

Stanton St Quintin Primary School

Langley Fitzurse Primary School

Concern and Complaints Policy

This policy is based on the DfE model complaints policy (as of 1st September 2025) and the managing serial or unreasonable complaints policy that are both required by all maintained schools.

Policy and Procedure: Concern and Complaints Policy

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1. Who can make a complaint?

- 1.1 In a maintained school, any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Langley Fitzurse CE or Stanton St Quintin Primary Schools about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

2. The difference between a concern and a complaint

- 2.1 A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.
- 2.2 A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.
- 2.3 It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Concerns can be resolved informally. Where this is not possible because attempts to resolve the concern informally do not succeed, the concern will move into the formal complaints process. Schools within the LFSSQ Federation take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.
- 2.5 There may be occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, the schools will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.
- 2.6 We will treat all complaints seriously, with an honest and open mind, and do everything we can to deal with them efficiently and effectively.
- 2.7 We will aim to keep you informed and provide clear explanations for decisions made. If we find that something has gone wrong, we will try to put this right as soon as possible and use the information in a positive way to identify training requirements, improve processes, and share learning when appropriate to prevent similar occurrences in the future.
- 2.8 The complaints process is an internal procedure designed to address concerns and issues that are believed to have gone wrong, and if this is the case, help us to address this and make improvements. This is not a legal or HR process and participation in this process by all sides is voluntary.
- 2.9 Some complaints (such as those relating to admissions, exclusions, SEND assessments staff grievances, child protection matters) which cannot be managed within this policy. A list of excluded complaints is set out at Appendix 1. Please check your complaint does not fall under one of these definitions before submitting it.
- 2.10 We recognise that making a complaint can be an emotive process, and we ask that all individuals engaging with this process, including parents and carers, do so in a respectful and constructive manner. Abusive, aggressive, or disrespectful behaviour towards staff or others involved at any stage will not be tolerated and may result in the suspension or halting of the complaints process. (It is a criminal offence to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance on school premises. This means that any person(s) can be legally removed from the site if they are acting in an abusive or threatening way at meetings and may be banned from the school site. This is set out in section 547 of the Education Act 1996).

- 2.11 We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. The Executive Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation, but the outcome of any investigation cannot then be provided.
- 2.12 A complaint must be raised within 3 months of the **incident** or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 3 months of the last of these incidents. Where Complaints made outside of this time frame may only be considered if there are exceptional circumstances.
- 2.13 We will consider complaints made during school holidays to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.
- 2.14 If the school receives a duplicate complaint in respect of an issue that has already been decided, from a partner, spouse, grandparent or child etc., the school can inform the new complainant that the school has already considered the complaint and the school's process is now complete. If there are any new aspects to the complaint, the new aspects alone will be considered in line with the full extent of the complaint procedure.
- 2.15 If the school becomes the focus of a campaign and receive large volumes of complaints, all based on the same subject or from complainants unconnected with the school, the Executive Headteacher or Chair of Governors (if the complaints are about the Executive Headteacher) will appoint an appropriate/ independent person to investigate the complaints. In these circumstances it may not be possible to meet with all individual complainants or correspond with them individually. Once the investigation is concluded, the investigating person may choose to write to each complainant with an outcome, or the school can respond with a template response to all complainants, or by publishing a single response on the school website. Complainants are advised to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the school's handling of the complaint.
- 2.16 Concerns or complaints must be raised using this complaints procedure in order to ensure the best outcome for all parties. The LFSSQ Federation will not formally respond to complaints or concerns raised on Social Media platforms but may contact individuals to guide them to use the complaints procedure and to request the removal of such content on social media in line with school social media policies.
- 2.17 Mediation can provide a helpful mechanism for discussion when a concern is raised, and can help rebuild relationships between parties once all of the stages of the complaints procedure have been completed. All parties must consent to attend a meeting of this nature in order for it to proceed.
- 2.18 In the event that a mediation meeting goes ahead, the formal procedure will be "paused" at the stage it has reached, recommencing at that stage if the meeting does not result in a satisfactory conclusion. Mediation should not be used as a substitute for an investigation during the formal stages of the complaint's procedure. A neutral third party (or parties) may be invited to facilitate or attend the discussion if agreed in advance by all parties. This could be an officer from the Local Authority or someone from the Diocese in the case of Langley Fitzurse CE school
- 2.19 Where a complaint has been closed either because it has been decided, or it has been withdrawn we will not consider it again. If we are contacted multiple times on the same matter this will be viewed as '**serial**' or '**persistent**' and we may choose not to respond.

