



The Wythenshawe Catholic Academy Trust

Journeying together with Jesus Christ, we learn to love and love to learn.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



Saint Paul's Catholic High School

St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

SS John Fisher & Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Document Record	
Title	Complaints Procedure
Date	April 2021
Supersedes	WCAT Complaints Procedure June 2019
Purpose	<p>To meet our statutory obligations when responding to complaints and ensure that a complaint by an individual is managed efficiently at the appropriate stage and resolved in a timely manner.</p> <p>This procedure sets out a framework to establish effective management of complaints taking into account the requirements of the Trust to deliver an effective education to its pupils.</p>
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Schools within the Wythenshawe Catholic Academy Trust:

- Saint Paul's Catholic High School
- St Anthony's Catholic Primary School
- SS John Fisher & Thomas More Catholic Primary School
- St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School

This procedure will be published on the Trust's website.

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1. Introduction

- i. The Wythenshawe Catholic Academy Trust (referred to hereafter as the Trust) has developed a number of key policies and procedures to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to respect, objectivity and belief in the dignity of the individual become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies and procedures are reviewed regularly in this regard.
- ii. The distinctiveness of a Catholic school is lived out through the care and respect shown for each other. All staff are principally responsible for a Catholic school's ability to put into effect its ethos, aims and projects.
- iii. The Trust will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to ensuring that throughout the complaints process, no individual is disadvantaged or discriminated against in the application of this procedure because of the protected characteristics. These are age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy, maternity and marriage or civil partnership.
- iv. If the Trust becomes aware that the complainant has a disability at any stage of this process then reasonable adjustments will be considered to ensure that the complainant is not disadvantaged by this process.
- v. The Trust supports the creation of a safer culture to ensure the schools are an environment where everyone is safe and happy by reinforcing the safeguarding and well-being of children and young people in its care.
- vi. The Trust expects that most concerns can be resolved informally and that complaints are treated seriously and confidentially whether raised informally or formally. Guidance from the DfE explains the difference between a concern and a complaint as:
 - a concern is defined as *an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*; and
 - A complaint is defined as *an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*.
- vii. The Trust recognises that many issues raised are concerns rather than complaints. The Trust will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible.
- viii. The Trust will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the school where appropriate and determine whether they can feed into the school improvement evaluation process.
- ix. The Trust will endeavor to consider and resolve complaints as quickly, and efficiently as possible and without the need to escalate to more formal procedures. However, where initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and a resolution is not achieved and the person raising the complaint remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further, the formal part of the procedure will be invoked.
- x. The Trust does not expect its employees to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect its employees from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

2. Scope of the procedure

- i. This procedure applies to all schools within the Trust. The schools in the Trust currently consist of Saint Paul's Catholic High School, St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, SS John Fisher & Thomas More Catholic Primary School and St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School.
- ii. This procedure applies to parents, carers and guardians of children attending schools within the Trust, members of the public and visitors to any of the Trust sites.
- iii. For the avoidance of doubt, this procedure should not be used by employees of the Trust as separate procedures exist for employees to raise concerns, such as the Grievance Policy and Dignity at Work Policy.
- iv. Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) about the school's support are within the scope of this procedure and each school's SEN Policy. Such complaints should first be made to the class teacher, Social, Emotional and Mental Health Leader and Inclusion Manager, SENDCO or Headteacher as appropriate and they will then be referred to this procedure. The school's SEND policy and information report includes information about the rights of parents of pupils with disabilities who believe that our school has discriminated against their child.
- v. This procedure is compliant with 'The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 7 *'Manner in which complaints are handled'*. This requirement states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of pupils at the school.
- vi. This procedure is in accordance with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) guidance on creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulation and refers to the Department for Education's (DfE) good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures.
- vii. This procedure is in accordance with the Trust's Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.
- viii. This procedure into account the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Equality Act 2010, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679 EU) and the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988.
- ix. Unless indicated otherwise, all references to "Governing Body" apply to school's Local Governing Body or Interim Management Board.

