



**DISCOVERY**  
EDUCATIONAL TRUST

## **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

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## **A STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE**

This is the Discovery Educational Trust (DET) Complaints Policy and Procedure and applies across all DET Schools, namely Chase High School, Southend (CHS), Larchwood Primary School, Brentwood (LPS) and St. Martin's School, Brentwood (SMS), collectively the "Schools".

The purpose of the Policy is to outline the arrangements for dealing with concerns and complaints.

A concern may be defined as *"an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important, for which reassurances are sought"*.

A complaint may be defined as *"an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action"*.

All staff are made aware of this Complaints Policy and Procedure and are expected to review this document regularly in order that they are familiar with DET's process for dealing with complaints.

## **WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?**

This Complaints Policy and Procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at DET Schools. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to DET about any provision of facilities or services provided at Trust and at School level.

Should a pupil have cause to complain about any matter or any person associated with DET/its Schools, the complaint needs to be raised by the parent/carer on behalf of the pupil in accordance with this policy and procedure.

In accordance with equality law, reasonable adjustments are considered, if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this Complaints procedure. For example, the provision of information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

## **EXCEPTIONS FROM THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

This document does not apply to complaints where there is a specific procedure in place. This includes:

- staff grievances, disciplinary or conduct issues
- matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation (including allegations of abuse against staff)
- pupil admissions
- pupil exclusions
- statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)
- appeals relating to assessment decisions for external qualifications
- complaints about services provided by other providers that may use school premises or facilities
- changes to DET/School legal status or consultations on reorganisations

Each of these follows its own process of complaint, which are outlined in separate policies.

If there is an allegation or concern about physical or sexual misconduct towards a child, or there is a belief that a child may be at risk of serious harm, DET and its Schools may immediately refer the case to Child Protection and Welfare Services. If it is decided that there is cause for an official investigation, the decisions by these authorities will supersede those made by DET/School and outlined in this document. Where the complaint relates to a Safeguarding referral made by a member of staff at a School, any consideration of that complaint by DET/School is limited to a review of the reasonableness of the decision to make the referral in light of the evidence available to the member of staff at that time and in light of the DET/School Safeguarding policies.

For more information on DET/School Child Protection protocols, refer DET/School Safeguarding and Child Protection policies.

## **LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

DET complies with its legal duties under: [\*The Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2014 Schedule 1, Part 7\*](#), which state that it must have and must make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents/carers of children in DET Schools.

It is also based on guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) [on creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulations](#), and refers to [good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures from the Department for Education \(DfE\)](#).

## **RATIONALE**

The DET Trust Board (TB) is committed to building and maintaining good relations with parents/carers and to work with them to provide the best possible education for all children. The TB understands that parental/carer concerns can give rise to stressful situations for families and School staff and that invoking a complaints procedure can place an unnecessary barrier of formality between the School and the complainant. Parents/carers are, therefore, encouraged to bring their concerns to the School in a spirit of positive willingness to seek a solution. Wherever possible, the School works to resolve concerns informally and at an early stage.

## **EXPECTED OUTCOME**

In the event of a parental/carer concern or complaint, this document provides parents/carers with detail on the process to be followed. The aim of this document is to assure parents/carers that any issue is dealt with attentively and promptly.

## **HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN OR MAKE A COMPLAINT**

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as he/she has appropriate consent to do so.

Complaints against School staff (except the HT) should be addressed to the HT via the relevant School Office\*. All correspondence must be marked as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the HT should be addressed to the EHT, via the relevant School Office\*. All correspondence must be marked as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the EHT should be addressed to the Chair of the TB via the relevant School Office\*. All correspondence must be marked as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual Local Governor or the whole Local School Committee (LSC) should be addressed to the Chair of the TB via the relevant School Office\*. All correspondence must be marked as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of the TB, any individual Trustee or the whole TB should be addressed to the Chair of the Members via the relevant School Office\*. All correspondence must be marked as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included as Appendix 1 to this document. If help is required in completing the form, the relevant School Office can be asked for help. A third-party organisation, for example, the Citizens Advice Bureau, can also be asked for assistance.