2.20 Vexatious complaints will not be considered. LFSSQ defines **vexatious 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:

- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
- insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance

2.21 LFSSQ will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour towards any member of staff and will take action to protect staff from any abusive, offensive or threatening behaviour. Such behaviour also includes being uncooperative or insisting that the complaint is dealt with in a manner that is not in line with this policy. Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with you (the complainant) informally before determining your behaviour/actions are unreasonable.

2.22 If this behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to you explaining that your behaviour is unreasonable and asking you to desist. For complainants who excessively contact LFSSQ causing a significant level of disruption, we may speak to our legal advisors and also review communication arrangements, limiting the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

2.23 **In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing.** This may include barring an individual from LFSSQ in accordance with the Department for Education guidance on controlling access to school premises.

2.24 If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint at any stage of the procedure, they must confirm this in writing. Once received, we will confirm in writing to the complainant that this matter is now closed, and the complaints process will cease. If the complainant indicates verbally that they wish to withdraw the complaint, but does not confirm this in writing, we will write to the complainant to advise them that the complaint is closed

2.25 An excellent guide published by Parent Kind to aimed at resolving concerns and complaints quickly and positively can be found through this link : [School guide to parent complaints 2025/26](#)

2.26 Complaints that are **not** in the score of the Complaints Policy can be found in Appendix 1

3. How to raise a concern or complaint

3.1 A concern may be made in person, by telephone or in writing (including by email admin@stanton-st-quintin.wilts.sch.uk for SSQ admin@lfssq.wilts.sch.uk for LF). They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. We may ask you (the complainant) for evidence of this consent. A complaint must be made in writing (including by email.)

- 3.3 The purpose of your complaint should be clear, preferably in bullet points, and should also state how the complainant feels the complaint can be satisfactorily resolved. If a complaint is not clear it may be returned to the complainant for revision.

See Appendix 2 for template Complaints Form.

- 3.4 We will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or by email) within 5 school days. Any relevant evidence can be submitted with the formal complaint, but the investigation officer should speak with the complainant to discuss the complaint and ask if there is any further relevant information.
- 3.5 Please note that if all (or part) of the complaint is about the conduct of a member of staff, it may have to be referred to the Local Authorities HR procedures to progress. If this is considered an HR matter, the complainant will be informed but will not be informed of any subsequent decision or actions.
- 3.6 The school office staff will deal with correspondence confidentially in order to reach the correct coordinator securely and promptly as set out in Appendix 2 (e.g. to the Chair of Governors or the nominated complaints co-ordinator). This may mean that correspondence is opened and scanned. All correspondence will be stored securely and confidentially in line with school policy.
- 3.7 In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

