# Complaints Policy

## 1. Statement of Purpose

1.1 Each school in the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, about how it is doing. Where someone has a concern or complaint each school will endeavour at all times to deal with the issues responsively and reasonably and if necessary put things right as quickly as possible.

1.2 Complaints will be treated confidentially with written records being securely retained.

## 2. Areas excluded from this procedure

2.1 Complaints relating to areas which are covered by other statutory procedures are excluded from this policy. These include exclusions, staff grievance, admissions and whistleblowing – please see the Trust and/or School website for the relevant policies.

## 3. Summary of the Complaints Procedure

| **INFORMAL PROCEDURE STAGE** | | **ACTION REQUIRED** |
|---|---|---|
| Stage 1a | Informal discussion with the class teacher or other relevant member of staff usually resulting in resolution of the issue | The person is informed of the action to be taken to resolve the issue. If they are not satisfied they should be provided with a copy of the Trust's Complaints Policy, information of how to proceed to stage 2 of the process and a copy of the Complainant Code of Conduct (see Annex 1). |
| Stage 1b | Informal discussion with the Headteacher or other member of senior staff usually resulting in resolution of the issue | |
| **FORMAL PROCEDURE STAGE** | | **ACTION REQUIRED** |
| Stage 2 | The complaint is submitted, normally in writing (see Annex 2 for Complaints Form), to the Headteacher | The Headteacher acknowledges receipt within 5 school days, and an investigation into the complaint is conducted by the Headteacher. If the complaint is against the Headteacher (or a decision made by the Headteacher) the complaint is escalated to Stage 3. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, the Investigator provides a written response to the Complainant within 20 school days, including the findings of the investigation and the reasons for those findings. Information is provided on how to progress the complaint to stage 3. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Stage 3 | The complaint is referred to the Local Governing Body (LGB) for investigation | The Chair of the LGB acknowledged receipt (usually received within 10 school days of the complainant receiving the Investigators response at Stage 2) and an investigation into the complaint is conducted by the Chair of the LGB or nominee. If the complaint is against the Headteacher the investigation is always conducted by the Chair. If the complaint is against the Chair then the Vice Chair will conduct the investigation. The complainant is given a written response of the outcome of the investigation within 10 school days and information is provided on how to progress to stage 4 |
| Stage 4 | Complainant writes to the Clerk to the LGB Complaints Review Panel (and copied to the Trust Company Secretary) requesting that the complaint is heard by the Complaints Review Panel involving at least one Trust Director. | Clerk arranges for the Complaints Review Panel to meet between 12 and 20 school days from receipt of letter and informs Complainant of findings within 5 school days of hearing. Information is provided on how to contact the Education Funding Agency if required. |
| Stage 5 | Complainant writes to the Education Funding Agency, at www.gov.uk/complain-about-school | The Education Funding Agency may intervene if<br>• there was an undue delay or the school did not comply with its Complaints Policy<br>• the school/Trust is not following the terms of its funding agreement<br>• The school/Trust has failed to comply with any other legal obligation |

## 4. Stage 1: Dealing with concerns and complaints informally

4.1 The vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight away through the class teacher, subject leader, mentor, pastoral leader, senior leader, other member of staff or the Headteacher, depending on who the parent first approached, without the need to resort to a formal complaints procedure, and this is preferable for all concerned. In some instances, the complainant may also welcome the opportunity for an informal discussion with the Headteacher or other senior member of staff. If the complaint concerns the Headteacher then the informal discussion will be held with the Chair of the Local Governing Board.

4.3 Although this stage involves dealing with the issue informally it may prove helpful later, although not essential at this stage, for the person responding to make a basic record of the issue or complaint raised, which may include brief notes of conversations (face to face or over the telephone), and the responses made.

4.4 The person who raised the issue should be informed of the action to be taken to resolve the issue. It may be helpful to confirm undertakings given about future action or monitoring in writing.

4.5 If the person is dissatisfied with the response they have been given at this stage, they should be provided with a copy of the Trust's Complaints Policy and the Trust's Complainant Code of Conduct and informed about how to take their complaint to Stage 2, by referring it to the Headteacher usually in writing (see Annex 2 – Complaints Form).

