

<b>Title:</b>	Complaints Policy
<b>Associated policies:</b>	Parent/Carer and Visitor Conduct
<b>1</b>	<b>Aims and Application</b>
	<p><b>1.1</b> The aims of this policy are to deal with complaints and concerns raised about Northampton School for Girls (NSG) or any individual connected with it by setting out and ensuring that a correct procedure is followed thoroughly, and in an open, honest and fair manner.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> This complaints procedure is not limited to parents/carers of children who are registered at NSG. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to NSG about any aspect of the provision or services that we provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Part 1</b> of this policy outlines how parents/carers of registered students currently attending NSG can raise a concern or complaint</li><li>• <b>Part 2</b> of this policy will deal with concerns or complaints from other persons</li></ul> <p><b>1.3</b> This complaints procedure does not apply to the matters contained in Appendix A.</p> <p><b>1.4</b> Anonymous concerns or complaints will not normally be investigated under this policy. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether there are exceptional circumstances to justify investigating the issues raised.</p> <p><b>1.5</b> All staff will be made aware of this complaints procedure. The Headteacher and Governing Body are expected to review this policy regularly in order that they are familiar with the process set out for dealing with complaints and can be of assistance when an issue is brought to their attention.</p> <p><b>1.6</b> In this procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>‘Concern’</b> means an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought</li><li>• <b>‘Complaint’</b> means an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action</li><li>• <b>‘Meeting’</b> means an in person or virtual meeting (ie telephone or video conference where all parties can participate verbally). Virtual meetings will only be held in the event that all parties have access to appropriate equipment to attend and are happy to do so.</li><li>• <b>‘Parent/carer’</b> means a parent or carer, or anyone with legal responsibility for a child</li><li>• <b>School days’</b> excludes weekends and school holidays and periods of partial or total School closure.</li><li>• The <b>‘Clerk’</b> is the individual responsible for advising the governing body on constitutional matters, duties and powers. The Clerk will be present at all formally convened meetings.</li></ul> <p><b>1.7</b> The timeframes referred to in this policy are our usual timeframes and we will seek to adhere to these timeframes where possible. However, in the event that these timeframes may need modifying, then this will be agreed with the complainant and the School.</p> <p><b>1.8</b> Reasonable adjustments will be made to this procedure where required to ensure that all complainants can access and complete this complaints procedure. This may include, for example, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.</p>

2	<b>Key Principles</b>
	<p><b>2.1</b> NSG expects all complainants to make reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> NSG encourages parents/carers to approach the School with any concerns and refrain from airing concerns about the school and its staff on social media sites. Posting negative comments on social media can cause damage and upset and is often counterproductive to students and the School community</p> <p><b>2.3</b> To investigate a complaint properly and fairly, we have implemented a staged approach. We anticipate that almost all complaints that arise will be resolved at <b>Stage 1</b> or <b>Stage 2</b> outlined below.</p> <p><b>2.4</b> In the operation of this policy, we expect all individuals to be addressed in a respectful and dignified manner and for communication to remain calm. The procedure under <b>Part 3</b> will only be used on very rare occasions to deal with unreasonably persistent complainants, or unreasonable complainant behaviour.</p> <p><b>2.5</b> Concerns or complaints should be brought to the School's attention as soon as possible. Any matter raised more than 12 months after the incident being complained of (or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 12 months of the last of these incidents) will not be considered unless the Headteacher/Chair of Governors accepts that there are good reasons to explain the delay, or the complaint is about a particularly serious matter.</p> <p><b>2.6</b> Where a complaint is received outside of term time, we will consider it to have been received <b>on the first school day following the holiday period</b>.</p> <p><b>2.7</b> On rare occasions the School may receive complaints from a number of parents/carers relating to the same issue. In order to deal with these complaints efficiently, the School will follow the procedure set out in <b>Part 4</b>.</p> <p><b>2.8</b> If it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines set out within this policy, complainants will be advised accordingly and given an explanation as to why this is the case. Revised timescales will be provided. If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority safeguarding teams or tribunals/courts, this may also impact on the School's ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure, or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.</p> <p><b>2.9</b> Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They do not have the authority to act on an individual basis and it may prevent them from being involved in the complaints procedure at later stages. If individual governors are approached, they will respectfully direct a complainant to the complaints procedure.</p> <p><b>2.10</b> If a complainant commences legal action against NSG in relation to their complaint, the School will consider whether it would be appropriate to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.</p> <p><b>2.11</b> If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, the School will ask them to confirm this in writing.</p>