See Appendix 3 for Complaints Procedure Flowchart

4. Concerns

- 4.1 Once we are aware of a concern, we will contact you by telephone or in writing as soon as possible. We may make arrangements to meet with you to discuss your concerns and desired outcomes in more detail to gain a better understanding and to agree appropriate next steps. **Our focus in this informal stage will be to seek clarification on your concern and find a resolution.** Your concern may be referred to the appropriate person with responsibility for your particular issues. This member of staff will make a clear note of the details, any actions or monitoring of the issue that has been agreed will be communicated clearly and confirmed in writing to you.
- 4.2 If your concerns are in respect of a particular member of staff, you should contact the Headteacher. If your concerns are about the Headteacher, a governor or a group of governors, the Informal stage of this procedure may not be appropriate, and the complainant may be referred to Stage 1 of the formal complaint procedure.
- 4.3 If necessary, we will contact appropriate people who may be able to assist us with our enquiries into your concerns. We will normally update you on the progress of our investigation within 10 school days. We would expect that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this early stage.
- 4.4 If you remain dissatisfied at the end of the informal stage, you can move to Stage 1 of the procedure and submit a formal complaint. The school may also determine that a formal Stage 1 complaint is more appropriate.

5. Stage 1 – Formal Complaint

- 5.1 Formal complaints will be forwarded to the most appropriate individual in line with the table at Appendix 2 who will write to the complainant to confirm they are investigating the complaint (the investigator). Details of the roles of individuals within the process are set out at Appendix 3.
- 5.2 The investigator will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The investigator will consider whether a phone call, email or face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this. (If you have a preference or need any reasonable adjustments, please let us know in advance.)
- 5.3 During the investigation, the investigator will:
- Try to speak to any witnesses 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
- The investigator may also be accompanied by a suitable person if they wish. A note-taker may also be present.
- 5.4 If the complaint centres on a pupil, we may talk to the pupil concerned and, where appropriate, others present at the time of the incident in question. Pupils will normally be accompanied by a parent or carer present, unless this would delay the investigation of a serious or urgent complaint, or where a pupil has specifically said that they would prefer the parent or carer not to be involved. In such circumstances, we will ensure that another member of staff, with whom the pupil feels comfortable, is present.
- 5.5 Witnesses will be reminded that the statements they make, whilst confidential, may be used as evidence later in the procedure and could therefore be seen by other parties considering the complaint (e.g. Governor Complaints Panel members). It may be necessary to redact or remove the identity of the person giving the statement or any third party if mentioned e.g. another pupil if there is not written permission provided to include these names.
- 5.6 When investigating particularly sensitive complaints, all parties will need to be mindful of confidentiality and data protection, and careful consideration should be given to who is present in the investigation and how confidentiality can be maintained.
- 5.7 Electronic recording of the meeting is not permitted without the consent of all attendees and only in special circumstances, i.e. where there are communication difficulties.
- 5.8 At the conclusion of their investigation, the person investigating your complaint will provide a formal written response within 20 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the investigating person is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide you with an update and the revised response date.
- 5.9 The written response to your complaint will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision and the reason(s) for it. The response should detail specifically whether each element of your complaint has been upheld, upheld in part or dismissed. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions we will take to resolve the complaint. You (the complainant) may be invited to a meeting to discuss the outcome as part of our commitment to building and maintaining good relations with you.
- 5.10 If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint at Stage 1, you are entitled to progress the parts of the complaint not upheld, for a governor panel to review as a stage 2 complaint.

6. Stage 2 Governor panel

6.1 Stage 2 is the final stage of the Complaints Procedure.

6.2 Within 10 school days of receiving the outcome of your complaint at Stage 1, you (the complainant) must submit your request for your complaint to go to a Stage 2 governor panel. You may find it helpful to use the complaints form. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

You should:

- state specifically why you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1
- state what resolution you are seeking.

6.3 Only the parts of the complaint that have not been upheld can be considered (as you cannot appeal something that was previously upheld). If your reasons for moving to Stage 2 are not clear, the school may need to come back to you for further clarity

6.4 You should send your Stage 2 complaint to the school office. The school will acknowledge receipt of the email within 5 school days and ensure the complaint is received by the intended recipient. A nominated complaints co-ordinator will usually be appointed as the contact point and arrange the dates of the meeting, the panel members, request for evidence and distribute the packs of papers for the meetings.

6.5 A Stage 2 complaint will need to be shared with the Headteacher and any person who investigated your complaint so that they can prepare a response for the panel to consider.

