



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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OUTWOOD GRANGE ACADEMIES TRUST

Complaints Procedure

Outwood Grange Academies Trust is committed to ensuring that all students are provided with a first class educational experience and that each Academy works in a productive and positive partnership with all parents and carers.

However, if a parent/carer feels that a situation has arisen that they are unhappy about then they have a right to make a complaint. Any and every complaint made will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and professionally. All parents/carers will be made aware of this policy and the procedures to follow if they wish to make a complaint.

Part 1 of this policy outlines how parents/carers of registered pupils/students currently attending academy schools within the trust can raise a concern or complaint. Concerns or complaints from other persons will be dealt with in accordance with Part 2 of this policy. Carers must provide in writing support from the local authority that has parental responsibility for the child. Without this consent, carers must proceed through part 2 of the policy.

PART ONE

1. Principles

The relevant academy will try to resolve problems informally wherever possible. An effective response and appropriate redress will be provided to all complaints as quickly as possible depending upon the complexity of the issues raised.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial.
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary.
- Ensure that if a complaint is regarding a member of staff that a more senior member of staff would facilitate the investigation.
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response.
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality.
- Treat complainants with respect.
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process.
- Consider how the complaint can feed into academy improvement evaluation processes.

2. Scope

This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools	The local authority admissions team
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under the 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 Social Services.
Suspension and/or Permanent Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion *complaints about the application of the Positive Discipline for Learning and Life Policy can be made via the complaints policy.
Whistleblowing	The trust has a <u>Whistleblowing</u> Procedure for all employees.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be investigated under the academy grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Where appropriate, complaints about staff conduct will be investigated under the academy disciplinary procedures. 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.
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs	Local Authority carrying out the assessment.
Complaints about services provided by external bodies using a school's premises or facilities	Providers should be contacted directly and have their own procedures for such eventualities.

Appeals relating to internal/external assessment decisions for external qualifications	JCQ Guidance https://www.jcq.org.uk/about-us/
Fixed Penalty Notices for attendance	Contact the Local Authority
Anonymous concern or complaint	These will not be investigated under this procedure unless the complaint is about a potentially serious matter (e.g. child protection/criminal activity) and there is enough information to investigate.

3. Statutory obligations

- Complainants must be aware that there is a complaints procedure and copies of this policy will be available on request.
- If the process results in an appeal to the Academy Council (see below), this procedure is statutory.
- Records will be made of any action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

4. Dealing with complaints

a) At each stage, the person investigating the complaint will ensure that they:

- Clarify the nature of the complaint and unresolved issues
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Keep appropriate notes of any interview(s) held.

b) At each stage, the person investigating the complaint will seek ways to resolve the complaint satisfactorily. It may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part and/or acknowledgement that the situation could have been handled differently or better (this is not the same as an admission of negligence)
- An apology
- An explanation
- An assurance and an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it

will not happen again

- An undertaking to review academy or Trust procedures in light of the complaint.

5. Records

A written record will be kept of all complaints by the academy, including informal complaints. This record will confirm the level at which the complaint is resolved, including whether it progresses to a formal hearing. The principal is responsible for ensuring that staff record all complaints and their outcome.

- All correspondence statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.
- The Academy Council will monitor the level and the subject matter of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis through the mechanism of performance and data reporting.

OGAT Academies

The officer with responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented in OGAT academies is the Chief Operating Officer at OGAT. Complainants should be aware that Principals may refer complaints received to the Chief Operating Officer at OGAT because they consider the matter is one of such a nature that it should be investigated independently of the academy. Likewise, complaints may be retrieved and dealt with by OGAT for the same reason. Where a complaint is made direct to OGAT, it will be logged by the Chief Operating Officer and forwarded to the academy unless it is retrieved as stated above.