5.1 The issue is referred to the Headteacher for investigation, usually by the Complainant writing to the Headteacher (see Annex 2 – Complaints Form). This should include information about why they are complaining, and what they want to happen as a result of their complaint. where there is:

- An unresolved concern under Stage 1, or
- a complaint which needs investigation, or
- a more serious dissatisfaction with some aspect of the School's policies, procedures, management or administration

5.2 The complaint should be set out in writing (using Annex 2 - Complaints Form) with full details and sent with all relevant documents and full contact details for the attention of the Headteacher. Should a formal written complaint be received by another member of the School's staff, he or she will immediately pass it to the Headteacher.

5.3 A complaint should normally be submitted within six weeks of the incident in question. If a complaint is submitted after this date, the Complainant will be required to explain why they were not able to submit the complaint within the stated period.

5.4 It is generally at this stage that it will become clear whether:

(i) it is appropriate for the complaint to be dealt with under these procedures or whether there are statutory processes which are more appropriate. If the latter is the case, the Headteacher will need to inform the Complainant of this and the way in which the complaint will be handled.

(ii) the Headteacher will investigate the complaint.

(iii) the concern is a definite complaint. If the focus of the complaint is unclear, the Investigator may ask the Complainant to clarify, in writing, why they are complaining, and what they want to happen as a result of their complaint.

5.5 Any complaint received under this process should be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt of the complaint with, in the absence of extenuating circumstances, a written response from the Investigator within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint. The Complainant will also be informed in the initial letter from the Investigator that if the complaint is about a named member of staff the Complainant should be advised not to contact the member of staff directly for the duration of the complaint. The Local Governing Body will be informed of all formal complaints escalating to Stage 2.

5.6 When a complaint is considered to be vexatious, serial, repetitive or spurious the Investigator will write to the Complainant explaining why the complaint is not being taken forward and informing that they have the right to refer this decision to the Chief Executive. Examples of what the Trust considers to be vexatious include:

- The Complainant has not identified any specific incidents or actions about which they wish to complain;
- The Complainant's concerns are presented as conclusions rather than identifying specific incidents or actions about which they wish to complain;

- The concerns that the Complainant identifies relate to historical actions and any evidence which might have enabled an objective investigation of their complaint is no longer available;
- The substance of the complaint has been addressed under this procedure already;
- The concerns that the Complainant raises do not fall within the scope of this procedure;
- The Complainant does not identify any potential sources of evidence which might allow the matter to be investigated;
- The complaints are obsessive, harassing, or repetitive;
- Complainants are seeking unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes;
- The complaints are designed to cause disruption and annoyance;
- Demands for redress lack any serious purpose or value.

(Please see Annex 3 for an example of vexatious or spurious complaint letter)

5.7 Assuming that the complaint is not vexatious or spurious an investigation will be held and the Complainant should also be given the opportunity to meet with the Investigator, accompanied by a relative or friend if they so wish, to discuss their complaint. Written records of interviews with Complainants and with staff or witnesses carried out in the course of the investigation should be kept by the Investigator.

5.8 The letter conveying the findings of the Investigator should, in the absence of extenuating circumstances, be provided within 20 school days of the receipt of the complaint and should include the outcome of the investigation accompanied by an explanation of those findings. The Complainant and should also be informed of the process for referral to Stage 3 of the Complaints Policy. Any such referral should be made within 10 school days after receipt of the Investigator's response.

## 6. Stage 3: Referral to the Chair of the Local Governing Body

6.1 Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Headteacher under Stage 2, the issue is referred in writing to the Chair of the Local Governing Body for consideration, within 10 school days of receipt of the Headteacher' s response.

6.2 The Chair of the Local Governing Body will investigate the complaint. If the complaint is about the Headteacher the investigation is always conducted by the Chair. If the complaint is about the Chair then the investigation will be undertaken by the Vice Chair of the Local Governing Body.

6.3 Any complaint received under this process should be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt of the complaint with, in the absence of extenuating circumstances, a written response from the Investigator within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint. The Complainant will also be informed in the initial letter from the Investigator that if the complaint is about a named member of staff the Complainant should be advised not to contact the member of staff directly for the duration of the complaint.