6.6 The Governor Complaints Panel will not normally review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the original complaint.

6.7 The Governors Complaints Panel is formed of three governors or associate members with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. If there are fewer than three governors available, the nominated complaints co-ordinator will source any additional, independent governors (or associate members) through another school or through their LA's Governor Services team or Diocese, in order to make up the panel. Where appropriate, including where a complaint concerns the Chair and Vice Chair or a majority of governors, an entirely independent panel may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2. They will also source an independent clerk of governors to support the panel. The exception to this is when a maintained school has appointed a standing committee to hear all the complaints.

6.8 The aim of a panel is to:

- Establish facts.
- Review how the complaint has been investigated and determine whether this has been conducted fairly.
- Determine if the complaint is upheld in whole or in part or is dismissed in whole or in part and to make any recommendations.
- As a result of this process, reassure you as the complainant that we have taken your complaint seriously and given it fair and due consideration.

6.11 Prior to the meeting, the panel will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Governor Complaints Panel. The panel will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through consideration of the written representation and evidence only. In making their decision they will need to be assured that the Stage 1 investigation considered all aspects of the complaint and evidence provided and that they

interviewed all relevant parties to understand the concerns of the complainant and the actions of the school.

- 6.12 The nominated complaints co-ordinator will aim to convene a mutually convenient meeting within 30 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request and provide written notification to all parties. If it is not possible to convene a meeting within 30 school days, the nominated complaints co-ordinator will provide a timescale within which they expect the meeting to take place and keep the complainant informed.
- 6.13 If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the nominated complaints co-ordinator will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed on the basis of written submissions from both parties only, in the complainant's and Headteacher/investigating person's absence.
- 6.14 All parties will be asked to provide any further written material and details of any witnesses that they intend to call. The complainant may bring someone along to provide support; this can be a relative or friend. It is the parties' responsibility to gain agreement from their witnesses to take part in this process and the complainant will be responsible for communicating the arrangements of the panel meeting to their witnesses. The same applies for the Headteacher and person investigating the complaint.
- 6.15 A governor complaints panel is not a form of legal proceedings and neither the complainant nor the school should bring legal representation. 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.
- 6.16 Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, as appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.
- 6.17 Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- 6.18 At least 10 school days in advance of the panel meeting, the nominated complaints co-ordinator will provide all parties with a date to submit the documentation and names of witnesses/companions which must be adhered to. Once all the documentation has been received, the nominated complaints co-ordinator will collate and distribute the papers to all parties at least 5 school days prior to the panel meeting. All parties will receive copies of all the papers presented for consideration by the Governor Complaints Panel. The papers will be sent by secure email to all parties with paper copies provided on request.
- 6.19 The panel will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.
- 6.20 The nominated complaints co-ordinator will confirm at least 5 school days in advance, the date, time and place of the meeting. We hope you (the complainant) will feel comfortable with the meeting taking place in the school, but we will do what we can to make alternative arrangements if you prefer. You should advise, as soon as possible, if you would prefer for the meeting to take place at an alternative venue to the school.
- 6.21 The complainant will be provided with a copy of the Procedure for the Governor Complaints Panel Meeting which explains what will happen at the hearing.