Complaints about the Trust

Where a complaint relates to a specific academy, this should be raised with the individual academy following their normal lines of communication and/or complaints policy. Any complaints that have not been raised with an individual academy will be referred to that academy in the first instance. Please note, complaints about the Trust should not be viewed as another stage of the complaints policy. If your concern relates to the running or organisation of the Trust, please direct it to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This concern will be dealt with in an informal way, involving others as necessary and the CEO may delegate the matter to staff as appropriate and depending on the nature of the concern. If after this informal process has concluded you are still not satisfied, you can lodge a formal complaint which should be addressed to the CEO.

Complaints about the CEO

In the event of a complaint in respect of the CEO, the following modifications to the procedures apply:

- Stage two - a formal complaint should be submitted to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Outwood Grange Academies Trust, Outwood Grange Academy, Potovens Lane, Outwood, Wakefield, WF1 2PF. The Chair will either investigate the matter or nominate another Trustee to investigate the complaint.
- Stage three - the Stage Three Appeal will consist of three other members of the Board of Trustees who have not previously been involved with the complaint

6. Complaints procedure

Dealing with Concerns

- It is important to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. A concern may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important, for which reassurances and solutions are sought’.
- A complaint may be defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’.

The policy which follows deals with complaints but the underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. The requirement to have a complaints procedure need not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. If the concern relates to your child’s teaching, learning or practice within the classroom, please email the school via the ‘contact us’ button on the school website requesting contact with the class teacher in the first instance. If the concern is about the class teacher, please email the school via the ‘contact us’ button on the school website requesting contact with the Head of Department for that subject. If the concern is pastoral related, please contact the Tutor in the first instance, again via the ‘contact us’ button on the school website.

Dealing with Complaints

This procedure will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the concern(s) are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

Investigating Complaints

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint makes sure that they:

- establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;

- clarifies the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meets with the complainant or contacts them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- clarifies what the complainant feels would put things right;
- interviews those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conducts the interview with an open mind and is prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keeps notes of the interview;

Social media

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, we request the complainants not discuss complaints publicly via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved, and we expect complainants to also observe confidentiality. Defamatory, offensive or otherwise inappropriate comments on social media will be reported to the appropriate authorities. The academy reserves the right to stop the complaint procedure if complainants do not observe confidentiality. Interviews should be recorded using the template at Appendix 3 and signed and dated by the individual as soon as they have been typed up.

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure the Academy will keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review Academy policies in light of the complaint.
- Please note, if the complaint is regarding a member of staff that is subsequently picked up through our staff disciplinary process, complainants will not be informed of the outcome. They will only be informed that the academy has upheld their complaint and the academy is taking appropriate action.

It would be useful if complainants were encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that the Academy could have handled the

situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

Vexatious Complaints

We expect our members of staff to be addressed in a respectful manner and for communication to remain calm at all times. The procedure under Part 3 will only be used on very rare occasions to deal with unreasonably persistent complainants or unreasonable complainant behaviour.

Duplicate complaints

After closing a complaint at the end of the complaints procedure, we may receive a duplicate complaint from:

- a spouse
- a partner
- a grandparent
- a child.

We will review the submission to establish whether there are any new aspects to the complaint that have not previously been considered. If this is the case, these new aspects will be investigated and dealt with to the full extent of the complaints procedure.

If the complaint is about the same subject and raises no new aspects, we will inform the new complainant that the school has already considered that complaint and the local process is complete.

Complaint campaigns

Occasionally, an Academy or the Trust may become the focus of a campaign and receive large volumes of complaints. These may be:

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

Members of the Executive Team will determine whether complaints constitute a complaint campaign. In the event of a complaint campaign, we may take any or all of the following steps, as appropriate:

- Refer the matter to the relevant member of the Executive Leadership Team.
- Send a template response to all complainants
- Publish a single response on the school/Trust website.