<b>3</b>	<b>Records of Complaints</b>
	<p>3.1 A record will be kept of all formal complaints, including details of the outcome, the actions taken and at what stage they were resolved. Details of these complaints will be shared with the Governing Board. This will be the case regardless of whether they were upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access is required by the Secretary of State</li> <li>• A disclosure is required in the course of a School inspection</li> <li>• An individual has a legal right to access their own personal data contained within such documentation; or</li> <li>• Under other legal authority.</li> </ul> <p style="background-color: yellow;">We will make the findings and recommendations of the panel available for inspection by the Northampton School for Girls Trust and the Headteacher.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Complaints Procedure and Stages</b>
	<b>Part 1</b>
	<b>Stage 1: Informal Concern</b>
	<p><b>4.1</b> An informal concern can be raised in person, by email/letter or by telephone. Most concerns are likely to be dealt with satisfactorily by a class teacher, the Head of Faculty, Head of Academic Standards or other members of staff without the need to resort to a formal complaint. The School values informal meetings and discussions and encourages parents/carers to approach staff with any concerns they may have. At all times, the School aims to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> In order to ensure that a concern is dealt with as effectively as possible, it is helpful to provide a detailed explanation of the nature of the concern, the individuals involved, and the outcome being sought. Where appropriate, individuals may be invited to an informal meeting with the member of staff most appropriate for dealing with that concern. The member of staff dealing with the concern will ensure that the individual/individuals raising the concern have been provided with clear information about the agreed actions that will be taken to address the concern raised and that these actions are agreed. Where appropriate, this will be put in writing.</p> <p><b>4.3</b> If a concern is brought to the attention of the Headteacher, the Headteacher may decide to deal with the concerns directly at this stage or may speak to the individual about moving the concern to a Stage 2 complaint. If this does occur, a Stage 2 letter will be sent to the individual by the Headteacher, and the Stage 2 procedures will be followed. If the concerns are about the Headteacher these should be referred directly to the Clerk of the governing board under <b>Stage 2</b> of this policy.</p> <p><b>4.4</b> There is no suggested timescale for resolution at this Stage 1 given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion. However, it would be expected that most issues are resolved <b>within 15 school days</b>.</p> <p><b>4.5</b> Where no satisfactory solution has been found to the concern raised, individuals will be advised that they may choose to move their concern to a <b>Stage 2 complaint</b>.</p>
	<b>Stage 2: Formal Complaint</b>

**4.6** If an individual's concerns are not resolved under **Stage 1**, they may choose to move to Stage 2 of this complaints procedure. Individuals may contact any member of staff at the School, in writing, on the telephone or in person and advise them that they wish to make a formal complaint.

**4.7** Any member of staff must inform their line manager/s of any such complaint that is received. Line Managers are expected to forward these to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who will forward these to the Headteacher. Details of this process are shared with all staff at the School.

**4.8** NSG will respect the views of an individual who indicates that they would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In this case, the Headteacher, will identify another designated member of staff to undertake the investigation of the complaint. Similarly, if the member of staff directly identified to investigate the complaint feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, the Headteacher will appoint an alternative member of staff to investigate. This is usually a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

**4.9** When making a Stage 2 complaint, it would be helpful if the complainant provides details of the outcomes they are seeking for a resolution. For ease, complainants are encouraged to use the Complaint Form provided in **Appendix 2** of this policy. If individuals require any additional help in completing the form, this can be provided. Please contact [complaints@nsg.northants.sch.uk](mailto:complaints@nsg.northants.sch.uk) for additional guidance and support. In all cases, when providing details of the complaint. It would be helpful to include:

- Information about the complaint;
- Details of what has happened so far;
- The names of people involved (if possible), dates and times of events and any copies of relevant documents or emails; and
- The possible outcomes that you are seeking as a result of the complaint.