6.4 In acknowledging any complaint, the Investigator may need to explain their powers in the matter in question and the extent to which it may or may not be possible to achieve the outcome desired by the Complainant. For example, a parent may be unhappy with their child's class placement. Whilst the Investigator can look at whether the decision about the class placement was made in a fair, reasonable and consistent way, they do not have the powers to change the placement. In such instances it is important that the Complainant is made aware at the outset of the scope of the investigation. However, when the Investigator is the Chair of the Local Governing Body and where it is not within the remit of the Investigator to change a decision, they may make a recommendation for the Headteacher to consider.

6.5 Should the complaint relate to a member of Trust level staff, the actions of the Trust's Board of Trustees or an individual Trustee, the Complainant should request a review of their complaint in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, via the Company Secretary to the Trust (should the complaint be about the Chair of the Board of Trustees, an alternative Trustee should undertake the investigation). The process will follow the same principles described above.

## 7. Stage 4: Reference to the Complaints Review Panel

### 7.1 *Overview*

7.1.1 Complaints only rarely reach this formal level, but the Trust's Board of Directors is committed to supporting a Complaints Review Panel usually convened by the Local Governing Body (LGB). The Complaints Review Panel should normally be comprised of at least two LGB members (panel members should have no detailed previous knowledge of the case and will not include a Governor who investigated the complaint at Stage 3) and at least one member of the Trust Board of Trustees as someone independent of the direct management and running of the school (not an employee of the Trust). The Chair of the Local Governing Body should not be a member of the Panel if they have been involved at the previous stage. The Panel should usually constitute three members.

### 7.2 *Timescale and documentation*

7.2.1 Where the Clerk to the LGB receives a complaint under these procedures, he or she should arrange for a Complaints Review Panel to meet between 12 and 20 school days from receipt of the letter and to inform the Company Secretary to the Trust immediately.

7.2.2 The Headteacher1 should also be informed immediately that a complaint has been received and consulted about the proposed date of the hearing.

7.2.3 On issuing notification of the date and time of the hearing, the clerk will need to advise the Complainant and the Headteacher that any written documentation they wish the Panel to consider will need to be submitted in time to be circulated to Panel members 5 days prior to the hearing. The Complainant should be advised that they may be accompanied by a relative or friend. The Headteacher (or any staff member who is the subject of the complaint) should be advised that they may be accompanied by a professional support representative such as a senior colleague from another school in the Trust.

7.2.4 Notification of the hearing will also include details of the way in which the hearing will be conducted. The hearing will be minuted and copies of all relevant correspondence and notes will be kept on file by the clerk.

7.2.5 The findings of the Panel should be notified to the Complainant and the Headteacher in writing within 5 school days of the hearing. This should include the outcome of the Panel accompanied by an explanation of those findings. The Complainant should also be informed of the opportunity for referral to the Education Funding Agency if they are not satisfied that the complaint has been dealt with properly according to the Trust's procedure.

### *7.3 Procedure at the Complaints Panel meeting*

[1] or the member of staff who is the subject of the complaint, in the case of complaints about a member of Trust level staff, Chair/member of the Local Governing Body/Board of Directors

7.3.1 The hearing is as informal as possible. The Complainant is entitled to bring a friend or relative. The Headteacher (or any staff member who is the subject of the complaint) is entitled to be accompanied by a professional support representative such as a senior colleague from another school in the Trust. Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.

7.3.2 It is within the power of the Panel to decide whether to allow those invited to the Complaints Review Panel meeting to attend at the same time, or be invited to present their case separately. If all attendees are invited to attend the meeting at the same time the following meeting structure may be followed[2]:

- The Chair of the panel (usually the member of the Trust Board of Trustees) should open the meeting by welcoming all those present and leading the introductions. The Chair should then outline the procedure and what the Complaints Panel's powers are.
- The Clerk (or Company Secretary) should outline the order in which the parties will be able to state their case and ask questions. The clerk should also draw attention to the estimated times included in the agenda and that although timings are approximate, the expectation is that they will be adhered to. Please see Annex 4 for a sample agenda with approximate timings.
- The panel should invite the Complainant to explain their complaint.
- The Headteacher, followed by the panel, may question the Complainant.
- The Chair should invite the Headteacher to explain the school's actions, followed by the school witnesses.
- The Complainant, followed by the panel, may question the Headteacher and their witnesses.
- The Chair should invite the Headteacher to make their final statement.
- The Chair should invite the Complainant to make their final statement.
- The Chair should ask both parties to leave together so that the panel can discuss the case. The Chair should inform both parties that they will be notified of the decision on the panel within 5 days.
- The Complainants Panel should make their decision. The Clerk should be able to advise on procedural issues or draw from his/her notes if needed, but should take no part in the decision.