Outwood Grange Academies Trust Complaints Procedure

Stage One: Informal

- Only complaints received in writing (preferably using the Complaints form) will be considered.
 - Complaints must be made within 3 months of the event. Complaints after this period will not be considered.
1. Where the first approach is made to a governor, the next step would be to refer the complainant to the appropriate line manager. Governors should not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure.
 2. The Line Manager will ensure that a written acknowledgement is provided to the complainant within 5 school days of receiving a complaint. The appointed member of staff leading the complaint will be in contact to arrange a suitable time to meet to discuss your complaint. This meeting will take place within 10 school days of the written complaint being received. They will then gather further supplementary evidence to support the investigation. The investigating officer at this stage may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. Following the investigation the investigating member of staff will contact you with a written response of their findings. The academy aims to complete this process within 15 school days since your original fact finding meeting.
 3. A written response should contain an outline of the complaint and a summary of the response to the complaint including the decision reached and the reasons for it. Where appropriate this should also include what response the Academy will take to resolve the complaint. This may be by way of a general description e.g. Action taken within the Disciplinary Procedure.
 4. This letter should also inform the complainant that should he/she wish the complaint to progress to the next stage of this procedure then he/she should send a written request stating this to the Principal within 10 school days of receiving the response.
 5. If no further communication is received from the complainant within 10 school days it is deemed that the complaint has been resolved and should end.

Stage Two: Formal complaints

6. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at stage one they may go to Stage 2 and have a more senior member of staff hear the complaint. The investigating officer at this stage may delegate the task of collating the information to

another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken ensuring they have had no previous involvement at Stage 1.

A written response should contain an outline of the complaint and a summary of the response to the complaint including the decision reached and the reasons for it. Where appropriate this should also include what response the Academy will take to resolve the complaint. This may be by way of a general description e.g. Action taken within the Disciplinary Procedure.

7. This letter should also inform the complainant that should he/she wish the complaint to progress to the next second stage of this procedure then he/she should send a written request stating this to the Principal within 10 school days of receiving the response.
8. If no further communication is received from the complainant within 10 school days it is deemed that the complaint has been resolved and should end.
9. The same timings as in Stage 1 will apply.

Stage Three (final stage): Panel Hearing

10. The complainant needs to write to the contact as identified in the Stage 2 written response.
11. The delegated officer should write to the complainant acknowledging receipt of the written request for the complaint to be heard. This acknowledgement must be sent within 5 school days and should inform the complainant of the arrangements for hearing the complaint within 25 school days of receiving it. The letter should explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. These must be received within 10 school days of the date of the hearing to allow adequate time for the documents to be circulated.
12. The delegated officer will aim to find a mutually convenient date for all at the panel stage but if, despite best efforts, it is not possible to find a mutually convenient date and time for a hearing within a reasonable timeframe, the Chair of the Panel may determine that the hearing proceeds on the basis of written submissions from both parties.
13. No person involved on the panel should have previous involvement in the complaint.
14. Individual complaints would not be heard by the whole Governing Body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any hearing set up for disciplinary purposes against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

15. The Academy Council may nominate a number of members with delegated powers to hear complaints at that stage, and set out its terms of reference. These include:

- drawing up its procedures;
- hearing individual appeals;
- making recommendations on policy as a result of complaints.

16. Any Governor from the Trust can be the Chair of a panel hearing at stage 3 as long as they have had no previous involvement in the case. The panel will consist of two governors and one member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the academy and Trust.

The Remit of the Complaints Panel

17. The panel can:

- 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 Academy's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

18. There are several points which any governor sitting on a complaints panel needs to remember:

- a. It is important that the hearing is independent and impartial. No Governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- b. The aim of the hearing, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the Academy and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.
- c. An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel Chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible.

19. The Academy will write and inform the complainant and any witnesses, the panel etc.

of the date and location of the meeting 5 school days in advance. The notification to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/ interpreter. The letter should explain how the meeting will be conducted and the complainant's right to submit further written evidence to the panel. The Investigating Officer at stage 2 has the right to bring representation if so desired.

