



CORE
EDUCATION
TRUST

Complaints Policy

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Monitoring & Review	Education – Annually	

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1 Who can make a complaint?

This complaints policy is primarily intended for parents and carers of students attending academies within CORE Education Trust. The Trust will also consider complaints from members of the public, community users, prospective parents and carers, contractors and other third parties where the complaint relates to the operation of the Trust or one of its schools. The Trust reserves the right to determine whether a complaint falls within the scope of this policy and whether an alternative procedure is more appropriate.

2 The difference between a concern and a complaint.

A concern may be defined as *‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’*.

A complaint may be defined as *‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’*.

It is in everyone’s interest that concerns, and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints policy. CORE Education Trust takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, please ask the school to refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, he or she will 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.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, the school will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints policy.

3 How to raise a concern or make a complaint.

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to the CEO via Head Office. Please email them to enquiry@core-education.co.uk and mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the CEO via the Trust office. Please email them to enquiry@core-education.co.uk and mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or a Trustee of the Trust, should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees via the Trust office. Please email them to enquiry@core-education.co.uk and mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complainants are encouraged to use the Trust Complaint Form (this is at the end of this policy) to ensure all relevant information is provided. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

Complainants may use artificial intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini or similar) to assist in drafting complaints; however, complainants remain responsible for ensuring that the information submitted is accurate, relevant and does not contain personal data relating to other individuals without proper authority.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints policy. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

To support a fair and confidential investigation, complainants are asked not to publicise their complaint or publish information relating to the complaint on social media whilst it is being considered.

4 Anonymous complaints.

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, we will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

5 Timescales.

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

6 Complaints received outside of term time.

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

7 Scope of the complaints policy.

This policy applies to complaints relating to CORE Education Trust and its academies, including the provision of education, facilities, services and community activities, except where a separate statutory procedure applies, including those listed below:

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools	Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process – either through the appeals process or via the local authority.
Collective worship	Complaints about the content of the daily act of collective worship should be directed to the local authority or the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). Complaints about the handling of a request to withdraw your child from religious education or the daily act of collective worship can be raised under this procedure.
Curriculum	Complaints about the content of the national curriculum should be directed to the Department for Education at www.education.gov.uk/contactus. However, complaints about the delivery of the curriculum, including the delivery of religious education (RE) and sex and relationships education, can be raised under this procedure.
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.
School re-organisation proposals	Where concerns are not adequately addressed by the school/Trust, complaints can be raised directly with the Department for Education at www.education.gov.uk/contactus

• Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)	Concerns about statutory assessments of special educational needs should be raised directly with the local authority.
• Exam grade appeals	Concerns around exam grades should be handled through the Internal Appeals Policy which are located on individual school websites.
• 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 the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or Children's Advice & Support Service (CASS) www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk/lado
• Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions. <i>*Complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints policy. School behaviour policies can be found on individual school websites.</i>
• Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing policy 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: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints policy. 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 policy.
• Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the

	school's internal disciplinary policies, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member because of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
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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 policy or result in the policy being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against the school or CORE Education Trust, in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints policy in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

8 Resolving complaints.

At each stage in the policy, the school wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. 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 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.

The complaints process cannot determine staff disciplinary matters and cannot award financial compensation. Such matters are dealt with through separate procedures where applicable.

9 Withdrawal of a complaint.

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

10 Record keeping

- 1.1 Staff members are encouraged to log all informal concerns on the CPOMS and inform the Headteacher of any serious concerns.
- 10.1 We keep a record of all complaints that reach the formal complaint or complaints committee/review stages. This includes how and when the complaint was resolved, and any action we took as a result.
- 10.2 We keep records in line with our data retention policy and data protection law. We keep all complaint details confidential, except where:
 - 10.2.1 The Secretary of State asks to see them;
 - 10.2.2 They are needed for an school inspection;
 - 10.2.3 An individual has a legal right to see their own personal information in the records; or
 - 10.2.4 The law requires us to share them.
- 10.3 The findings and recommendations from any complaints committee decision will be shared with the Trust and the Headteacher of the school.
- 10.4 Electronic recordings of any meetings or the complaints committee hearing will not be permitted unless there are very good reasons to do so and all parties to the meeting or hearing give their written consent.

