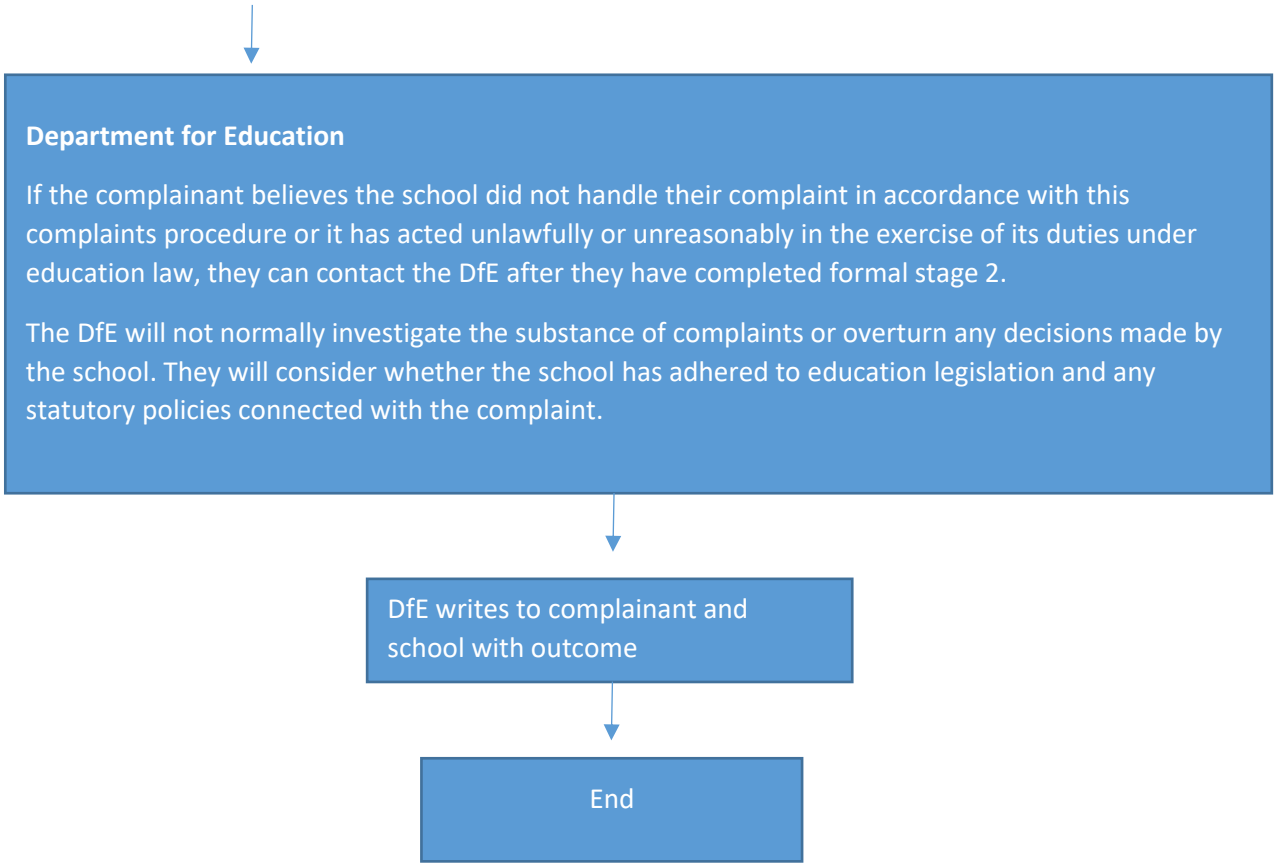
Formal Complaints Procedure- Stage 1



If the complaint is about the chair or vice chair of the governing body or about the majority or all of the governing body Formal Stage 1 will be completed by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Formal Complaints Procedure- Stage 2




Department for Education
If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with this complaints procedure or it has acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of its duties under education law, they can contact the DfE after they have completed formal stage 2.
The DfE will not normally investigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the school. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.
DfE writes to complainant and school with outcome
End