**4.10** A complaint will normally be acknowledged in writing **within 5 school days of receipt**. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the NSG complaints procedure, the name of the person that will be responsible for investigating the complaint and a proposed date for providing a response to the complaint. **This will normally be within 15 school days of acknowledgement of the complaint.**

**4.11** The Headteacher (or someone appointed by them) will contact the complainant by phone and invite them to a meeting to clarify the complaint, to seek any additional information that may be required and to explore possible resolutions. This will be followed by an email which confirms the details agreed. Individuals can be accompanied by one other person to the meeting. This may be a friend, relative, advocate or interpreter. Where possible, this meeting will take place within **10 school days** of acknowledgement of the complaint.

**4.12** If necessary, witnesses will be interviewed and statements taken from those involved. If the complaint centres on a student, the student will also be interviewed. Students will normally be interviewed with their parent or carer present. However, if this would seriously delay the investigation of a serious or urgent complaint, another member of staff with whom the student feels comfortable should be present. In these instances, parents/carers will be informed. If the matter includes a complaint relating to a member of staff, the member of staff will have the opportunity to respond to the complaint and provide information as part of the investigation.

**4.13** Once the relevant facts have been established as far as is reasonably possible, complainants will be provided with a written response to the complaint, including an explanation of the decision that has been taken and the reasons for it. This will also include details of the actions that will be taken to resolve the complaint, if it

is upheld or partially upheld. The complainant/s will be advised that if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they may request that the complaint be heard by the Complaints Committee as part of **Stage 3** of this procedure. The process for this will be outlined in the Stage 2 outcome letter.

**4.14** NSG may (but shall not be obliged to) engage an independent, external person to undertake the **Stage 2** investigation as part of the complaint, or to review the investigation and response at **Stage 2**. This may be appropriate where the complaint is particularly complex and involves legal issues, for example.

**4.15** If the complaint is about the Headteacher, individuals should forward the complaint to the Clerk of the Governing Body at the following email address: [clerk@nsg.northants.sch.uk](mailto:clerk@nsg.northants.sch.uk) The Clerk will then forward the complaint to the Chair of Governors, who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated in accordance with **Stage 2**. If the Chair of Governors is not available, this will be delegated to the Vice Chair of Governors.

### Stage 3: Referral to a Complaints Committee

**4.16** If complainants remain dissatisfied with the decision under **Stage 2**, they may request that a Complaints Committee be convened to consider their complaint. The details of this process will be outlined to complainants as part of the Stage 2 outcome letter.

**Please note:** The Complaints Committee will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from **Stage 2** of the procedure.

**4.17** To request a hearing before the Complaints Committee, complainants must inform the Clerk to the Governing Board at NSG within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome of **Stage 2**. Complainants can contact the Clerk at the following email address: [clerk@nsg.northants.sch.uk](mailto:clerk@nsg.northants.sch.uk) Requests received outside of this timeframe will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. Complainants should ensure that they provide copies of all relevant documents and state all the grounds for the complaint and the outcome being sought.

**4.18** Stage 3 complaints will be acknowledged within **5 school days** of receipt and details of the process will be outlined to complainants in writing.

**4.19** The Clerk will arrange for a Complaints Committee to be convened, made up of at least three members. The panel will include:

- Members of the Governing Board of NSG with no previous involvement in the matter; and,
- One person who is independent of the management and running of Northampton School for Girls.

One of these members will be appointed to be the Chair of the Complaints Committee.

**4.20** Every effort will be made to enable the hearing to take place within **20 school days of the receipt of a request**. As soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event **at least 5 school days before the hearing**, complainants will be sent written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the committee members who will be present. Complainants will also be informed of the name of the person who will be presenting the case on behalf of NSG (referred to in this policy as the 'school representative'). This may be the Headteacher, the person who undertook the investigation at Stage 2, or another person with sufficient knowledge of the matter.