3. Principles

- i. This procedure is designed to meet statutory obligations when responding to complaints and ensure that a complaint by an individual is managed efficiently at the appropriate stage and resolved in a timely manner.
- ii. The timescales in this procedure may be amended by mutual agreement. All parties will ensure however, that meetings, and any subsequent appeal meeting, progress as quickly as is reasonably possible for the benefit of all parties concerned. Please refer to Paragraph 11 for timescales.
- iii. Anonymous complaints will not be considered, nor will complaints not in scope of the procedure, of which examples can be found at Appendix A.

- iv. Advice on how to deal with serial, persistent and unreasonable complaints can be found at Appendix B.
- v. A model complaints form can be found at Appendix C.
- vi. Should a complaint be referred to an Appeal Hearing Panel, the proceedings of the hearing can be found at Appendix D.

4. Complaints about our fulfilment of early years requirements

- i. The school will investigate all written complaints relating to the school's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, and notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint. The school will keep a record of the complaint and make this available to Ofsted on request. See paragraph 13 on retention of records.
- ii. Parents and carers can notify Ofsted if they believe that the school is not meeting Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, by calling 0300 123 4666, or by emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. An online contact form is also available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted#org-contacts>.
- iii. The school will notify parents and carers if it becomes aware that the school is to be inspected by Ofsted. The Trust will also supply a copy of the inspection report to parents and carers of children attending the setting on a regular basis.

5. Roles and responsibilities

- i. The Trust has delegated the overall responsibility for the effective operation of this procedure to the school's Local Governing Body or Headteacher as appropriate, in accordance with the nature of the complaint.
- ii. All stakeholders involved in a complaint process should comply with the terms of this procedure.
- iii. The Trust will:
 - Ensure that each school or governing body (depending on the nature and stage of the complaint) manages the complaint process in accordance with this procedure.
- iv. The Local Governing Body will:
 - Be responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with this procedure.
- v. The Headteacher will:
 - Ensure that the school responds and deals with complaints under the operation of this procedure.
- vi. The Complainant will:
 - Ensure that they follow this procedure and express their complaint in full as early as possible;
 - Co-operate with the school throughout this process and respond to deadlines and communication promptly;
 - Treat all those involved with respect and not publish details about the complaint on social media.

- vii. The Investigator will:
- Be impartial and non-adversarial and may be involved in Stages 1 and 2 of this procedure and will interview all relevant parties and keep notes;
 - Provide a comprehensive, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint and identify solutions and recommend courses of action to resolve problems.
- vii. The Panel Clerk will:
- Be the point of contact for the complainant for the panel meeting;
 - Facilitate a hearing, set the date, time and venue;
 - Collate any written material and circulate the relevant papers and evidence to all parties in advance of the hearing;
 - Liaise with the complainant, staff members, the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and Appeal Panel to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure.
- viii. The Panel Chair will:
- Ensure the panel is open-minded and acts independently and that no member of the panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
 - Ensure that all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the committee and that they are allowed to present the case;
 - Ensure that everyone is treated with respect throughout;
 - Ensure that issues are addressed and the key findings of fact are made.
- ix. The Appeal Panel will:
- Be aware that the aim of the hearing, which will be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant;
 - Comprise of three non-staff governors or other appropriate suitably skilled individuals from within the Trust;
 - One panel member will be completely independent of the management and running of the school or the Trust, usually a Governor from another school;
 - Be impartial to the complaint and not have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.

Note: In the exceptional event that there are insufficient numbers of Directors or Governors available to participate in a Panel, the Trust may appoint associate members solely to participate in the appropriate Panel.

6. Stages of the procedure

- i. The Trust has determined that there are three stages in this procedure. This procedure intends to try and deal with the complainant, to the satisfaction of

the complainant, at the earliest possible stage. Only if the complaint cannot be resolved informally would it be escalated to the formal stage. Only if the complaint cannot be subsequently resolved at the formal stage should it be escalated to an Appeal Panel.

- ii. At each stage of the complaints procedure the investigator responsible will consider:
 - What has happened;
 - Who was involved;
 - What the complainant feels would put things right; and
 - How the complaint may be resolved.
- iii. In considering how a complaint may be resolved the investigator will give due regard to the seriousness of the complaint.