20. Intervention of parallel investigations relevant to the complaint by the Police or social services may cause variation to these time scales. Any such variation will be notified to the complainant.

Hearing the Complaint at the Meeting

The aim of the meeting will be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the Academy and the complainant.

In the interest of natural justice, the introduction of previously undisclosed evidence or witnesses would be a reason to adjourn the meeting so that the other side has time to consider and respond to the new evidence.

The recommended conduct of the meeting is as follows:

- a. The Chair of the panel will welcome the complainant, introduce the panel members and explain the procedure.
- b. The Chair of the panel will invite the complainant to explain the complaint.
- c. The Committee members may question the complainant about the complaint and the reasons why it has been made.
- d. The Investigating Officer at stage 2 will be invited by the Chair of the panel to question the complainant about the complaint and why it has been made.
- e. The Chair of the panel will invite the Investigating Officer at stage 2 to make a statement in response to the complaint. At the discretion of the Chair of the panel the Investigating Officer at stage 2 may invite members of staff directly involved in the complaint to supplement his/her response.
- f. The Committee members may question the Investigating Officer at stage 2 and/or members of staff about the response to the complaint.
- g. The Chair of the panel will allow the complainant to question the Investigating Officer at stage 2 and/or members of staff about the response to the complaint.
- h. Any party has the right to call witnesses, subject to the approval of the Chair of the Committee.
- i. The Committee, the Investigating Officer at stage 2 and the complainant have the right to question any such witness.
- j. The Investigating Officer at stage 2 will be invited by the Chair of the panel to make a final statement.
- k. The complainant will be invited by the Chair of the panel to make a final statement.

- l. The Chair of the panel will explain to the complainant and the Investigating Officer at stage 2 that the decision of the panel will now be considered and a written decision will be sent to both parties within 15 school days. The Chair of the panel will then ask all parties to leave except for members of the Committee.
- m. The Committee will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and;
 - i. Reach a decision on the complaint and the reasons for it.
 - ii. Decide upon the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- n. The Governors sitting on the panel need to be aware of the complaints procedure before the meeting.

If the complainant remains unsatisfied, they may then take their complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Complainants who are dissatisfied with the handling of their complaints may use this enquiry form [CLICK HERE](#). Please note ESFA can only investigate the handling of the complaints process, not the decision made by the academy. More information about our remit regarding complaints about academies is available online [Complaints about an academy](#).

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Chief Operating Officer

The person in charge of coordinating the complaints procedure at the academy is the principal. Overall responsibility is retained by OGAT through the Chief Operating Officer. The role of governors arises only in respect of appeals where the complainant remains dissatisfied with attempts to resolve the issue of complaint and as set out above.

The Role of the Chair of the Panel

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

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption;
- the issues are addressed;
- key findings of fact are made;
- parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease;
- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy;
- the panel is open minded and acting independently;

- no member of the panel has any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions;
- written material is seen by all parties.

Checklist for a Panel Hearing

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence. Students may not appear as witnesses, but they may provide statements.
- The panel should ensure that all parties have copies of all documentation before the hearing begins.

PART TWO

Concerns or Complaints from persons other than parents/carers of current registered pupils

Part 1 of this complaints procedure applies solely to complaints made by parents or carers of current registered pupils of academies within the trust. The trust wishes to work closely with other members of the local community and will deal with concerns and complaints as follows:

1. A concern regarding an academy 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 (SLT) 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, you will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.
2. Where a concern is not resolved at stage 1, or you wish your concerns to be dealt with immediately as a formal complaint, you should put your complaint in writing and send this to the Principal of the relevant academy to investigate. The Principal may delegate the task of investigation and/or respond to the complaint to a member of SLT. A formal response to the complaint will usually be provided within 10 school days of receipt of the letter of complaint although if a longer period is required to respond, you will be kept updated.