- 6.22 As a general rule, no evidence (documentary or otherwise) or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced into the panel meeting by any of the participants. If any party wishes to do so, a request must be made to the panel and, if the panel agree to the request, the meeting will be adjourned so that the other parties have a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence. The adjournment will be managed by the clerk of the panel.
- 6.23 The chair of the panel will ensure that the meeting is properly recorded via written minutes. The minutes are strictly confidential and should not be shared with parties external to the process.
- 6.24 The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's (or other party's) own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending to record electronically must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken and all processes must adhere to Data Protection guidance/legislation.
- 6.25 During the meeting, the panel will listen to the evidence presented. The panel will explain the next steps to the complainant.
- 6.26 The Governor Complaints Panel will then consider the complaint, and all the evidence presented. The panel will acknowledge if the complaint is not upheld, upheld in whole or in part and may offer one or more of the following,
- an explanation
 - an admission if the situation could have been handled differently or better
 - an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
 - a recommendation of actions to be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales for this to happen
 - an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
 - an apology.
- 6.27 The Chair of the Panel (or the Clerk on behalf of the Chair) will provide the complainant with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days. A copy of the letter will also be sent to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and the person who investigated your complaint (as appropriate). The letter to the complainant will also include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled.
- 6.28 The complainant may request a copy of the official minutes of the panel meeting and it is at the panel's discretion to make this decision. However, best practice is to ensure an open and transparent process.
- 6.29 If, at any stage of the complaint, it is determined that staff disciplinary or capability proceedings are necessary in order to resolve the issue, the details of this action will remain confidential to the headteacher or the individual's line manager. Complainants are not entitled to participate in those proceedings or receive any detail about them

7. Escalation

- 7.1 If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, the complainant can contact the Department for Education (DfE) after the Stage 2 has been completed. You can contact the

Department for Education via their website www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to: Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester. M1 2WD. Please enclose with your letter to the DfE a copy of the governor panel outcome letter.

- 7.2 Please note that the DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints, it will only consider whether LFSSQ has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.
- 7.3 If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or HR tribunals etc, 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.
- 7.4 If a complainant commences legal action against the LFSSQ Federation in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have been concluded.

Appendix 1

Complaints that are not in the scope of the Complaints Policy

Complaints not dealt with by this policy	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions to schools Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs School re-organisation proposals i.e. academisation, federation, etc 	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Wiltshire County Council. If you (the complainant) are dissatisfied with the outcome about School re-organisation, please contact the Department for Education.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion of children from school* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You (the complainant) may also be able to complain directly to the Local Authority or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff (including from governors) will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>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 in line with school's internal procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Curriculum - content 	<p>Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus</p>

Appendix 2 Complaint Form (Stage 1 and/or Stage 2)

Your name:	
Pupil's name (if relevant):	
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Mobile number	Email Address:
<p>Please provide a summary of the key points of your complaint to be considered by the stage 1 investigation officer: (If this is a request to be considered by a stage 2 governor panel, please explain why you were dissatisfied with the outcome of the previous stage 1 investigation).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I am writing to make a formal complaint about (the incident you are complaining about).2. I am complaining because (give as much detail about the incident(s) as you can. Include the date/time, people involved, what happened, any witnesses).3. So far the following actions have been taken: (explain what has happened so far in response to your concerns e.g. meetings, actions by the school. You can include copies of any letters or emails).4. I am not happy with the actions taken because (e.g. not enough done, the problem is still going on, no action has been taken).	

I would like you to put things right by (e.g. explaining how this incident happened, an offering an apology, changing school policy, providing extra support for my child to ... etc).

If you are attaching any evidence/paperwork, please give details of what this is.