7. Stage 1 Informal Resolution

- i. A meeting will be held with the complainant with the intention of providing an informal resolution to the complaint, without the need to resort to the formal stage of the procedure as many enquiries and concerns can be satisfactorily dealt with informally. An appropriate member of staff such as a class teacher, member of SLT, of Deputy Headteacher may also attend the meeting as appropriate.
- ii. If the matter requires further investigation or the individual needs to establish the facts, they may meet the complainant again to discuss or resolve the matter directly or may provide a written response, including a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate an explanation of what the school will do to resolve the issue will be included.
- iii. If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.
- iv. A written record of the complaint and the date on which it was received will be kept and if appropriate, a record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Please refer to paragraph 14 for record retention.

8. Stage 2 Formal Resolution

- i. The complaint is put in writing using the form at Appendix C to the Headteacher or other appropriate person and/or the subject of their complaint. The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times and the names of witnesses of events alongside copies of any relevant documents, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.
- ii. Complaints made against a Headteacher will be investigated by a suitably skilled and impartial member of the Governing Body.
- iii. Complaints made against a member of the Governing Body will be investigated by a suitably skilled and impartial member of the Governing Body.
- v. Complaints made against the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) should be made to the Chair of the Trust Board who will investigate the complaint.

- vi. Complaints made against a member of the Trust's Central Team should be made to the CEO who will investigate the complaint.
- iv. Complaints made jointly against a Chair and Vice Chair will be investigated by the entire or majority Governing Body or an independent investigator appointed by the Governing Body or Diocese.
- v. If the complainant needs assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the school office in person or by phone or e-mail or can ask a third party to act on their behalf.
- vi. The Headteacher or other appropriate person will offer the complainant an opportunity to meet with them to clarify concerns, seek a resolution and give the complainant an opportunity to provide additional information. The complainant may be accompanied at the meeting and should inform the school who their chosen companion will be in advance of the meeting. In certain circumstances, the school may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting, for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the school will notify the complainant as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange alternative accompaniment.
- vii. The school will endeavor to resolve any formal complaints within 10 working days of them being raised, except where they are raised during school holidays. Please see paragraph 10 for timeframes.
- viii. Once the facts of the complaint have been established and investigated, the complaint will be provided with a written response, including a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it no later than 10 working days after the date of the meeting to discuss the matter. Where appropriate an explanation of what the school will do to resolve the issue will be included in the letter.
- ix. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the result at stage 2, they should notify the Chair of Governors or other appropriate person, in writing within 10 working days of receiving the Headteacher's written response.
- x. A written record will be kept the complaint and the date on which it was received and a record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

9. Stage 3 Appeal Panel

- i. The complaint is put in writing to the Chair of the Governing Body or other appropriate person, who will arrange for a Clerk and the complaint to be heard by an Appeal Panel. The Clerk will need the details of the complaint as set out above, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.
- ii. Complaints made jointly against a Chair and Vice Chair will be heard by the Trust Board or a committee of independent Governors, sourced from the Diocese if appropriate or necessary.
- iii. The Hearing will normally be convened within 15 working days following escalation from stage 2 except where they are raised during school holidays.

- iv. The complainant will be given reasonable notice of the date of the review panel; however, the review panel reserves the right to convene at their convenience rather than that of the complainant. If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates without good reason, the clerk will set a date. The hearing will go ahead using written submissions from both parties.
- v. The complainant is entitled to be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish by a person who has a reasonable interest in the appeal and whose contribution would assist the Appeal Panel in their decision making. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- vi. If the complainant or Headteacher wishes to submit any documentation to be considered, the evidence will be initially sent to the Clerk, who will circulate the documentation to all parties, including the Appeal Panel along with the order of proceedings at Appendix D. All written evidence must be received by the Clerk no later than 10 working days in advance of the hearing. The Clerk will ensure distribution of the evidence to all parties no later than 5 working days in advance of the hearing.
- vii. The complainant will be notified of the outcome in writing as soon as possible, but in any event, within 5 working days of the panel meeting.
- viii. The findings of an Appeal Panel are final.

10. Concluding the investigation

- i. At any stage during the investigation, there may be occasions where in order to bring the complaint to a resolution the complainant may be offered any of the following:
 - An explanation;
 - An apology;
 - An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
 - An appropriate redress where necessary;
 - Reassurance of steps that have been taken to prevent a recurrence of the relevant events;
 - Recommend a review to the Trust's policies or procedures in light of the complaint.
- ii. When the investigation has been concluded the complainant and/or the member of staff concerned will be informed in writing of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:
 - There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld;
 - The evidence did not substantiate the concern, so the complaint cannot be upheld;
 - The complaint was substantiated in part or full. A brief description should then be given of the remedial action being taken by the school as a consequence of the complaint;

- Details of the investigation or of any disciplinary procedures to be taken against a third party cannot be released;
 - The matter has been fully investigated and as a consequence further confidential procedures are being pursued.
- iii. If no further communication is received from the complainant within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome letter, it is deemed the complaint has been resolved and is closed.
- iv. If a complaint has been through all stages of the school's complaints procedure but the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can ask the ESFA to review the handling of the complaint. The ESFA will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the school. The ESFA will not overturn a school's decision about a complaint. However, it will look into:
 - Whether there was undue delay or the school did not comply with its own complaints procedure;
 - Whether the school was in breach of its funding agreement with the secretary of state;
 - Whether the school has failed to comply with any other legal obligation.
- v. If the school did not deal with the complaint properly, it may be asked to re-investigate the complaint. If the school's complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly. For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school> This information will be included in the outcome letter to the complainant.
- vi. If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure and the complaint is regarding the school not meeting standards set by the DfE in any of the following areas, the complainant can refer their complaint to the DfE:
 - Education;
 - Pupil welfare and health and safety;
 - School premises;
 - Staff suitability;
 - Making information available to parents;
 - The spiritual, moral, social or cultural development of pupils.
- viii. The DfE will consider reports of a major failure to meet the standards. Where appropriate, it can arrange an emergency inspection to look at pupil welfare and health and safety, and make sure that the school deals with serious failings. For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

Timeframes

- i. Every complaint shall receive fair and proper consideration and a timely response but in order for the school to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made as soon as possible after an incident arises and within 3 months of an

event. Exceptions may be considered where there are valid reasons for not making a complaint within this timeframe.

- ii. Upon receipt of a written complaint, an acknowledgement will be sent in writing within 3 working days.
- iii. It is expected that most issues would be resolved at stages 1 and 2 of the procedure within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint, or escalation from stage 1 to stage 2 within 10 further working days.
- iv. If the matter proceeds to stage 3 of the procedure it is expected that the matter will be addressed within 15 working days of the matter being escalated from stage 2.
- v. Should any stage require more time then the school will inform the complainant of this in writing as soon as this is known, together with details of the new time limits and explain the reason for the delay.
- vi. The school will endeavor to resolve any informal concerns or complaints within 10 working days of them being raised, except where they are raised during school holidays. In these cases, the school consider the complaint to have been received on the first day after the holiday period and will strive to resolve the complaint as soon as possible.
- vii. Intervention of parallel investigations relevant to the complaint by the Police or other outside agencies may cause variation to the time scales.

11. Complaint Campaigns

- i. Where the school receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from the same complainants unconnected with the school, the school may respond by publishing a single response on its website or sending a template response to all complainants.

12. Retention of records

- i. The school will retain records of all correspondence and statements relating to individual complaints at all stages of the process. These records will be kept confidential and will only be viewed by those involved in investigating the complaint or the Appeal Panel. The exceptions to this are where:
 - The Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them;
 - The complainant requests access to records through a freedom of information request (FOI), or through a subject access request (SAR) under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
 - The material must be made available during a school inspection.
 - There is an applicable lawful basis under the GDPR for extending the retention period.

Appendix A Complaints outside of this procedure

This complaints procedure covers all complaints about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides with the exceptions listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) • School re-organisation proposals • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation (Safeguarding) 	Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities (LA). For school admissions, it will depend on who is the admission authority (either the school or the LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school 	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures 	These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 service. They should be contacted direct.

Appendix B Serial, persistent and unreasonable complaints

The school will do its best to be helpful to people who contact them with a complaint. The purpose of this procedure is to identify all the facts that are pertinent to the complaint so that it can be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant. However, there may be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaint procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied.

In situations where the school recognises it has done everything it can in response to a complaint it will weigh up whether it is a poor use of schools' time and resources to reply to repeated letters, emails or telephone calls making substantially the same points.