Concerns or complaints regarding the Principal or the trust as a whole should be referred directly to the Chief Operating Officer c/o Outwood Grange Academies Trust, Potovens

Lane, Wakefield, WFI 2PF who will arrange for the stages above to be considered by an appropriate person.

PART THREE

Unreasonably persistent complainants and unreasonable complainant behaviour

There are rare circumstances where we will deviate from the Complaints Procedure set out in Part I. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- where the complainant's behaviour or language towards staff, members of the academy council or trustees is abusive, offensive, discriminatory or threatening;
- where the complaint's behaviour is hindering our consideration of complaints and/or the proper running of the academy because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact, such as, if the complainant:
 - refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
 - refuses to cooperate with the complaints investigation process
 - refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
 - insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
 - introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
 - raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
 - makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
 - changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
 - seeks an unrealistic outcome, such as the inappropriate dismissal of staff
 - 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
 - knowingly provides falsified information

- publishes confidential information relating to the complaint on social media or other public forums
- where the complainant's complaint is clearly frivolous, vexatious and/or has patently insufficient grounds. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint 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
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value
- 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, we 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 academy e.g. requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only), requiring contact to take place with a named person only, restricting telephone calls to specified days and times or banning the complainant from the academy's premises. This will be reviewed after six months;
- conduct the Complaints Committee on the papers only i.e. not hold a hearing;
- refuse to consider the complaint and refer the complainant directly to Stage 3.

In all cases we will write to tell the complainant why we believe his or her behaviour is unacceptable or unreasonably persistent, what action we are taking and the duration of that action.

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

- we have taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns
- the complainant has been given a clear statement of our position and their options

- the complainant contacts us repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time

The case for ceasing further correspondence is stronger where:

- letters, emails, or telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive or make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff
- we have reason to believe the complainant is contacting us with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience

Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, members of the academy council or trustees, we will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to _____ (Principal) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Student's name:
Your relationship to the Student:
Address: Postcode: Daytime telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint:
What action, if any, have you already taken to resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

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

Are you attaching any paperwork? (If so please give details)

Signature:

Date:

OFFICIAL USE

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Investigation Interview Template (for use in Complaints Procedure)

Date of Interview:
Present <i>(give name and job title):</i>
<i>Insert content of the interview, ensuring to record both the question asked and the answer provided.</i>
I, <i>insert name</i> , confirm that these notes are an accurate record of the interview held on <i>insert date</i> .
Signed:
Dated:

Agenda for a Panel Hearing

All parties will be welcomed by the Chair of the panel.

1. All parties will be asked to introduce themselves.
2. The complainant will be asked to outline their complaint, inviting any witnesses to also present.
3. If witnesses are called, they will be first asked questions by the complainant, then by the Investigating Officer at stage 2 and finally by the panel.
4. The complainant will conclude their presentation of their complaint.
5. The Investigating Officer at stage 2 will be invited to ask questions of the complainant.
6. The Panel will ask questions of the complainant.
7. The Investigating Officer at stage 2 will be invited to present their response to the complaint.
8. The complainant will be invited to ask questions of the Investigating Officer at stage 2.
9. The panel will ask questions of the Investigating Officer at stage 2.
10. The Investigating Officer at stage 2 will be asked to sum up their response.
11. The complainant will be asked to sum up their complaint.
12. All parties will be thanked for their attendance and contribution and the Chair will confirm that a written response will be sent to both parties within 15 school days.

The Panel reserves the right to modify the above procedure at their sole discretion, for example requiring the parent and the academy representative to present their complaint/actions separately to the Panel in the absence of the other party.

Response letter

The following should be included in the response letter

- The stage of the complaint procedure which the letter is referring to.
- Date of complaint received in writing
- Date of initial meeting with the complainant
- Summary of the complaints raised
- Brief outline of how the investigation was conducted
- Outcome for each complaint in detail with the following;
 - Upheld
 - Not upheld
 - Partially upheld
 - Inconclusive
 - Could not investigate

Which provides a justification for the above outcome.