Your signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

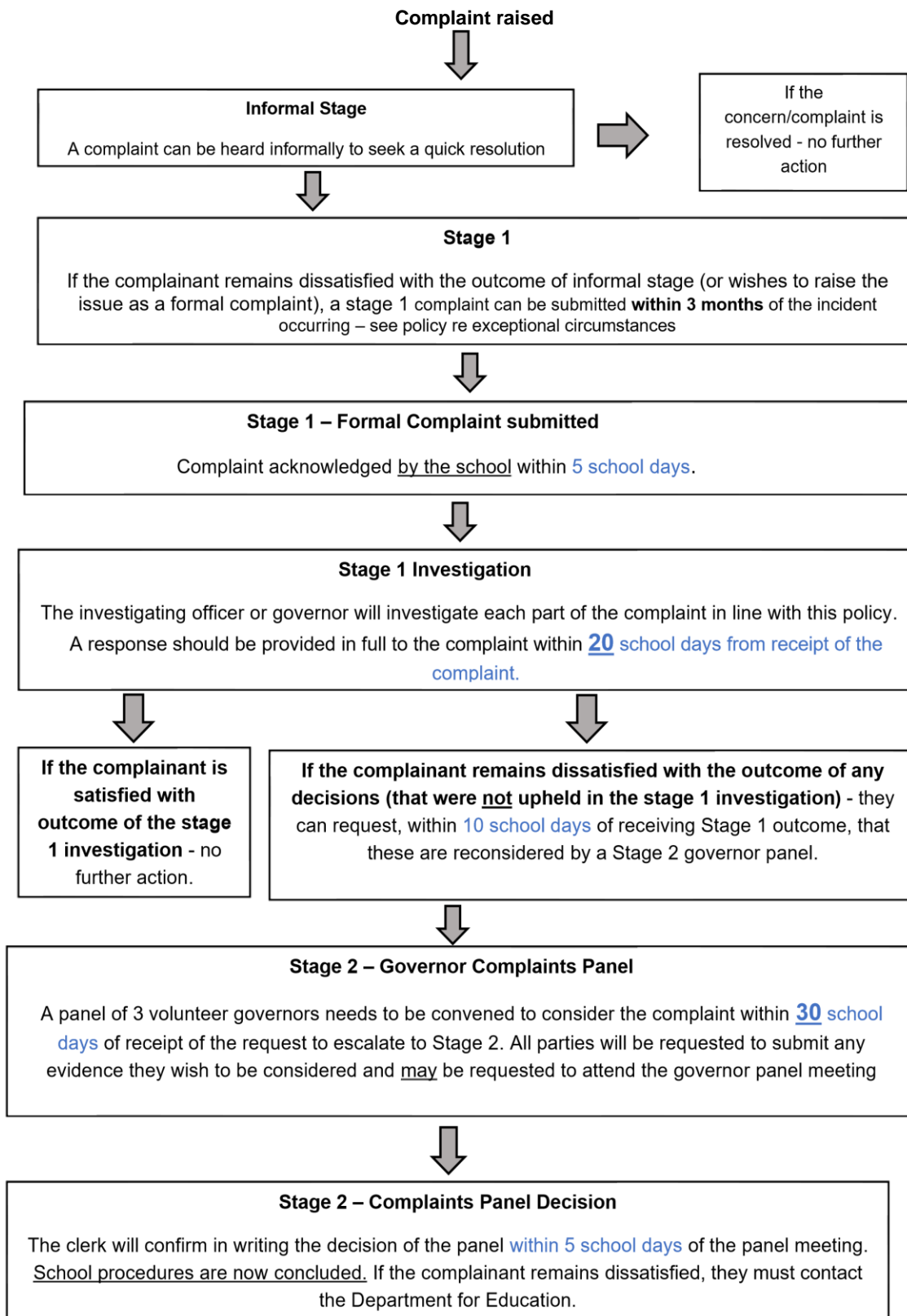
Complaint referred to:

Date:

Please note that a copy of the written complaint will need to be provided to the person(s) you are complaining about in order for them to be able to provide a full response.

If you do not wish for the full written complaint to be provided to the person(s) you must indicate this in your complaint/complaint form and state your reasons why this information should not be shared. In this case, an agreed summary of the complaint will then be provided to the person(s) you are complaining about in order for them to respond.

Appendix 3 – Flowchart – How to raise a complaint



Appendix 4

Who manages each stage of a complaint.