7.3.3 If the Chair of the Panel decides not to allow the attendees to attend the meeting at the same time the following meeting structure may be followed (please see Annex 5 for a sample agenda):

- The parties attending the meeting should be invited to join the meeting and present their case in the following order: Complainant, Complainant's witness(es), Headteacher, witness(es) from/for the school.
- When each attendee joins the meeting the Chair should lead the introductions of the panel, and explain the procedure and powers of the panel.
- Each attendee should be given the opportunity to present their case and answer questions from the panel. They will then be thanked for their attendance and informed that they will be notified of the decision on the panel within 5 days.

### *7.4 Conduct at meetings*

7.4.1 In most cases, each party is helpful, polite and patient, and accepts that it takes time to resolve a dispute. However, the conduct of some participants can make

[2] The following meeting structure is a recommendation only. The Chair may decide to allow all attendees to be present at the same time, but not allow cross-examination

investigating and resolving a complaint difficult, or they may behave in a way that is unacceptable or inappropriate.

7.4.2 The Trust will never tolerate aggressive or intimidating behaviour, violence or abuse towards anyone attending a Complaints Review Panel meeting. This may include behaviour or language (verbal or non-verbal) that may cause individuals to feel afraid, threatened or abused; and it may include threats, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks and rudeness.

7.4.3 It is the responsibility of the panel members to monitor the conduct of those attending a panel meeting. If a member of the panel decides that an attendee is exhibiting unacceptable behaviour, in the first instance they will be asked to desist from that behaviour. If this request is ignored they may be asked to leave the meeting.

### *7.5 The Role of the Clerk (or Company Secretary in exceptional cases)*

- To set up the Complaints Panel and invite all relevant parties.
- To ask for any written representations and supporting documentation.
- To circulate any representations in advance of the meeting, including a report from Stage 2 of the complaints process and a written account of the complaint from the Complainant, if available.
- To take detailed minutes of the meeting as a record of the evidence considered by the Complaints Panel (these minutes should be available to all parties on request).
- To provide advice to the Complaints Panel once the other parties have left the room.
- To write to all parties after the meeting with the Complaints Panel's findings.

### *7.6 The Complaints Review Panel's Decision*

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

## 8. Further Recourse

8.1 If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the Complaint Review Panel's handling of their complaint, further recourse to other agencies is available to them outside the scope of the Trust's own procedures. However, these agencies would be unable to take any action until the Trust's own procedures had been completed.

8.2 Complainants have a right of appeal to the Education Funding Agency. The Education Funding Agency will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the Trust.

It will consider complaints about academies that fall into any of the following three areas:
(i) where there is undue delay or the school did not comply with its own complaints procedure when considering a complaint
(ii) where the school / Trust is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State
(iii) where an school / Trust has failed to comply with any other legal obligation

8.3 The Education Funding Agency will not overturn the Trust's decision about a complaint. However, if it finds that the Trust did not deal with a complaint properly it will request the complaint is looked at again and procedures meet the requirements set out in the Regulations. If the Trust's complaints procedure does not meet the Regulations, it will ask the Trust to put this right. It may seek to enforce the decision under the terms of the funding agreement on behalf of the Secretary of State, if appropriate.

## 9.0 Vexatious and/or Repeated Complaints

9.1 There may be occasions when, despite exhausting the procedure in this Complaints Policy, the Complainant persists in making the same complaint to the School There may also be occasions when a Complainant raises unreasonable persistent complaints or raises complaints about matters which do not affect them. In addition, there may be occasions when a complaint is made about a matter which is clearly so trivial that it would be a waste of the Academy's resources to deal with it under the formal stages of the procedure. In all of these cases, the School reserves the right to regard the complaint as vexatious and/or repeated and to refuse to investigate it under the procedure in this Complaints Policy if it appears reasonable and fair to do so, having regard to the circumstances surrounding the complaint.

9.2 Where the School decides that a complaint is vexatious and/or repeated and will not be investigated, the School will write to the Complainant within 5 school days of the complaint being raised to notify them of the decision.