- Provide details of next steps if the complainant wishes to take the complaint to the next stage of the complaints policy.

Outwood Grange Academies Trust Complaints Policy Changes 17th April 2024

Change	Where change can be found
Outline what we aim to do when responding to complaints	Page 2, under part 1; Principles
<p>Identifies what complaints this policy does not apply to, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admissions to schools - Matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation - Suspension and/or Permanent Exclusion of children from school - Whistleblowing - Staff grievances - Staff conduct* - Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs - Complaints about services provided by external bodies using a school's premises or facilities - Appeals relating to internal/external assessment decisions for external qualifications - Fixed Penalty Notices for attendance - Anonymous concern or complaint <p>* Will be investigated, however complainants will not be informed about any disciplinary process involving staff. The policy explains who to contact instead for complaints relating to the above.</p>	Table on page 3 and 4 under part 2; Scope
Identifies how to make a complaint against the Trust and how to make a complaint against the CEO	Page 5 and 6 under part 5; Complaints about the Trust
Identifies the difference between a concern and a complaint and that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. Also identifies different colleagues to contact and how.	Page 6 under part 6; Dealing with complaints
Outlines that we expect complainants to observe confidentiality. Defamatory, offensive or	Page 7 under part 6; Social media

<p>otherwise inappropriate comments on social media will be reported to the appropriate authorities. The academy reserves the right to stop the complaint procedure if complainants do not observe confidentiality.</p>	
<p>Duplicate complaints e.g from a spouse, a partner, a grandparent or a child will not be investigated unless there is a new aspect of the complaint.</p>	<p>Page 8 under part 6; Duplicate complaints</p>
<p>In the event of a complaint campaign, we may take any or all of the following steps, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refer the matter to the relevant member of the Executive Leadership Team. ● Send a template response to all complainants. ● Publish a single response on the school/Trust website. 	<p>Page 8 under part 6; Complaint campaigns</p>
<p>Stage 1: 10 school days to meet with the complainant, of which the academy will acknowledge the complaint within 5 school days. The academy has a further 15 school days to respond to the complaint from the date of the meeting with the complainants</p> <p>Stage 2: Same timings as above</p>	<p>Page 9 under Stage 1 Formal; bullet point 2 Page 10 under Stage 2 Formal; bullet point 9</p>
<p>Outlines that a written response must be provided at all stages</p>	<p>Page 9 under Stage 1 Formal; bullet point 3 Page 10 under Stage 2 Formal Complaints; under point 6 Page 11 under Stage 3 Panel Hearing; point 19</p>
<p>Stage 2: Identifies that this will be investigated by the next senior person and does not stipulate this must be the Principal e.g Principal has been replaced with Investigating Officer</p>	<p>Page 9 under Stage 2 Formal Complaints; point 6 Page 12 under Hearing the complaint; bullet points a-n</p>
<p>Identifies who the complainant should write to if they are unhappy with the outcome of stage 2. This may not be the Executive Principal</p>	<p>Page 10 under Stage 3 Panel Hearing; point 10</p>
<p>Identifies the arrangements for hearing the complaint is within 25 school days of receiving it and not 20 days as previous</p>	<p>Page 10 under Stage 3 Panel Hearing; point 11</p>

Replaces Executive Principal with delegated officer for Stage 3; Panel hearing	Page 10 under Stage 3 Panel Hearing; point 12
Replaces COO with Chair of Panel	Page 10 under Stage 3 Panel Hearing; point 12
Agenda for Panel Hearing moved to appendix 3	Page 21
Concerns or Complaints from persons other than parents/carers of current registered pupils (Part 2) has had stage 2 and the formal hearing removed	Page 14 under part 2
Appendix 2 from the old policy has been removed	
Appendix 4 included - what should the letter detail	Page 22