**4.21** If, despite using reasonable efforts, it is not possible to find a mutually convenient date and time for a hearing within a reasonable timeframe, the Chair of the Complaints Committee may determine that the hearing proceeds on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

**4.22** Individuals have the right to be accompanied to the hearing by a friend, relative, advocate or interpreter. Individuals should notify the Clerk in advance if they intend to bring anyone to the hearing. We do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the Complaints Committee meeting. The Complaints Committee may take legal advice on matters of law and procedure, if appropriate.

**4.23** A copy of all the documentation pertaining to the complaint, and any other documents provided by the complainant, or by the school representative in defense of the complaint, will be provided to the Complaints Committee as soon as practicable. Copies of these documents will also be provided to the complainant and the school representative at least 3 school days before the hearing takes place. The Complaints Committee reserves the right not to consider any documentation presented by either party less than 3 school days prior to the hearing.

**4.24** The Complaints Committee is under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and/or may take written statements into account.

**4.25** The hearing will be conducted to ensure that each party has the opportunity to address the Complaints Committee. The procedure to be followed during the hearing will be explained to the parties by letter in advance of the hearing. The Clerk will ensure that sufficient notes are taken to record an accurate reflection of the points considered and any decisions taken or actions agreed. Electronic recordings of the hearing will not normally be permitted and, in any event, would require the consent of all those present.

**4.26** Unless otherwise stated, the procedure for the Stage 3 hearing is as follows:

- the parent/carer and school representative will enter the hearing together;
- the Chair of the Committee will introduce the committee members and outline the process;
- the parent/carer will explain the complaint;
- the school representative and committee members will have the opportunity to question the parent/carer;
- the school representative will explain the School's actions;
- the parent/carer and the committee members will have the opportunity to ask question of the school representative;
- the parent/carer will sum up their complaint;
- the School representative will sum up the School's actions;
- the Chair of the Committee will explain that both parties will hear from the committee within 5 school days;
- both parties will leave together while the committee decides;
- the Clerk will stay to assist the committee with its decision making.

The Clerk and or Complaints Committee reserves the right to modify the above procedure at their discretion, for example requiring the parent/carer and the school representative to present their complaint/actions separately to the Complaints Committee in the absence of the other party.

**4.27** A Complaints Committee may be adjourned if the Complaints Committee require further evidence or in exceptional circumstances (for example, if clarification sought by the Complaints Committee is essential to the proceedings). The adjourned date must be as soon as possible.

**4.28** After the hearing, the Complaints Committee will consider their decision and inform **you and, where relevant, the person complained about of their decision** in writing within 5 school days. The letter will set out the decision of the committee together with the reasons underpinning that decision. The committee can (by a majority if necessary):

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the School systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

### Stage 4: Referral of the Complaint to the Educational and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

**4.29** If complainants remain dissatisfied with the decision of the Complaints Committee, they are entitled to refer their complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The ESFA will only investigate whether the complaint was handled properly, and in accordance with education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

**4.30** At the time of writing this policy, details about the ESFA procedure and the ESFA Academy Complaints form are available at: [How ESFA handles complaints about academies - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about-us/how-esfa-handles-complaints-about-academies)

Or, individuals can write to the ESFA at the following address:

**Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit  
Education and Skills Funding Agency  
Cheylesmore House  
5 Quinton Road  
Coventry. CV1 2WT**

## 5 Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1 The role of the Clerk

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the Complaints Committee, and should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure;
- liaise with the Chair of Governors, Headteacher and any other governors as appropriate to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure;
- be mindful of the timescales to respond to complaints;
- ensure that all individuals involved in the complaints procedure 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);
- ensure that the Complaints Committee has access to legal advice, where appropriate;

set the date, time and venue of the meeting, taking reasonable steps to find a date that is convenient to all parties 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;
- take minutes at the meeting;
- notify all parties of the Complaint Committee's decision;
- assist the school in issuing a summary letter to the complainant.

### **5.2 The role of the Headteacher (or other party investigating as applicable in accordance with the procedure) at Stage 2**

- to ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure;
- to ensure that the correct procedure has been followed;
- to ensure that an investigation is carried out, and a report compiled;
- to meet the complainant, if appropriate;
- to notify the clerk to arrange the Complaints Committee if the complaint is being moved to a Stage 3 complaint.