In accordance with Equality law, reasonable adjustments are considered, if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this Complaints Policy and Procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

\*when sending a complaint via email, the relevant email addresses to use for each DET School are as detailed here:

CHS – [chasehigh.school@chasehigh.org](mailto:chasehigh.school@chasehigh.org)

LPS – [office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk](mailto:office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk)

SMS - [enquiries@st-martins.essex.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@st-martins.essex.sch.uk)

## **ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS**

Anonymous complaints are not normally investigated. However, the HT or EHT, if appropriate, determines whether any anonymous complaint warrants an investigation.

## **TIME SCALES**

A complaint must be raised within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. Complaints made outside of this time-frame are considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

DET and its Schools do the utmost to adhere to timescales laid out in this procedure. However, if it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines detailed, a complainant is advised and provided with an explanation. Revised timescales are agreed with a complainant.

## **COMPLAINTS RECEIVED OUTSIDE OF TERM TIME**

Complaints made outside of term time are deemed to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## **THE IMPACT OF OTHER INVESTIGATIONS ON THIS COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example, the police, LA safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact on DET's ability to adhere to the timescales within this Policy and Procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, complainants are informed of the proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against DET in relation to his/her complaint, DET considers whether to suspend the Complaints Procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

## **RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

At each stage in the procedure, DET seeks to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, DET acknowledges that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, a complainant may be offered one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that every effort will be made to ensure that the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review School policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

## **WITHDRAWAL OF A COMPLAINT**

If a complainant wants to withdraw his/her complaint, he/she is asked to confirm this in writing.

## **THE FOUR STAGES OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **STAGE 1 – INFORMAL COMPLAINTS**

It is hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis.

Concerns should be raised with the relevant member of staff. Complainants should not approach Local Governors/Trustees to raise concerns or complaints. Local Governors and Trustees have no power to act on an individual basis and it may prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 3 of the procedure.

Typically, complaints and concerns are discussed at the time that they are raised. Should further

investigation be required, the appropriate person investigating the complaint ordinarily discusses the outcome of the investigation with the complainant as soon as practicable or, if requested by the complainant, provides an informal written response, i.e. by email, within five school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

## **STAGE 2 – FORMAL COMPLAINTS**

Formal complaints must be made to the HT (unless the complaint is about the HT), via the relevant School Office\* and within ten school days of receiving the outcome of the Stage 1 process. This should be done in writing. For ease of use, a template complaint form is included as Appendix 1 to this document.

Requests to move to Stage 2 of the process made outside of these timelines will not be considered.

The HT must record the date the complaint is received and must acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (by either letter or email) within three school days.

Within this response, the HT seeks to clarify the nature of the complaint, asks what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The HT can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is also appropriate.

*Note: The HT may delegate the investigation to another member of the School's Senior Leadership Team (SLT), but not the decision to be taken.*

During the investigation, the HT (or investigator):

- if necessary, interviews those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keeps a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to his/her investigation.

At the conclusion of his/her investigation and within ten school days of the date of receipt of the complaint, the HT provides a formal written response. The HT can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is also appropriate.

If the HT is unable to meet this deadline, he/she provides the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response details any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provides a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, the response includes details of actions that DET will take to resolve the complaint.

The HT advises the complainant of how to escalate his/her complaint should he/she remain dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2.

Complaints against School staff (except the HT) should be made, in the first instance, to the HT via the relevant School Office\*. All correspondence must be marked as Private and Confidential.



Complaints that involve or are about the HT should be addressed to the EHT, via the relevant School Office\*. All correspondence must be marked as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the EHT should be addressed to the Chair of the TB via the relevant School Office\*. All correspondence must be marked as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual Local Governor or the whole Local School Committee (LSC) should be addressed to the Chair of the TB via the relevant School Office\*. All correspondence must be marked as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of the TB, any individual Trustee or the whole TB should be addressed to the Chair of the Members via the relevant School Office\*. All correspondence must be marked as Private and Confidential.

\*when sending a complaint via email, the relevant email addresses to use for each DET School are as detailed here:

CHS – [chasehigh.school@chasehigh.org](mailto:chasehigh.school@chasehigh.org)

LPS – [office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk](mailto:office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk)

SMS - [enquiries@st-martins.essex.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@st-martins.essex.sch.uk)

### **STAGE 3 – COMPLAINTS PANEL HEARING**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, the complaint can be escalated to Stage 3. Stage 3 involves a panel hearing consisting of, at least, three people, who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member, who is independent of the management and running of the School/DET. This is the final stage of the Complaints Procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Chair of the TB (or to the Vice Chair of the Members if the complaint is about the TB) via the relevant School Office\*, within ten school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response.