9.3 If the Complainant is unhappy with the decision not to investigate a vexatious and/or repeated complaint, they may write to the Chair of the Local Governing Body to ask for the decision to be reviewed. The Chair of the Local Governing Body will be provided with all documentation relating to the current complaint and any previous complaints which were relevant to the decision, together with the letter from the School to the Complainant, and will review the decision made. The Chair of Local Governing Board will write to the Complainant with the outcome of the review within 10 school days of the date that the letter from the Complainant seeking the review was received.

9.4 If the Chair of Local Governing Board quashes the decision not to investigate the concern or complaint, it will be referred to the School to be dealt with under the procedure in this Complaints Policy in the usual way.

9.5 If the Chair of Local Governing Board upholds the decision not to investigate the concern or complaint, the Complainant may refer the concern or complaint to the Education Funding Agency using the procedure stated towards the end of this Complaints Policy.

9.6 In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of Local Governing Board can delegate the responsibility for the review to the Vice-Chair of Local Governing Board.

## 10 Anonymous Complaints

10.1 The School will not investigate anonymous complaints under the procedure in this Complaints Policy. Anonymous complaints will be referred to the Headteacher who will decide what, if any, action should be taken.

## 11 Support for employees who have been the subject of a complaint

11.1 In the first instance, staff members who have been subject to a complaint should seek support from their line manager or Chair of their school's Local Governing Body. For information on the support and counselling service available to employees of the Trust please contact the Trust's HR Advisors.

## Policy status and review

| | |
|---|---|
| **Written by:** | Chief Executive |
| **Status:** | FINAL |
| **Approval date:** | 11th July 2017 |
| **Review Date:** | September 2019 |

# Annex 1 Complainant Code of Conduct

The Headteacher and Local Governing Body are fully committed to the improvement of our school. We welcome feedback from parents/carers and other members of the school community and will always try to resolve any concerns as quickly as possible. In the first instance please discuss your complaint with your child's class teacher, if appropriate, or the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership team.

If you would like to take your complaint further there is a procedure for individuals to use if they wish to make a formal complaint. Please see the school website or ask at the school office for a copy of the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust Complaints Policy.

In our experience, in most cases, Complainants are helpful, polite and patient, and they give us time to sort out whatever has happened so that everyone has been listened to and the problem is resolved. The majority of Complainants will not need to be reminded to fulfil the academies' expectations to:

- conduct themselves in accordance with the Trust's Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct Policy;
- treat all members of the school community with courtesy and respect;
- respect the needs of pupils/students and staff within the school;
- avoid the use of violence, or threats of violence, towards people or property;
- recognise the time constraints under which members of staff in academies work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond to a complaint
- follow the Trust's complaints procedure

Sometimes, however, those pursuing complaints or other issues treat staff and others in a way that is unacceptable. Whilst we recognise that some complaints may relate to serious and distressing incidents, we will not accept threatening or harassing behaviour towards any members of the school community.

**Threatening or harassing behaviour** may include behaviour or language (verbal, non-verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened or abused; and it may include threats, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks and rudeness, such as behaviour which is:

- out of proportion to the nature of the complaint;
- persistent – even when the complaints procedure has been exhausted;
- personally harassing;
- unjustifiably repetitious;
- pursuing complaints in an unreasonable manner (e.g. using abusive or threatening language;
- making complaints in public or via a social networking site such as Facebook;

**We will not tolerate behaviour if:**

- it appears to be pursued in a way intended to cause personal distress rather than to seek a resolution;
- it appears to be deliberately targeted at one or more members of school staff or others, without good cause;
- the way in which a complaint or other issues are pursued (as opposed to the complaint itself) causes undue distress to school staff or others;
- it has a significant and disproportionate adverse effect on the school community

**In cases of threatening or harassing behaviour, the school may take some or all of the following steps, as appropriate:**

- inform the Complainant informally that his/her behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable or unacceptable, and request a changed approach;
- inform the Complainant in writing that the school considers his/her behaviour to be threatening or harassing;
- require all future meetings with a member of staff to be conducted with a second person present. In the interests of all parties, notes of these meetings may be taken;
- inform the Complainant that, except in emergencies, the school will respond only to written communication and that these may be required to be channelled through the Clerk to the Trust;
- the school is advised to call the police if there is a case of threatening or harassing behaviour.