### **5.3 The role of the Chair of the Complaints Committee**

The Chair of the Complaints Committee has a key role, ensuring that:

- 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;
- the remit of the Complaints Committee is explained to the complainant;
- the 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);
- key findings of fact are made, and that any issues not previously mentioned as part of the Stage 2 complaint are not raised at the meeting and, if they are mentioned at the meeting, these should not be noted or considered by the Complaints Committee;
- 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 Complaints Committee is open-minded, acts independently and no Complaints Committee member has an external interest in the outcome, or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- the meeting is minuted.

## **6 Concerns or Complains by Other Persons**

### **Part 2**

**6.1** Part 1 of this complaints policy applies only to complaints made by a parent/carer of current registered students at the School. However, NSG wishes to work closely with other members of the local community and will deal with their concerns and complaints as follows:



**Stage 1:** A concern regarding the School or its operations may be made to any member of staff. That member of staff will attempt to resolve the matter immediately or may, if appropriate, refer the matter to their line manager or member of the senior leadership team who is best placed to deal with the concern. It is expected that most concerns will be responded to orally or in writing within 5 school days. If a longer period is required, individuals raising the concern will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

**Stage 2:** Where a concern is not resolved at Stage 1, or where individuals request that their concern is dealt with immediately as a formal complaint, complainants can either put their complaint in writing, contact the school by phone or speak with a member of staff at the School. Staff at the School will then follow the process as outlined 4.5 of this policy. The Headteacher may delegate the task of investigation and/or responding to the complaint to a member of SLT, or may escalate the complaint straight to Stage 3 complaint. A formal response to the complaint will usually be provided within **10 school days** of acknowledgement of the letter of complaint. However, if a longer period is required to undertake the investigation or to respond to the complaint, complainants will be informed in writing.

**Stage 3:** If complainants are not satisfied with the response at Stage 2, they may request a review of the complaint. This can be done directly by contacting the Headteacher who will inform the Clerk, or by contacting the Clerk of the Governing Board directly at the following email address: [clerk@nsg.northants.sch.uk](mailto:clerk@nsg.northants.sch.uk). The Clerk will then inform the Chair of Governors. Complainants should contact the Headteacher or the Clerk within 10 school days of receipt of the outcome letter for Stage 2. Requests received outside of this timeframe may be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. The Chair of Governors will arrange for a governor to consider the complaint alone, or may convene a complaints committee on the same terms as set out in Part 1 of this complaints policy. The decision at this stage will usually be sent to the complainant within 20 school days of receipt of the request for a review. The decision at Stage 3 exhausts the School's complaints procedure.

**6.2** Concerns or complaints regarding the Headteacher or the School as a whole should be referred to the Chair of Governors by contacting the Clerk to the governors at [clerk@nsg.northants.sch.uk](mailto:clerk@nsg.northants.sch.uk). The Clerk will then forward the concerns to the Chair of Governors and will also be responsible for ensuring that complainants are kept informed.

## 7 Unreasonable Complaints and/or Unreasonable Complaints Behaviour

**7.1** There may be rare circumstances where we will deviate from the Complaints Procedure set out in Parts 1 and 2. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- where the complainant's behaviour or language towards staff, members of the governing board or the Clerk is abusive, offensive, discriminatory or threatening;
- where the complaint's behaviour is hindering the investigation or consideration of complaints and/or the proper running of the School because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact, such as, if the complainant:
  - (a) refuses to co-operate with the complaint's investigation process
  - (b) refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaint's procedure
  - (c) insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaint's procedure or with good practice
  - (d) introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be considered and commented on

- (e) raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- (f) makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- (g) changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- (h) seeks an unrealistic outcome, such as the inappropriate dismissal of staff
- (i) makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- (j) knowingly provides falsified information
- (k) publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums
- (l) where the complainant's complaint is clearly frivolous, vexatious and/or has patently insufficient grounds.

**Note:** The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint as:

- (m) complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- (n) insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
- (o) insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
- (p) complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- (q) demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value
- (r) where the complainant's complaint is the same, similar to or based on the same facts of a complaint which has already been considered in full.