11 Stage 1 – Informal complaints.

It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis.

Concerns should be raised with either the Class Teacher, Head of Year or Headteacher. Complainants should not approach individual governors 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 3 of the policy.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide an informal written response within 20 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

12 Stage 2 – Formal complaints.

Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in person or in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form).

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 3 school days.

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.

Note: The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the Headteacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint.

If the Headteacher cannot meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and a revised response date.

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.

The Headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair) the CEO will complete all the actions at Stage 2.

Complaints about the Headteacher, or a member of the governing body, must be made to the CEO, via the Trust office.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 2 will be escalated to the CEO of the Trust. *Note: The CEO may delegate the investigation to another member of the Trust's Executive Leadership team, but not the decision to be taken.*

13 Stage 3 – Panel Hearing.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3 – a panel hearing consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school. This independent panel member may be from another school within the Trust. This is the final stage of the complaints policy.

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within 15 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 3 school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 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 complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. The meeting will then proceed in the complainant's absence based on written submissions from both parties.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 3 will be heard by the trustees and an independent panel member.

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel 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.

For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints policy. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary policy, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 7 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time, and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the policy.

The meeting will be clerked, and the Trust does not need to disclose who will attend ahead of the panel. The meeting will be held in private and virtually if the need arises due to the availability of the panel. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or policies to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the panel will provide the complainant and CORE Education Trust with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education (DfE) if they are dissatisfied with how CORE Education Trust has handled their complaint.

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 CORE Education Trust will take to resolve the complaint.

The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by email, or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, the proprietor and the Headteacher will make them available for inspection on the school premises.

The school will keep a written record of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, and what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State, or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act, requests access to them.

14 Complaints escalated to/about the Trust, CEO or Trustee

If a complaint is escalated to CORE Education Trust “the trust” or if a complainant wishes to complain directly about the trust, then the complaint should be sent to the CEO to be investigated.

The CEO will write to the complainant acknowledging the complaint within 3 school days of the date that the written request was received. The acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint will now be investigated under Stage 2 of this Complaints Policy and will confirm the date for providing a response to the complainant.

Following the investigation, the CEO will write to the complainant confirming the outcome within 20 school days of the date that the letter was received. If this time limit cannot be met, the CEO will write to the Complainant within 20 school days of the date that the letter was received, explaining the reason for the delay, and providing a revised date.

If the complaint concerns the CEO or a Trustee, the complaint should be investigated by the Chair of the Trust Board. If a formal complaint form is received about the Chair, the complaint will be referred to the Vice Chair for investigation.

NB. Where the Chair of the Trust Board has investigated the complaint, they will write the letter of outcome to the Complainant and provide a copy to the CEO.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the previous stage, the complainant should write to the Clerk asking for the complaint to be heard before a Complaint Panel, within 5 school days.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 3 school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 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 complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire trust board or
- the majority of the trust board

Stage 3 will be heard by a completely independent complaints panel.

The Complaint Panel will consist of three members. None of the three members of the Complaint 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.

One of the Complaint Panel members will be independent of the management and running of the School Trust. This means that the independent Complaint Panel member will not be a Trustee or an employee of the Trust.

A complainant may bring someone along 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.

For instance, if a trust employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints policy. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary policies, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 7 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time, and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 6 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the policy.

The meeting will be held in private and virtually if the need arises due to availability of the panel. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or policy to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Panel will provide the complainant and CORE Education Trust with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education (DfE) if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by CORE Education Trust.

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 CORE Education Trust will take to resolve the complaint.

The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained

about. Furthermore, the proprietor and the Headteacher will make them available for inspection on the school premises.

The school will keep a written record of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, and what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

15 Next steps.

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints policy or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the DfE after they have completed Stage 3.

The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by CORE Education Trust. They will consider whether CORE Education Trust 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.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the DfE online at:
<https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe>, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288.