If the complainant then tries to reopen the same issue, the school will inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

If the complainant contacts the school again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent'. If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put strategies in place such as:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an e-mail address;
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact;
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf;
- Put any other appropriate strategy in place.

Once the school has decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, they will inform the complainant through a hard copy letter. The school will stop responding in the following situations:

- The school has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs;
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options (if any);
- The complainant is contacting the school repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time;
- The school has reason to believe the individual is contacting them with the intention of causing disruption annoyance or inconvenience and has been advised of this belief by letter, email or telephone call;
- The complainant's letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always harassing, prolific, defamatory abusive or aggressive;
- The complainant contacts the school repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time;
- The complainant makes insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff.

In certain circumstances and if a complainant persists to the point that the school considers it to constitute harassment, legal advice will be sought as to the next steps. In some cases, injunctions and other court orders may be issued to complainants because of their behaviours.

Appendix C Examples of complaints that may be regarded as unreasonable

- Refuses to specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance from the Trust's staff;
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the despite having been provided with information about the scope of this complaints procedure;
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- Makes unjustified or what may appear to be groundless complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the complaint and seeks to have them replaced;
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds and/or denying statements he/she made at an earlier stage;
- Introducing new information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raising large numbers of detailed questions which are particularly time consuming and costly to respond to and insisting they are all fully answered;
- Electronically recording meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the persons involved;
- 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 followed;
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- Makes excessive demands on the time and resources of staff whilst a complaint is being looked into, by for example excessive telephone calls or sending e-mails to numerous school staff, writing lengthy complicated letters every few days and expecting immediate responses.

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

- Maliciously;
- Aggressively or using threats, intimidation or violence;
- Using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- Knowing it to be false or using falsified information;
- Publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.



Appendix D Complaints Form

Please complete and return to the school who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken

1. Basic Information

Your name:

Pupil's name (if applicable):

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

2. Please give specific details of your complaint.



The Wythenshawe Catholic Academy Trust

Journeying together with Jesus Christ, we learn to love and love to learn.

3. What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

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

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

Signature: _____.

Date: _____.



Appendix E Proceedings of the Hearing Panel

Introductions

1. The Chair of the Governors Appeal Panel should open the meeting stating the purpose and the format of the meeting to clarify this to all in attendance.
2. Individuals present should introduce themselves stating their reason for being at the meeting.
3. The Clerk will take notes of the meeting, listing who is present and make everyone aware of the confidential nature of the process.

Step 1 – Complainant's case

4. The Chair will request a verbal statement from the Complainant in support of his/her written letter of complaint and why he/she feels the issue has not been resolved. The Panel members can ask questions to make sure they understand the issue from the complainant's point of view.
5. The Complainant is invited to call any witnesses.
6. The Respondent may question the witnesses after each has spoken.
7. The Panel may question the witnesses after each has spoken.
8. The Respondent may question the Complainant.

Step 2 – Respondent's case

9. The Chair will request a verbal statement from the Respondent (or his/her representative) in support of his/her written account of the complaint and the steps taken to resolve the issue. The Panel members can ask questions to make sure they understand the issue from the Respondent's point of view.
10. The Respondent is invited to call any witnesses
11. The Complainant may question the witnesses after each has spoken.
12. The Panel may question the witnesses after each has spoken.
13. The Complainant may question the Respondent.

Step 3 – Summary and Conclusions

14. Members of the Panel should make sure they fully understand the issues and ask any further questions to clarify any points that are still not clear to them.
15. The Chair will ask the Complainant and the Respondent (or their representative) if they are satisfied that they have provided all the information they wanted or if there is something they wish to add and if they feel they have had a fair hearing.

Step 4 - Deliberations and Decision

16. The Chair will ask all parties to leave except the Panel and the Clerk (to refer to notes taken and record the decision).
17. The Panel will discuss the issues in private.
18. When the Panel has reached a decision, the Clerk will inform everyone concerned in writing as soon as possible, but in any event, within 5 working days of the panel meeting.
19. A record will be kept of the outcome of the hearing.
20. The complaint will be reported at the next full Governing Body Meeting.