In these circumstances, the School may:

- inform the complainant that their behaviour is unacceptable or unreasonably persistent and ask them to change it;
- restrict the complainant's access to the School, for example by requesting contact in a particular form, requiring contact to take place with a named person only, restricting telephone calls to specified days and times or banning the complainant from the School's premises. Any such arrangements will be reviewed after six months;
- conduct the Complaints Committee on the papers only, for example not hold a hearing;
- refuse to consider the complaint and, where Part 1 of this procedure applies, refer the complainant directly to Stage 4.

**7.2** In all cases the School will inform the complainant in writing why the behaviour is unacceptable or unreasonably persistent, what action the School is taking and the duration of that action.

The School may take the decision not to respond to any further correspondence where:

- the School has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns
- the complainant contacts the School repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time

	<p><b>The case for ceasing further correspondence is stronger where:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• letters, emails, or telephone calls are often, or always, abusive or aggressive, or make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff</li><li>• the School has reason to believe the complainant is contacting them with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience</li><li>• Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, members of the governing board will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, the School may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.</li></ul>
<b>8</b>	<b>Complaints Campaigns</b>
	<p>For the purposes of this policy, a complaint campaign is defined as a complaint from three or more separate individuals (whether or not connected with the school) which are all based on the same subject.</p> <p>Depending on the subject in question, we may deviate from the procedure set out in this policy and instead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• send a template response to all complainants and/or</li><li>• publish a single response on the school's website (as applicable)</li></ul>
<b>9</b>	<b>Policy Review</b>
	<p>This policy will be reviewed as part of the statutory review cycle.</p>

Appendix A: Matters Excluded from the Scope of this Policy	
<b>Admissions</b>	The process for challenging admissions decisions is set out in our admissions policy in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
<b>Child protection matters</b>	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
<b>Exclusions</b>	The process for challenging exclusions decisions is set out in the DfE's statutory guidance and information can be found at: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions">School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
<b>National Curriculum content</b>	Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="https://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>
<b>School re-organisation proposals</b>	Where concerns are not adequately addressed by the School, complaints can be raised directly with the Department for Education.
<b>Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</b>	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
<b>Staff grievances</b>	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
<b>Staff conduct</b>	<p>Certain complaints about staff may need to be dealt with under the schools'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.</p>
<b>Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>	Concerns about statutory assessments of special educational needs should be raised directly with the local authority.

	<b>Whistleblowing</b>	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of the complaint</p>
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**Appendix B: Complaints form**

**Your name:**

**Your address and postcode:**

**Your daytime telephone number:**

**Your email address:**

**Details of your complaint (please note that additional information will be gathered from you when the School investigates the complaint):**

**What would you consider a satisfactory outcome of your complaint to be?**

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### Appendix C : Overview of the Complaints Process

<b>Stage 1:</b> <b>Informal concerns</b>	Parent/Carer brings complaint to attention of member of staff
	Issue to be resolved within <b>15 school days</b> of acknowledgement
	Where no satisfactory solution has been found, parent/carers to be advised that they should proceed to <b>Stage 2</b>
<b>Stage 2:</b> <b>Formal Written Complaint</b>	Parent/Carer can choose to put complaint in writing, make a complaint on the phone or directly with a member of staff.
	Complaint to be acknowledged within <b>5 school days</b>
	(Optional) Meeting with parents/carers within <b>10 school days</b> of acknowledgement of complaint
	Response to the complaint sent within <b>15 school days</b> of acknowledgement
<b>Stage 3:</b> <b>Referral to Complaints Committee</b>	Parent/Carer to request hearing within <b>10 school days</b> of receiving notice of the outcome of <b>Stage 2</b>
	Request to be acknowledged within <b>5 school days</b> of receipt of request
	Hearing to take place within <b>20 school days</b> of receipt of request
	Notification of date, time and place of the hearing and details of the committee members present sent at least <b>5 school days</b> before the hearing
	School representative and parents/carers to submit evidence in support of their case to Clerk at least <b>3 school days</b> before the hearing
	Complaints Committee decision sent not more than <b>5 school days</b> after the hearing takes place