**The Trust will not tolerate any form of physical or verbal aggression against members of the school community. If there is evidence of any such aggression the school may:**

- ban the individual from entering the school site, with immediate effect;
- request an Injunction to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance (IPNA);
- prosecute under Anti-Harassment legislation;
- call the police to remove the individual from the premises, under powers provided by the Education Act 1996.

Truro and Penwith Academy Trust

St Erth School

# Annex 2 Complaint Form

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

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name of School:** | |
| **Your name:** | |
| **Pupil / Student's name (if relevant):** | |
| **Your relationship with the Pupil/Student (if relevant):** | |
| **Your address:** | |
| **Email address:** | |
| **Telephone number:** | Day time:<br>Evening: |
| **Please give details of your complaint:** | |

| |
|---|
| **What action, if any, have you already taken to try and 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?** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Signature:** | |
| **Date:** | |

**Official use**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Date acknowledgement sent:** | |
| **By who:** | |
| **Complaint referred to:** | |
| **Date:** | |

**Annex 3**

# Vexatious or spurious complaint example letter

Complainant address

Date

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

Following receipt of your communications and careful consideration of the same, I regret that I am unable to deal with this matter under the Trust's Complaints Policy because:

*(It will be appropriate to include SOME of the following statements)*

- You have not identified any specific incidents or actions about which you wish to complain.
- Your concerns are presented as conclusions rather than identifying specific incidents or actions about which you wish to complain;
- The concerns that you identify relate to historical actions and any evidence which might have enabled an objective investigation of your complaint is no longer available.
- The substance of your complaint has been addressed under this procedure already.
- The concerns that you raise do not fall within the scope of this procedure.
- You have not identified any potential sources of evidence which might allow the matter to be investigated.
- Your complaint is considered to be obsessive, harassing, or repetitive.
- The outcomes you are seeking are considered to be unrealistic or unreasonable.
- Your complaints are designed to cause disruption and annoyance.
- The demands for redress lack any serious purpose or value.

If you wish my decision to be reviewed then you may take advantage of the procedure set out in the Trust's formal Complaints Policy, by referring it to the Chief Executive, Truro and Penwith Academy Trust, c/o Truro College, College Road, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3XX. Please find a copy of our Complaints Policy attached to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher or Chair of Local Governing Body

**Annex 4**

# Sample agenda (all attendees present together)

**Complaints Review Panel**

Agenda for a meeting of the Complaints Panel of the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust, to consider the complaints brought by **(Complainant)** against **(school/member of staff),** to be held on **(Date),** starting at **(Time)** at **(Location)**.

**Participants:**
Panel members:
Two LGB members (not previously involved in Informal or Formal stage complaint)
A Trustee of the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust (Independent panel member)

**Attendees:**
Complainant
Legal/Personal Support invited to attend by the Complainant
Headteacher (or senior representative from the school)
Member of staff the complaint is made about (if the complaint is not about the Headteacher or school)
Professional support representative invited to attend by the Headteacher or staff member
Witnesses

| **Item** | **Approximate time** |
|---|---|
| 1. Welcome, introductions and explanation of procedures, including possible outcomes<br>*(Panel, Complainant, Headteacher, staff member [if applicable] and any attendees supporting the Complainant, Headteacher or staff member present)* | 10am - 10.10am |
| 2. Opportunity for Complainant to explain the complaint | 10.10am - 10.30am |
| 3. The Panel and the Headteacher/staff member may question the Complainant | 10.30am – 10.40am |
| 4. Opportunity for the Headteacher/staff member to make a statement | 10.45am - 11.05pm |
| 5. The panel and Complainant may question the Headteacher/staff member | 11.05am – 11.15am |
| 6. Witness statement(s), if available | 11.15am – 11.25am (10 minutes to be scheduled for each witness) |
| 7. The panel, Complainant and Headteacher/staff member may question the witness(es) | 11.25am - 11.35am (10 minutes for the panel to question each witness) |
| 8. Final statement by the Headteacher/staff member | 11.35 – 11.40am |
| 9. Final statement by the Complainant | 11.40 – 11.45am |
| 8. Conclusion of meeting | 11.45am (later if more witnesses are present) |
| 9. Private meeting of the Complaints Panel | 11.45am - |