Requests to move to Stage 3 of the process made outside of these timelines will not be considered.

\*when sending a complaint via email, the relevant email addresses to use for each DET School are as detailed here:

CHS – [chasehigh.school@chasehigh.org](mailto:chasehigh.school@chasehigh.org)

LPS – [office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk](mailto:office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk)

SMS - [enquiries@st-martins.essex.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@st-martins.essex.sch.uk)

The Chair of the TB (or Vice Chair of the Members) must record the date the complaint is received and must acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (by either letter or email) within three school days.

The Clerk writes to the complainant to inform him/her of the date of the meeting. He/she aims to convene a meeting within 30 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk provides an anticipated date and keeps the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk decides when to hold the meeting. The meeting then proceeds in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

If complaint is;

- about a member of staff, Stage 3 is heard by the EHT, at least, one Trustee and an independent panel member selected by the other panel members.
- about the HT, Stage 3 is heard by, at least, two Trustees and an independent panel member selected by the panel Trustee members.
- about the EHT, Stage 3 is heard by, at least, two Trustees and an independent panel member selected by the panel Trustee members.
- about the entire LSC or members thereof, Stage 3 is heard by, at least, two Trustees and an independent panel member selected by the panel Trustee members.
- about the entire TB or members thereof, Stage 3 is heard by, at least, two Members and an independent panel member selected by the panel Members.

Someone may accompany a complainant to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, neither party is encouraged to bring legal representatives to the panel meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, he/she may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

*Note: Complaints about staff conduct are not generally handled under this Complaints Policy and Procedure. Complainants are advised that any staff conduct complaints are considered under HR staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes are not shared with them.*

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least ten school days before the meeting, the Clerk:

- confirms and notifies the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- requests copies of any further written material to be submitted to the panel, at least, five school days before the meeting.

Any written material is circulated to all parties, at least, five school days before the date of the

meeting. The panel does not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The panel also does not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting is held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent is recorded in any minutes taken.

The panel considers the complaint and the evidence presented. The panel can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the panel:

- decides on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommends changes to the School's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Complaints Panel provides the complainant and School/DET with a full explanation of its decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within five school days.

The letter to the complainant includes details of how to contact ESFA if he/she is dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been handled by DET.

The response details any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provides a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it includes details of actions that DET will take to resolve the complaint.

The panel ensures that those findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, if requested, they are made available for inspection on the School premises.

A written record is kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are 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.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMPLAINTS PANEL**

### **COMPLAINANT**

The complainant receives a more effective response to the complaint if he/she:

- explains the complaint in full as early as possible

- co-operates with the School/DET in seeking a solution to the complaint
- responds promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- asks for assistance as needed
- treats all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrains from publicising the details of his/her complaint on Social Media and respects confidentiality.

## **INVESTIGATING OFFICER**

The Investigating Officer's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
  - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
  - consideration of records and other relevant information
  - analysing information.
- liaising with the complainant and the Complaints Co-ordinator, as appropriate, to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The Investigating Officer should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The person to whom the complaint has been addressed or the Complaints Panel then determines whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicates that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

## **COMPLAINTS CO-ORDINATOR** (individual providing administrative support)

The Complaints Co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, HT, EHT, Chair of the TB, Members, Clerk and appointed members (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the Complaints Procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
  - sharing third party information
  - additional support - this may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person

- keep records.

## **CLERK**

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

- ensure that all people 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)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) 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
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the panel's decision.

## **COMPLAINTS PANEL CHAIR**

The Complaints Panel Chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- 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/young person
- the remit of the panel is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the Data Protection Act 2018 or GDPR. If a new issue arises, it is useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting.
- both the complainant and the School/DET 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 issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the panel is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- he/she liaises with the Clerk (and Complaints Co-ordinator, if the School has one).

## **COMPLAINTS PANEL MEMBER**

Complaints Panel members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so.

- no Trustee or Member may sit on the Complaints Panel if he/she has had prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the School and the complainant.

It is recognised that a complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the Complaints Panel does not find in his/her favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

Many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting.

Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.

- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated. The Complaints Panel should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults. If the child/young person is the complainant, the Complaints Panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent/carer is the complainant, the Complaints Panel should give the parent/carer the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend. However, the parent/carer should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent/carer wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the panel considers is not in the child/young person's interests.
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

## **SERIAL AND UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS**

Whilst it is hoped that this procedure will reduce any dissatisfaction with DET/School, it is acknowledged that there may be rare occasions where a complainant continues to be dissatisfied with DET/School and the outcomes achieved under the Complaints Policy and Procedure. A complainant should try to limit communication with DET/School that relates to a complaint while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent during Stage 2 or 3 of the procedure as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Where a complainant attempts to re-open an issue, which has already been dealt with under the Complaints Policy and Procedure, the Chair of the TB contacts him/her to inform him/her that the matter has already been dealt with and that either that stage of the policy has been exhausted or that the Complaints procedure has been exhausted and the matter is considered closed. Where further correspondence is received on the same matter, this may be considered vexatious and DET/School is under no obligation to further respond to that correspondence.

If the complainant subsequently contacts DET/School again about the same issue, DET/School can choose not to respond. The normal circumstance in which DET/School does not respond is if:

- DET/School has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs, and DET/School position has been clearly set out in writing together with the complainant's options

- the complainant is contacting DET/School repeatedly, but making, substantially, the same points each time
- the complainant refuses to follow the Complaints procedures or insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways that are not in line with this procedure or with good practice
- DET/School reasonably believes the aim of the contact is to cause disruption or inconvenience
- the complainant acts or communicates in an inappropriate way\* towards DET/School staff.

If DET/School decides that it is appropriate to stop responding, the complainant is informed in writing. Whenever possible, the HT or Chair of the TB discusses any concerns with the complainant informally before deciding to stop responding.

DET/School ensures, when making this decision, that complainants making any new complaint are heard, and that DET/School acts reasonably.

\*acting in an inappropriate way may include, but is not limited to:

- using threats to intimidate
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly providing falsified information
- publishing unacceptable information on social media or other public forums

If aggressive or abusive behaviour takes place, the HT writes to the complainant explaining that his/her behaviour is unreasonable and asks him/her to change it. For complainants, who excessively contact DET/School, causing a significant level of disruption, DET/School may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This is reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, DET/School immediately informs the police and communicates actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from a School site.

## **COMPLAINT CAMPAIGNS**

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 DET/Schools), which are all based on the same subject. Depending on the subject in question, DET/Schools may deviate from the procedure set out in this policy and instead:

- send a template response to all complainants and/or
- publish a single response on the DET/School website (as applicable).

## **MONITORING AND STORAGE OF INFORMATION IN RELATION TO COMPLAINTS**

DET records the progress of complaints at Stage 3, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the outcome. The records also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls. This material is treated as confidential and held centrally and is viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or members of the review panel. Records of complaints are kept securely and then disposed of in line with DET's Record Management Policy. Complaint records may be inspected by the Secretary of State or any inspection body.

The TB regularly monitors all complaints that are made, to what stage they progressed and how they were resolved. This enables the TB to identify any emerging patterns, to ensure that similar problems are avoided in the future or to identify if they could have been managed more effectively. The TB does not receive any personal data that is not relevant to the monitoring process.

The Complaints records are logged and managed by the DET Trust Coordinator.

This Policy is reviewed every year. However, should there be any updates from DfE/ESFA, or from lessons learned of complaints received, this Policy is amended accordingly. At each review, the Policy is approved by the TB.

### **NEXT STEPS**

If a complainant believes that the School/DET did not handle a complaint in accordance with the published Complaints Policy and Procedure or it acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of its duties under education law, he/she can contact the DfE/ESFA after completion of Stage 3.

The DfE/ESFA does not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by DET. It considers whether the School/DET has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and whether it has followed [Part 7 of the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

The complainant can refer a complaint to the DfE/ESFA online at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus), by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

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



## **APPENDIX 1 – TEMPLATE COMPLAINT FORM**

Please complete and return to \_\_\_\_\_

(*HT/EHT/Chair of the TB/Member/School Office (delete as appropriate)*), who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your Name:</b>
<b>Pupil's Name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>
<b>Address:</b>  <b>Postcode:</b> <b>Daytime Telephone Number:</b> <b>Evening Telephone Number:</b> <b>Email Address:</b>

**Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the School about it.**

**What actions, if any, have you already taken to try 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:**

**Action taken:**

**Date:**