If the complaint relates to:	Informal Stage	Stage 1 Formal (Investigation)	Stage 2 Complaint Panel
Pupils, parents or staff (other than the Headteacher)	<p>The appropriate member of staff. (Any concerns about staff conduct may need to be considered under HR procedures).</p>	<p>Executive Headteacher or Head of School (The Headteacher may delegate the investigation, but not the decision).</p>	<p>Governor Panel (The panel could include governors/associate members from another school).</p>
The Headteacher	<p>Chair of Governors <u>A Formal Stage 1 investigation may be more appropriate.</u> (Any concerns about Headteacher conduct may need to be considered under HR procedures).</p>	<p>The Chair of Governors, Complaints Governor or impartial person.</p>	<p>Governor Panel (The panel could include governors/associate members from another school).</p>
A Governor or group of Governors (other than the Chair of Governors)	<p>Chair of Governors</p>	<p>Vice Governors or another nominated non-staff governor (which could include a governor/associate member from another school).</p>	<p>Governor Panel (The panel could include a governors/associate members from another school).</p>
The Chair of Governors	<p>Vice chair of Governors</p>	<p>Clerk to governors will refer to Wiltshire County Council Governor Services who will nominate an investigating officer (which could include a governor/associate member from another school).</p>	<p>Governor Panel (The panel could include a governors/associate members from another school).</p>
The whole governing body	<p>No formal process advised</p>	<p>Clerk to governors will refer the complaint to Wiltshire Local Authority Governor Services who will nominate an investigating officer.</p>	<p>Wiltshire Local Authority Governor Services to nominate an independent panel of governors or associate members.</p>

Appendix 5

Guidance on individual's roles in the complaints process

Complainant

Role: The person making the complaint.

Responsibilities:

- Explain your complaint fully, clearly, and concisely, preferably using the form provided in this policy (Appendix 2 Item 13).
- Cooperate with the school to seek a solution.
- Respond promptly to requests for information or meeting dates.
- Ask for assistance as needed. (We will ensure that adjustments are made so that the complaints process is accessible to you e.g. providing information in alternative formats or supporting you to make your complaint.)
- Treat everyone involved with respect.
- Any written/printed evidence provided for the panel meetings must not have the name of another child mentioned or any images, unless you can provide authorisation from their parents - you can instead refer to them as "child A" etc.
- Refrain from publicising details of the complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process and afterwards.

Stage 1 Investigator - The headteacher (or person who investigated at stage one)

Role: Establish the facts relevant to the complaint and state if relevant policies were followed in accordance with the required procedures.

Responsibilities:

- Provide a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint.
- Conduct sensitive and thorough interviews with the complainant, staff, children/young people, and other relevant individuals.
- Consider records and other relevant information.
- Analyse information.
- Liaise with the complainant to clarify the complaint and understand what would resolve the issue.
- Conduct interviews with an open mind and sensitivity, persisting in questioning to obtain necessary information.
- Keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker.
- Ensure papers produced during the investigation are kept securely.
- Be mindful of response timescales.
- Prepare a comprehensive report setting out facts, identifying solutions, and recommending actions to resolve problems.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process and afterwards.
- Refer to the Governor Services complaints toolkit for guidance which included guidance for the stage 1 investigator.
- Present evidence and answer questions at any subsequent stage 2 governor panel meeting to review how the complaint has been investigated and to determine whether this has been conducted fairly.

The appointed investigator - If the headteacher was the stage 1 investigator

Role: attend the meeting to provide information about the school's response to the complaint and the related school policies and procedures. (Any concerns regarding staff behaviour may be determined to require separate investigation in line with the school's internal HR procedures.)

Responsibilities:

- Cannot be compelled to attend a governor complaints panel meeting, but it may be helpful for governors to make a decision and find a solution by having evidence provided by headteacher and an opportunity to ask questions.
- Provide written statements as part of the evidence to be considered in the packs provided to all parties in preparation for the meeting.
- Can be accompanied during the meeting if they wish.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process and afterwards.

Nominated Complaints Coordinator

This is a key post that must be appointed at the earlier point of the stage 2 process. The 'Complaints Co-ordinator' could be a member of SLT, the School Business Manager or a named (impartial) governor. (This policy is based on the DfE model and guidance, and it is generally considered that a person "with no prior exposure to the complaint are suitably impartial".)

