

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE STATEMENT

(Statutory Document)

This document links to: None identified

This policy was reviewed in:	July 2017
This policy will be reviewed in:	July 2019
This policy will be reviewed by:	Finance & Operations committee
This policy is owned by:	Senior leadership Team

Stage One: Initial Contact with a member of staff

The Complaints Procedure for Dover Christ Church Academy follows a three-stage model. The underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. Many concerns will be dealt with informally and parents/carers are encouraged to make contact with the member of staff concerned or the student's Form Tutor / Head of College.

Parents/carers may also choose to speak to a Vice Principal on an informal basis, particularly if they feel they would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. Similarly if the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with the complaint the complaint should be referred to a Vice Principal who can refer the complainant to another member of staff.

Where the complaint concerns the Principal, the Vice Principal can refer the complainant to the Chair of the Governing Body. Where the first approach is made to a governor, the next step would be to refer the complainant to the appropriate person and advise them about the procedure. Governors may not engage in the hearing of 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.

The formal procedures set out below will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

Stage Two: Complaint Heard by Principal

All complaints that cannot be rectified informally must be in writing. A complaints form is attached to this procedure that parents/carers may find useful. If the complaints form is not used parents/carers should give the information indicated on this form in their written complaint, in order that their complaint is clearly understood. All written complaints should be sent to the school, addressed for the attention of the Principal, unless the complaint concerns the Principal, in which case the complaint should be sent to the Chair of the Governing Body.

Complaints sent to a governor which are not about the Principal, will be forwarded to the Principal in order that the standard procedure may be followed.

Standard Procedure

The complaint will be acknowledged by the Principal within five working days of the receipt of the complaint.

The Principal will, once the complaint is fully understood, initiate an investigation into the nature of the complaint; this will lead to one of two outcomes:

1. If it is found that there is no substance to the complaint then the Principal will write to the complainant informing them of this outcome and the reasons why

2. If there is found to be grounds to the complaint, the complainant will be invited to attend a meeting with the Principal, or representative appointed by the Principal, which will be within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint, subject to the availability of the complainant.

The attendees at this meeting will vary according to the circumstances of each complaint. A personal representative or translator (if required) may accompany the parents/carers and the student may attend. A representative or colleague may also accompany the member of staff against whom the complaint has been made. The attendees at the meeting should be agreed by the parties before the meeting, if possible.

Any complaints regarding the Principal will continue directly to stage 3 below.

If parents/carers are not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting then they should proceed to stage three.

Stage Three: Complaint Heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel

The complainant should write to the Chair of the Governing Body giving details of the complaint. The Chair of Governors will then follow the Standard Procedure as outlined above. Where there is found to be substance to the complaint then the Clerk to the Governing Body or Chair will convene a Governing Body complaints panel within 30 school days of the complaint being received. The governors' appeal hearing is the final school-based stage of the complaints process, and is not convened to merely rubber-stamp previous decisions. Individual complaints will not be heard by the whole Governing Body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

Complaints Panel procedure:

The hearing will be as informal as possible. Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.

1. After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
2. The Principal may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
3. The Principal is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.

4. The complainant may question both the Principal and the witnesses after each has spoken.
5. The panel may ask questions at any point.
6. The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
7. The Principal is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
8. Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
9. The Chair explains that both parties will receive written confirmation of the decision of the panel within five school days.

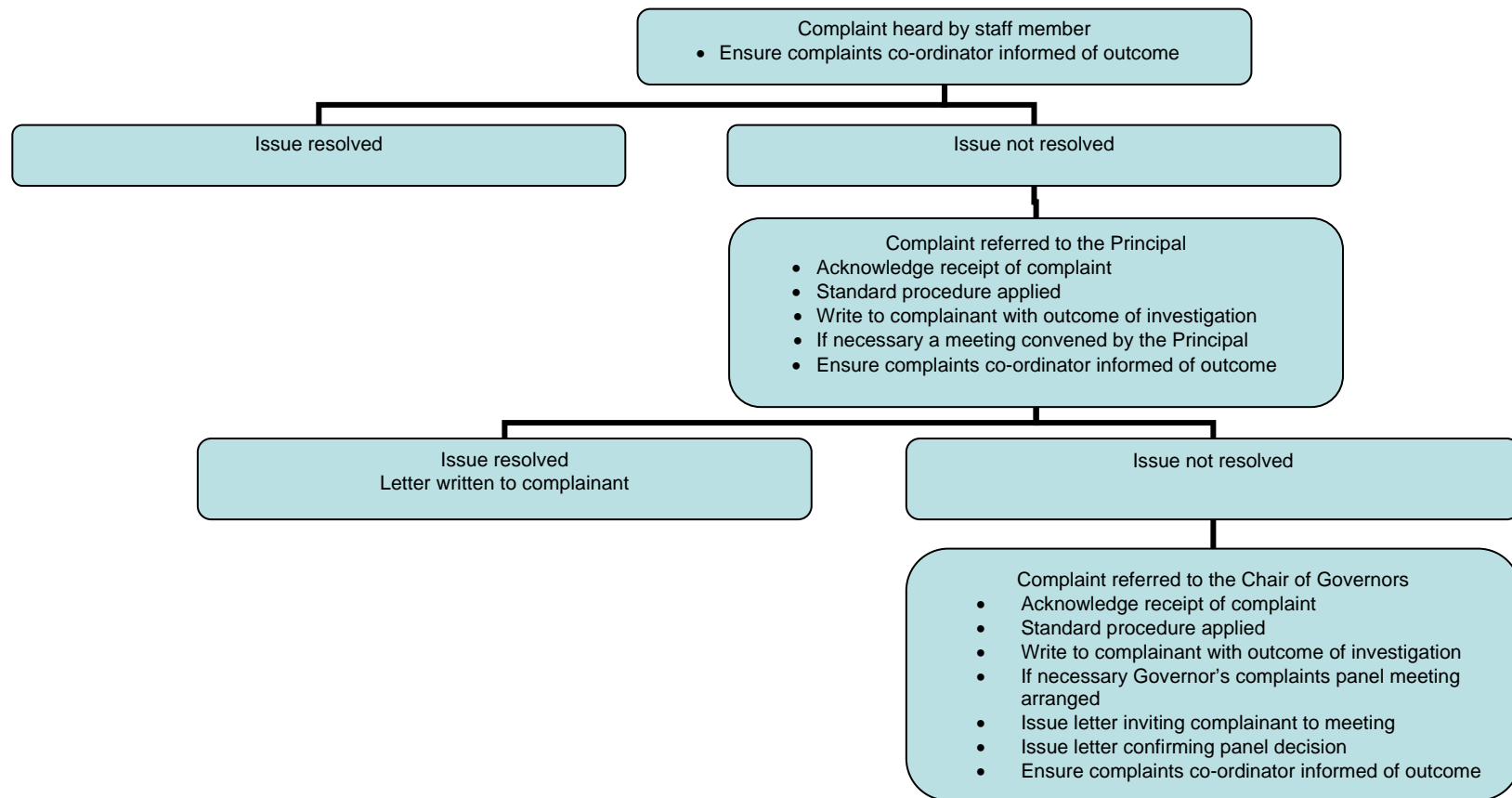
The Remit of The Complaints Appeal Panel

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.

Flowchart

Summary of Dealing with Complaints



Complaint form

Please complete and return to Mr I Smith (Complaints Co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Student's name:

Your relationship to the student:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

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?

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

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: