



One Community Trust

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Author Tracy Robinson (based on WBC Complaints Policy)

Author	TR
Approved by	Trustees
Approval Date	10/10/2022
Version Number	2
Status	Approved
Review Date	Based on WBC Policy – will review when WBC update

CHANGE RECORD FORM

Version	Date of change	Date of release	Changed by	Reason for change
1	20/05/21	17/09/21	TR	New policy
2	30/09/22	12/10/2022	SA	Added Appendix E

Contents:

Scope of this Procedure	3
The Difference Between a Concern and a Complaint.....	3
Timescales	3
Anonymous Complaints.....	3
Serial or Unreasonable Complaints.....	3
How to Raise a Complaint	4
Resolving Complaints.....	5
Withdrawal of a Complaint	5
Informal Complaints.....	5
Formal Stage 1	6
Formal Stage 2	7
Next Steps.....	10
Appendix A: Statutory exceptions to this Complaints Procedure.....	11
Appendix B: Complaints Form	13
Appendix C: Arrangements and Procedure for Governors or Trustees Panel Hearing.....	16
Appendix D: Policy for Managing Serial or Unreasonable Complaints.....	17
Appendix E: Flow charts of stage 1 and stage 2 process.....	19

Scope of this Procedure

1. This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at OCT schools. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint about any facilities or services that the Trust or schools provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), the Trust and schools will use this complaints procedure. Any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes of this will be confidential and will not be shared with the complainant. The scope of this complaints procedure is covered in more detail in Appendix A.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

2. For the purposes of this policy we will make the following distinctions:

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’.

Timescales

3. Complaints 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.

School complaint: The school will consider complaints made outside of this time frame only if Chair of Governors and Headteacher, having taken advice, are of the view that exceptional circumstances apply. Trust complaint: The Trust will consider complaints made outside of this time frame only if the Chair of the Board and CEO, having taken advice, are of the view that exceptional circumstances apply.

4. All time-scales in this procedure refer to school working days, for this school, excluding school holidays, In Service Training (Inset) days and bank holidays.
5. Any complaints made outside of term time will be considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Anonymous complaints

6. Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors (school complaints), CEO or Chair of the Board (Trust complaints), if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Serial or Unreasonable Complaints

7. Where the Trust or school judges a complaint to be unreasonable or where a complainant is making serial complaints or raising issues again that have previously been addressed under the final formal stage of the Trust’s complaints procedure, the procedure outlined at Appendix D may be invoked.

How to Raise a Concern / Complaint

8. A concern / informal complaint can be made initially in person, in writing or by telephone. It may also be made by a third party acting on someone else's behalf, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.
9. School complaint: In the first instance parental concerns should normally be raised with the class teacher or, if the concern is about the class teacher, with a member of the senior leadership team or the Headteacher.

Trust complaint: In the case of concerns about the Trust, contact the CEO via octadmin@onecommunitytrust.co.uk.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint under Formal Stage 1 of this procedure.

10. Complainants should not approach individual governors or Trustees to raise concerns or complaints. Governors and Trustees have no power to act on an individual basis and this may also prevent them from considering a complaint if it reaches Stage 2 of this procedure.
11. School complaint: A formal complaint against a member of school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance to the Headteacher via the school office and should be marked as private and confidential.

Trust complaint: A formal complaint against a member of the Trust staff (except the CEO) should be made in the first instance to the CEO via the Trust office and should be marked as private and confidential.

12. School complaint: A formal complaint that involves or is about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office, and should be marked as private and confidential.

Trust complaint: A formal complaint that involves or is about the CEO should be addressed to the Chair of the Board, via the Trust office, and should be marked as private and confidential.

13. School complaint: A formal complaint about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the clerk to the governing body via the school office and should be marked as private and confidential. The clerk to the governing body will also inform the Trust CEO.

Trust complaint: A formal complaint about the Chair of the Trust Board, Trustees, any individual Trustee or the whole Trust board should be addressed to the clerk to the Trust via the Trust office and should be marked as private and confidential.

14. For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure (Appendix B). Help in completing the form can be accessed via the school or Trust office.
15. In accordance with equalities law, the school or Trust will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. This may include providing information in alternative formats, assisting individuals in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Resolving complaints

16. At each stage in the procedure, the school or Trust will hope to be able to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, it will be acknowledged that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, one or more of the following may be offered:
- an explanation
 - an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
 - an assurance that the school or Trust will try to ensure 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 or Trust policies in light of the complaint
 - an apology

Withdrawal of a Complaint

17. If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, they will be asked to confirm this in writing. Once a complaint has been withdrawn the same issue cannot be raised again. If written confirmation of withdrawal is not received by the school or Trust within seven school days then the matter will be considered closed. The complainant will be informed by letter or email.

Concerns / Informal Complaints

18. It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. The school or Trust aims to take all concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve issues raised as quickly as possible.
19. If an individual has difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, the school or Trust will respect this. In this case the complainant will be referred to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the complainant will be referred to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.
20. The school or Trust would hope and expect to be able to deal with most concerns raised on an informal basis, and a complainant should not raise a formal complaint before discussing their concerns informally with an appropriate member of staff. It is understood, however, that there are occasions when people remain dissatisfied and would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case every attempt will be made to resolve the issue through the formal stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

Formal Stage 1

21. School complaint: Formal complaints must be completed in writing, preferably using the complaints form provided at Appendix B, to the specific school Headteacher, other than in the circumstances referred to in paragraphs 12 and 13.

Trust complaints: Formal complaints must be completed in writing, preferably using the complaints form provided at Appendix B, to the CEO, other than in the circumstances referred to in paragraphs 12 and 13.

22. The Headteacher or CEO will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within five school days.
23. Within this response, the Headteacher or CEO will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Headteacher or CEO can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.
24. School complaint: The Headteacher may delegate any investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but will not delegate the decision about the merits of the complaint.

Trust complaint: The CEO may delegate any investigation to another member of the Trust's leadership team but will not delegate the decision about the merits of the complaint.

25. During an investigation, the Headteacher or CEO (or designated member of staff) will, if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish, and will keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to the investigation. Staff members may be accompanied at these meetings by a colleague or trade union representative if they wish.
26. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Headteacher or CEO will provide a formal written response, within twenty school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.
27. If the Headteacher or CEO is unable to meet this deadline, the complainant will be provided with an update and revised response date.
28. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the Trust or school will take to resolve the complaint.
29. The Headteacher or CEO will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Formal Stage 1.
30. School complaint: If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member or members of the governing body (including the chair and/or vice-chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Formal Stage 1.

Trust complaint: If the complaint is about the CEO, or a member or members of the Trust (including the chair and/or vice-chair), a suitably skilled Trustee will be appointed to complete all the actions at Formal Stage 1.

31. School complaint: Complaints about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office, and should be marked as private and confidential. If the complaint

is about a member or member(s) of the governing body, complaints must be made to the clerk to the governing body, via the school office.

Trust complaint: Complaints about the CEO should be addressed to the Chair of the Board, via the school office, and should be marked as private and confidential. If the complaint is about a member or member(s) of the Trust board, complaints must be made to the clerk to the Trust board, via the Trust office.

32. School complaint: If the complaint is about the Chair, Chair and Vice chair of the governing body or about the majority of the governing body, Formal Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response. (A governor from another OCT school, who has no conflict of interest or prior knowledge of the complaint, is considered independent).

Trust complaint: If the complaint is about the Chair, Chair and Vice chair of the Trust board or about the majority of the Trust board, Formal Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Trust board. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Formal Stage 2

33. School complaint: If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Formal Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Formal Stage 2 – a meeting with a panel comprising of three members, two impartial governors with no prior connection to the complaint and at least one member which is independent of the management of the school in which the complaint sits, will be convened for this purpose. (A governor from another OCT school, who has no conflict of interest or prior knowledge of the complaint, is considered independent). This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

Trust complaint: If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Formal Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Formal Stage 2 – a meeting with a panel comprising of three members, two impartial Trustees with no prior connection to the complaint and at least one member which is independent of the management of the Trust will be convened for this purpose. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

34. School complaint: A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the clerk to the governing body, via the school office, within twenty school days of receipt of the Formal Stage 1 response. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if the clerk to the governing body, having taken appropriate advice, considers that exceptional circumstances apply.

Trust complaint: A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the clerk to the Trust board, via the Trust office, within twenty school days of receipt of the Formal Stage 1 response. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if the clerk to the Trust board, having taken appropriate advice, considers that exceptional circumstances apply.

35. The clerk to the governing body or Trust board will record the date the request to escalate the complaint is received, and acknowledge receipt in writing (either by letter or email) within five school days.

36. The clerk to the governing body or Trust board will aim to convene a meeting of the governors' or Trustees' complaints panel which is within twenty school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed. If the governors' or Trustees' panel appoints someone other than the clerk to minute the complaints hearing, this individual may make the arrangements for the meeting.
37. The complaints panel will comprise at least three members. The complainant will be informed in advance of the meeting of the membership of the panel and asked whether they wish to raise any objections to individual members. If objections are raised the panel will give them reasonable consideration. If the ability of a panel member to give the case a fair hearing is called into question the reasons given will be considered and that panel member may be replaced.
38. School complaint : If there are fewer than two governors available, the clerk to the governing body, or the minute clerk for the hearing, will seek to source additional, independent and impartial governors through another OCT school or through the Warrington Governor and Advisory Support Team, in order to make up the panel.
- Trust complaint: If there are fewer than two Trustees available, the clerk to the board, or the minute clerk for the hearing, will seek to source additional, independent and impartial members through another Trust or school, in order to make up the panel.
- Alternatively, an entirely independent panel may be convened to hear the complaint at Formal Stage 2.
39. If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the clerk to the governing body or Trust board, or the minute clerk for the hearing, will decide when to hold the meeting, in consultation with the panel. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.
40. A suitable venue must be provided for the meeting which includes separate waiting areas for the two parties and refreshments for all involved.
41. At least ten school days before the meeting, the clerk to the governing body or Trust board, or the minute clerk for the hearing, will:
- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring (except where paragraph 39 applies) that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
 - request copies from both parties of any further written material to be submitted to the panel at least five school days before the meeting;
 - request that both parties provide names of any witnesses to be called and the nature of the evidence which they will be providing, at least five days in advance of the meeting. The panel has the discretion not to admit a witness if they do not consider their evidence to be relevant to the complaint.
42. The person representing the school may be accompanied by a member of the Trust team.

43. The complainant may bring someone with them to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. DfE /ESFA guidance July 2020 is that this should not be a legal representative. This companion will not have the right to speak on the complainant's behalf.
44. If a school or Trust employee is called as a witness in a complaints meeting, they may wish to be supported by a representative of their trade union. Any such representative will be present in a supportive capacity only and will not be allowed to speak on the member of staff's behalf.
45. Minutes of the meeting will be taken by the clerk to the governing body or Trust board, or a minute clerk appointed specifically for the hearing by the governors' panel.
46. There will be no audio or visual recording of the proceedings by any party unless a complainant's own disability or individual needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before recordings of meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken. A copy of the minutes of the meeting, once approved by the panel, will be shared with all parties.
47. The panel will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.
48. The panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Formal Stage 1 of the procedure.
49. The meeting will be held in private and proceedings will be treated as confidential.
50. The meeting will follow the process outlined in Appendix C.
51. The panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The panel can:
 - uphold the complaint in whole or in part
 - dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
52. If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the panel will:
 - decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
 - where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's or Trust's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.
53. School complaint: The chair of the panel will provide the complainant and the Headteacher/ Chair of Governors / Trustee (depending on who conducted Formal Stage 1) with a full explanation of the panel's decision, findings and recommendations and the reason(s) for them, in writing, within five school days.

Trust complaint: The chair of the panel will provide the complainant and the CEO / Chair of the Board (depending on who conducted Formal Stage 1) with a full explanation of the panel's decision, findings and recommendations and the reason(s) for them, in writing, within five school days.

The response will also detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and, where appropriate, will include details of actions the school will take to resolve the complaint.

54. School complaint: All written records and data will be kept secure and confidential and made available for inspection, on the school premises, by the Headteacher and the Proprietor (if not the subject of the complaint). Written records will note if the complaint was resolved or proceeded to a panel hearing and any actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint. The only exception to this is where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access.

Trust complaint: All written records and data will be kept secure and confidential and made available for inspection, on the Trust premises, by the CEO and the Proprietor (if not the subject of the complaint). Written records will note if the complaint was resolved or proceeded to a panel hearing and any actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint. The only exception to this is where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access.

55. The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by the school or Trust.

Next Steps

56. School complaint : If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with this complaints procedure or it acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of its duties under education law, in the first instance, request a hearing by Trustees (steps 34 -55). Requests should be made through octadmin@onecommunitytrust.co.uk within 3 school weeks of Stage 2 being concluded.

Trust complaint: If the complainant believes the Trust did not handle their complaint in accordance with this complaints procedure or it acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of its duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Formal Stage 2.

57. The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the school or Trust. They will consider whether the school or Trust has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and whether they have followed [Part 7 of the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)

58. The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe>, 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 A: Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints other than those that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below. As noted below, employees may not use this procedure to raise concerns relating to their employment.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals 	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Warrington Borough Council</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact Children's Safeguarding/Social Work Team on: 01925 443322</p> <p>Outside of office hours: 01925 444400</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through this procedure.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p>

	Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities 	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about the services provided by One Community Trust 	In the first instance: Please contact octadmin@onecommunitytrust.co.uk For Formal complaints please use the complaints form provided in Appendix B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Curriculum – content 	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against the school or Trust, the complaints procedure may be suspended until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Appendix B: Complaints Form

School complaint: Please complete and return to either the school office marked private and confidential for the attention of the Headteacher or Chair of Governors who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Trust complaint: Please complete and return to either the school office marked private and confidential for the attention of the CEO or Chair of the Board who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:

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

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:

Appendix C: Arrangements and Procedure for Governors or Trustees Panel Hearing

1. The panel will agree a chair from amongst their number.
2. Although this procedure may appear formal, the hearing should be conducted in as informal a way as possible, and the chair of the panel should make every effort to make all parties feel comfortable.
3. The chair of the panel will introduce all the parties present and explain the procedure to be followed, and that every effort will be made to keep the process as informal as possible.
4. The complainant will outline his/her complaint and explain why s/he is dissatisfied with the school's or Trust's response at Formal Stage 1. The complainant may call any witnesses in support of his/her complaint who will attend the meeting only for the time that they are providing information, and may be questioned by all parties.
5. The panel/ investigator will have the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant through the chair.
6. The Investigator from Stage 1 will explain their involvement in the complaint and the reasons for their decisions at the first formal stage. Any witnesses called in support of his/her statement will attend the meeting only for the time that they are providing information, and may be questioned by all parties.
7. The complainant and members of the panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Investigator.
8. Both parties will be given the opportunity to sum up their statements, ending with the complainant. No new material may be introduced at this stage.
9. The panel may decide to adjourn the hearing pending further investigation at any stage, if this seems necessary.
10. Both parties will leave the meeting and the panel will consider the information that has been put to them. The clerk will remain for this part of the meeting in order to clarify anything if necessary, but the panel's deliberations will not be minuted.
11. School complaint: The panel must reach a unanimous or majority decision as to whether or not to uphold the complaint wholly or in part, and what action (if any) the school needs to take to resolve the complaint. This may include referring the matter to another formal process, including an offer of a hearing by three independent Trustees, whether in relation to a complaint against a governor or a member of the school staff. Normally the panel will reach a decision at this point but they may feel the need to take further advice. Where this is the case they should endeavour to reach a decision as soon as possible.
12. The panel will communicate their response to both parties in writing as soon as possible but, in any case, within five working days of reaching their decision.

Appendix D: Policy for Managing Serial or Unreasonable Complaints

1. One Community Trust is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our schools. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.
2. This Trust and its schools defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school or Trust, 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 co-operate 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
 - repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
 - refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
 - seeks an unrealistic outcome
 - 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
 - uses threats to intimidate
 - uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence

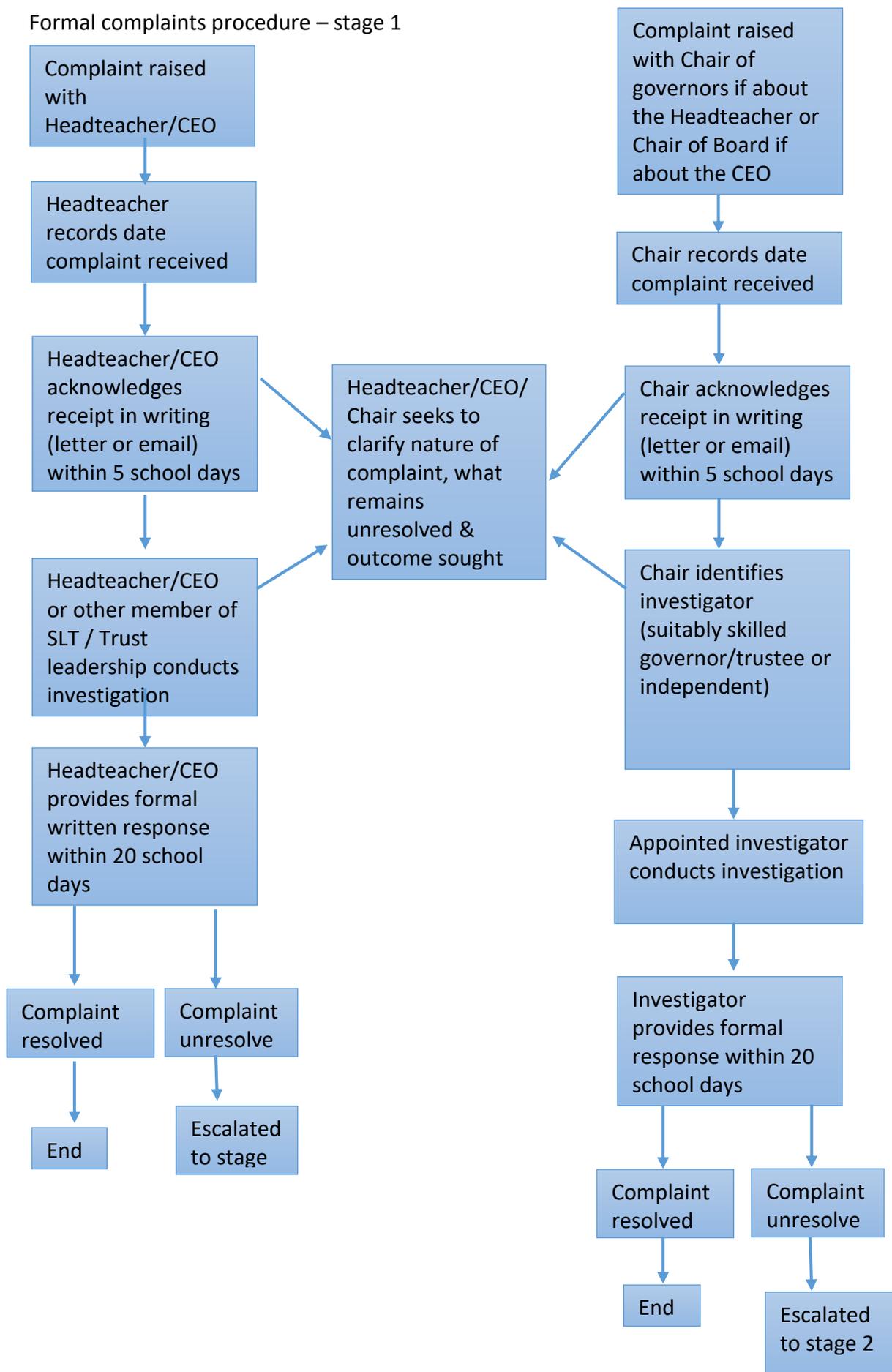
- knowingly provides falsified information
 - publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.
3. Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school or Trust that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.
 4. School complaint: Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

Trust complaint: Whenever possible, the CEO or Chair of the Board will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

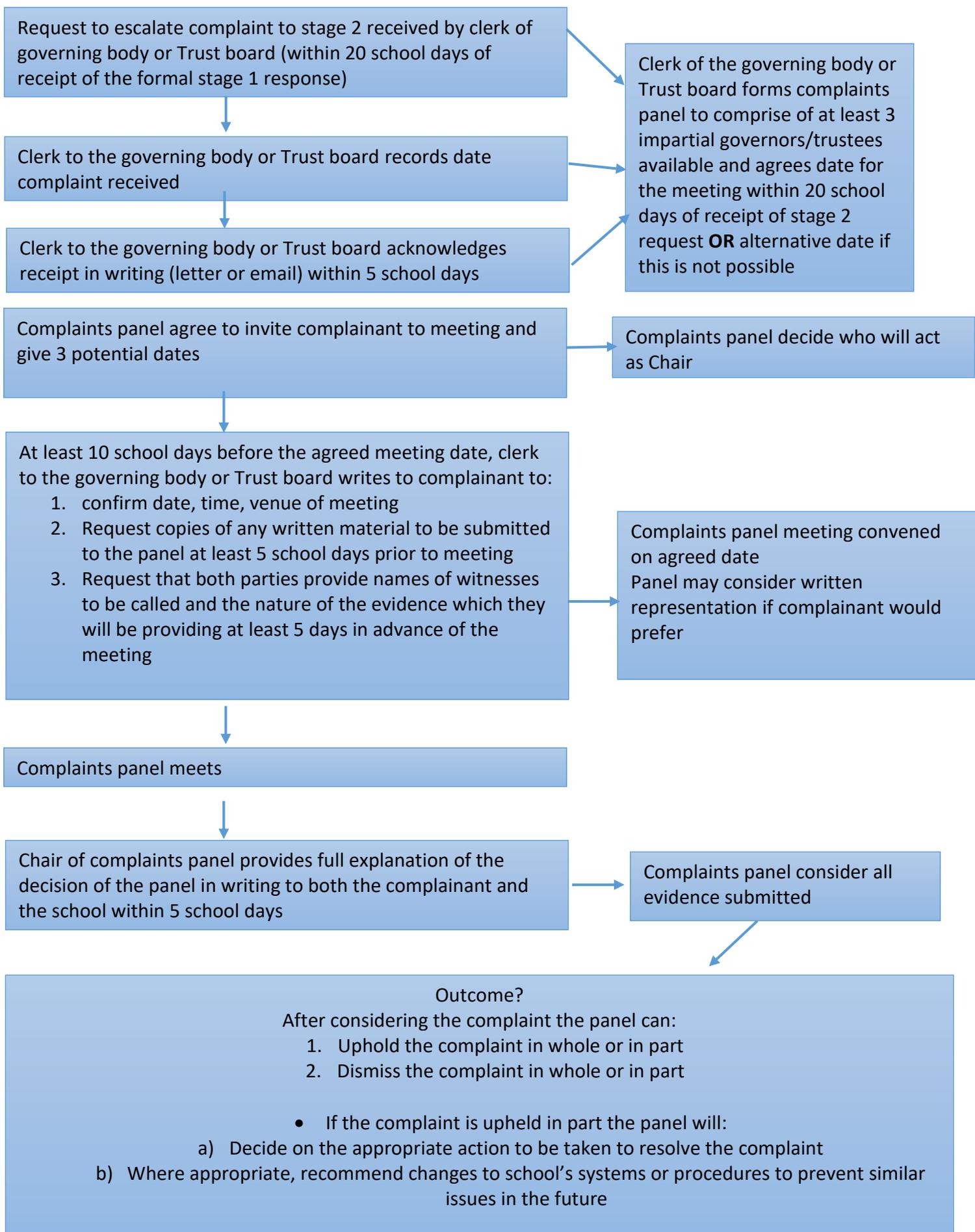
5. If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher or CEO will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the school or Trust causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.
6. In response to any incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police, where appropriate, and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the school or Trust premises.

Appendix E: Flow charts of stage 1 and stage 2 process

Formal complaints procedure – stage 1



Formal Complaints Procedure – Stage 2





Trust board

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints policy and procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, in the first instance, they should request a hearing by Trustees.

Department for Education

If the complainant believes the school/Trust did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints policy and procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the DfE after they have completed stage 2.

The DfE will not normally investigate the substance of the complaint or overturn decisions made by the school/Trust. The DfE will consider whether the school/Trust has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected to the complaint.