16 Complaint Campaigns

On rare occasions, we may receive concerns or complaints from three or more people about the same issue. When this happens, we treat it as a 'complaint campaign'.

In that case, we will not follow the usual procedure. Instead, we will:

- Send the same response to everyone who has raised a concern/complaint; and/or
- Publish a single response on our website.

Where the complaint campaign involves complainants who are parents or carers of students currently attending one of our academies, they will be entitled to escalate their complaint to a complaint committee hearing if they are dissatisfied with our response. We will consider how best to manage complaint committee hearings in such circumstances.

If you are not happy with our response, you can refer the matters to the Department for Education (DfE) which has limited powers to consider complaints about academies. The DfE cannot change our response to the 'complaint campaign' but can review whether we handled it properly.

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Headteacher / CEO (delete as applicable) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Student's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the student (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

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Roles and responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the 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. This helps to protect the privacy of all individuals involved and supports the integrity of the investigation.

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 coordinator 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 Headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Complaints Co-ordinator (this could be the Headteacher or CEO/ designated complaints governor or other staff member providing administrative support).

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the policy.
- liaise with staff members: Headteacher, CEO, Chair of Governors, Chair of Trust, to ensure the smooth running of the complaints policy.
- be aware of issues regarding:
 - sharing third party information
 - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person.
- keep records.

CEO

The CEO is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint policy are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school 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 meeting, 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 1 paperwork, school, and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale.
- record the proceedings.
- circulate the minutes of the meeting.
- notify all parties of the committee's decision.

Panel Chair

The panel's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the CEO) 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 policy.
- the meeting is minuted.
- they liaise with the CEO (and complaints co-ordinator if the school has one)

Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

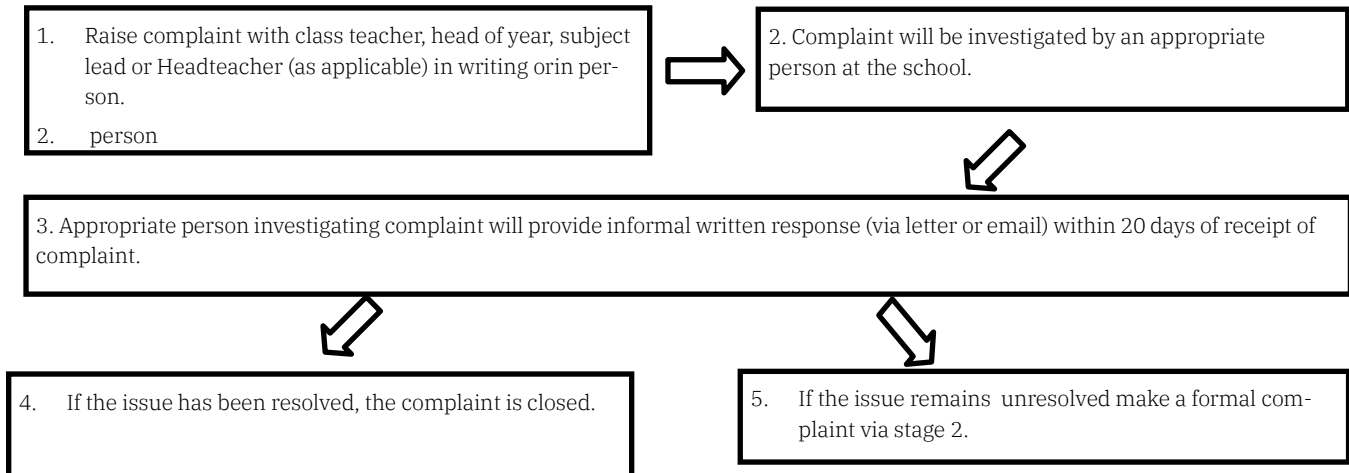
- the meeting must be independent and impartial and should be seen to be so.
- no governor may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.
- we recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting 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 meeting.
- careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.
- the committee 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 committee 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 committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.
- However, 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 meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