Role: Manage the administration of the Stage 2 complaints process from the start.

Responsibilities:

- Ensure the complainant is fully updated at each stage.
- Liaise with staff members, headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk, and LA officers (if appropriate) to ensure smooth running of the procedure.
- Be aware of issues regarding sharing third-party information and providing additional support, such as interpretation services or support for children/young people.
- Keep records.
- Ensure all involved are aware of their legal rights and duties under relevant legislation (e.g., school complaints, education law, Equality Act 2010, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR).
- Set the agreed date, time, and venue of the meeting, ensuring convenience for all parties and accessibility.
- Collate and send relevant written material to parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process and afterwards.

The clerk to the complaints panel

All governor meetings must have a Governance Professional/Clerk to governors who is able to provide clear impartial advice, and effective administrative support to help the governor panel understand its role, functions and legal duties.

Role: Provides clear, impartial advice and effective administrative support to the governor panel.

Responsibilities:

- Support the governor panel in understanding its role, functions, and legal duties.
- Record the meeting via official minutes.
- Provide guidance on procedures during the meeting.

- Support the panel with the outcome letter notifying all parties of the panel's decisions.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process and afterwards.

Governor Services can provide a specialist clerk for the day of the complaints panel, subject to availability. The specialist clerk to governors is therefore not usually the first point of contact for complaints; this is the role of the nominated complaints coordinator.

The Chair of the Governor Complaints Panel

Role: Ensures the smooth and fair conduct of the governor panel meeting.

Responsibilities:

- Request additional information from both parties via the Clerk to governors before the meeting.
- Conduct the meeting in an informal, non-adversarial manner.
- Maintain an open-minded and independent panel process.
- Ensure no panel member has an external interest in the outcome or prior involvement in the complaint.
- Ensure all parties are treated with respect and courtesy.
- Put complainant at ease, especially if they are children or young people.
- Explain the remit of the panel meeting to the complainant.
- Ensure written material has been shared with everyone in attendance, respecting confidentiality and privacy laws.
- Allow time for consideration and governor panel questions.
- Provide opportunities for both the complainant to present their complaint and the school to present their response. If any new issues arise which are not related and not included in the original complaint, they may need to be investigated separately, starting at stage 1 in line with the school policy.
- Ensure the issues are addressed and key findings of fact are made.
- Liaise with the Clerk to governors to ensure the meeting is minuted and a comprehensive outcome letter is produced, in the time scale required, that summarises the deliberation of the panel, the decisions for each part of the complaint and the reasons for each decision.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process and afterwards.

The Governor Complaints Panel Members

Role: All school governors, including the Chair of governors, are volunteers who give their time, skills and experience to provide independent strategic leadership and challenge to the school.

Responsibilities:

- It is recommended that panel members attend governor panel training prior to the meeting so that they feel confident to undertake this important role and understand their remit.
- Avoid involvement if they have prior connections to the complaint or complainant or prior knowledge of the details of the complaint.
- Aim to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.
- Take extra care when the complainant is a child or young person, ensuring they do not feel intimidated.
- Respect the views of all parties.
- Prioritise the welfare of the child/young person.

- After considering all the evidence, make a decision on each aspect of the complaint with a reason and provide any recommendations
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process and afterwards.

Witnesses

Role: Provide evidence to help establish the facts of the complaint.

Responsibilities:

- May be asked to attend by either party or the panel but cannot be compelled to attend.
- May be asked to submit written statements instead of attending in person.
- Can be accompanied during the meeting if they wish by a companion.
- Only present during the part of the meeting where they provide evidence or answer questions.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process and afterwards.

Companion

Role: Provide support to complainants, respondents, and witnesses during the complaints process.

Responsibilities:

- Accompany individuals in a supportive role without speaking for them, unless necessary due to individual needs or circumstances.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process and afterwards.
- Cannot have a dual role as both companion and witness.