Complaints Policy Overview

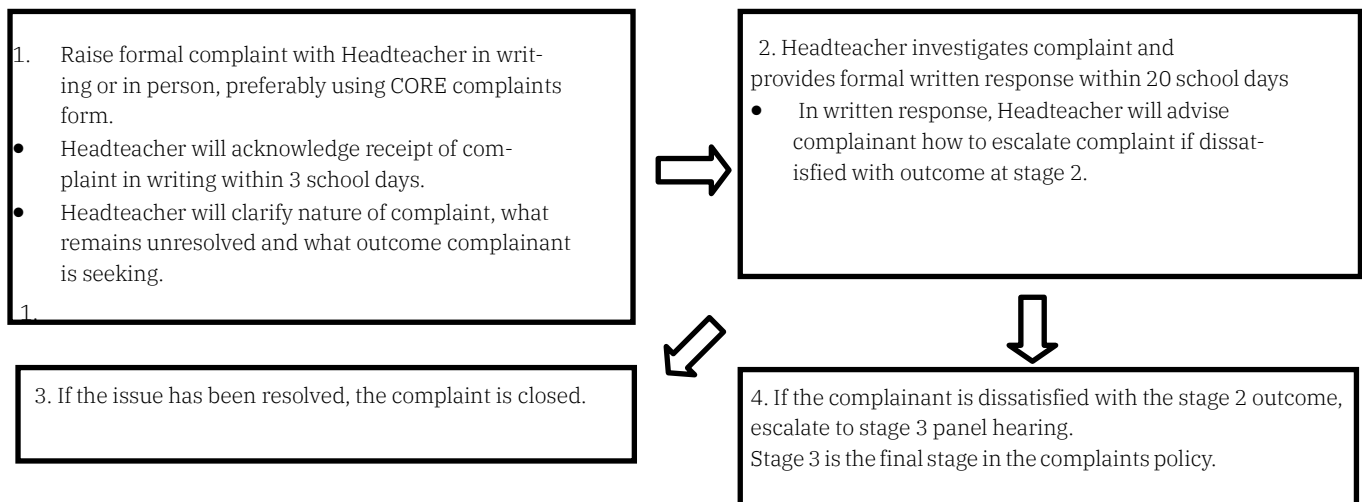
NB: This overview should be read in conjunction with the full complaints policy.

At each stage in the complaints policy CORE Education Trust wants to resolve the complaint. It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal

Stage 1 – Initial/informal complaint



Stage 2 – Formal complaint



Note: If the complaint is about the Headteacher, the complaint should be sent to the CEO via the Trust Head Office. The CEO will complete the actions at stage 2. If the complaint is about the Local Governing Body (LGB) Chair, Vice Chair, or the majority of the LGB, Stage 2 will be dealt with by the CEO.

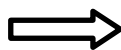
Note: If the complaint is about the Trust, the CEO or a Trustee, the complaint should be sent to the Chair of Trustees via the Trust Head Office. The Chair of Trustees will complete the actions at stage 2.

1. To contact the CEO please email enquiry@core-education.co.uk and use the following as the email subject: *Private and Confidential Complaint, for the attention of the CEO.*

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at stage 2, they can escalate their complaint to the final stage in the complaints policy as outlined below.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

1. Make request in writing for stage 3 panel to the Clerk via Trust Head Office within 15 school days of stage 2 outcome letter being received.



2. Complaint is acknowledged by the Clerk within 3 school days.



3. The Clerk will aim to convene stage 3 panel within 20 school days. If it is not possible to adhere to this timescale this will be communicated clearly to complainant with revised timeline.



4. The date and time of the panel hearing will be confirmed with all parties at least 7 school days in advance of the meeting.



5. Papers for the panel hearing will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days in advance of the meeting.



6. The Chair of the panel will write to the complainant with the outcome of the panel hearing withing 5 school days of the meeting. The outcome letter will include details of how to contact the Department for Education (DfE) if the complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled.

To contact the CEO please email enquiry@core-education.co.uk and use the following as the email subject: *Private and Confidential Complaint, for the attention of the CEO.*

Note: Stage 3 is the final stage of our complaints policy.