

# Community Schools Alliance Trust

## Complaints and Concerns Policy

Approved by Trustees: September 2015  
October 2017

Next Review Date: October 2019



Community Schools  
Alliance Trust

## 1. General Principles

Community Schools Alliance Trust places great value on its strong partnership with parents. We recognize that from time to time concerns or complaints may arise and it is our aim to work with all parties involved towards a satisfactory resolution.

The aim of this procedure is to enable those involved to reach a resolution of their concerns by providing a transparent and easily understood process for handling complaints. We will do this by:

- Attempting to resolve concerns through informal discussions at the earliest stage
- Providing named contacts and a timescale for a response to be made by the academy
- Focusing on resolving complaints rather than apportioning blame
- Promoting confidentiality and discretion
- Being forthright in dealing with vexatious, abusive and malicious complaints

All complaints, regardless of the subject matter, will first of all be reviewed by the Complaints Co-ordinator (this is normally the Headteacher) to ensure that the appropriate staff in the academy are notified. If after reviewing the nature of your complaint it is decided that an alternative statutory procedure applies then we will inform you. Examples of such complaints include those relating to exclusions or admissions.

## 2. How to report a complaint

### Stage 1 - Informal concerns or complaints

Concerns or complaints should initially be discussed informally with the relevant member of staff, for example the class teacher or Phase Leader, with a view to resolving the issue. There is no need at this stage for the complaint to be made in writing, however the member of staff will make a note of any agreed actions using the Parent consultation form (Annex A) or The Record of concern form (Annex B) and this will be retained as a record.

If the complaint has already been discussed with the member of staff, or that would be inappropriate, a senior leader (this could be the Headteacher or another senior person) will discuss the complaint again with you with a view to seeking to resolve the matter informally.

**We would expect the vast majority of concerns or complaints to be resolved at this early stage.**

In the unusual event that your complaint remains unresolved after discussions with the appropriate member of staff then you may put your complaint in writing and this will be handled under Stage 2.

### Stage 2 - Formal Complaint Investigation

If your complaint cannot be resolved informally then you will be given the opportunity to put it formally in writing using a drafted letter or the Stage 2 Complaint Form (Annex C). You will need to send this to the Complaints Co-ordinator named on the front page of this document **within 10 school days** of the conclusion of Stage 1.

We will then appoint an appropriate person to investigate your complaint further (The Investigating Officer). For more information on who will be involved at each stage of a complain please see the Managements Process table at Annex D

Once appointed the Investigating Officer will:

- Acknowledge your complaint **within 5 school days**.
- Investigate the complaint and then decide how best to resolve it within a further **10 school days**.
- Provide a written response to you outlining how the investigation was conducted and the outcome of

the complaint, as well as offering you an opportunity to meet and discuss the outcome if appropriate. This will normally be **within 5 school days** of completing the investigation. Advise you on the next steps if after this review your complaint has not been resolved which will be covered under Stage 3.

### **Stage 3 - Formal Complaint Panel**

If your complaint has not been resolved at Stage 2 then you may write **within 10 school days** of the notification of the Stage 2 outcome to the Complaints Co-ordinator requesting a Formal Complaints Panel and explaining why you feel that your complaint has not been fully addressed at Stage 2. You should do this using the Stage 3 Complaints form (Annex E).

We will acknowledge your request **within 5 school days** and inform you of the arrangements for the Formal Complaint Panel.

A meeting of the Panel will be convened normally **within 20 school days** of your request.

The Panel will consider the following:

- any appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- whether to dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- whether to uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- whether changes to the academy procedures in the future may be necessary.

The Panel will consist of at least three people who are not directly involved in the matter detailed in the complaint and one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school. The Panel members will take into account whether the complaint has been handled properly and reasonably in accordance with this procedure and whether the Stage 2 outcome was reasonable and appropriate.

You will normally be informed of the outcome at the end of the Formal Panel and this will be confirmed in writing within 7 school days. The decision of the Panel is Final.

### **3. Taking your complaint further**

Although the decision of the Panel is final under this procedure if you consider that the Academy Trust or its representatives is proposing to act unreasonably, or has failed to carry out its statutory duties then you may contact the Education Funding Agency (EFA) via the [schools complaints form](#).

### **4. Expectations under this procedure**

When you bring a complaint to us under this procedure you may expect the academy to:

- Take your complaint seriously
- Treat you with courtesy and respect
  - Deal with it with discretion and confidentiality (if the matter relates to the safety and well-being of a child then we reserve the right to share details with other agencies)
- Offer you the opportunity to be accompanied by a friend, adviser or colleague
- Meet the timescales set unless there is good reasons to extend these – in which case you will be informed
- Seek and offer resolution at all stages
  - Inform you of the action taken to resolve your complaint and of any measures to ensure that a similar complaint does not arise in the future

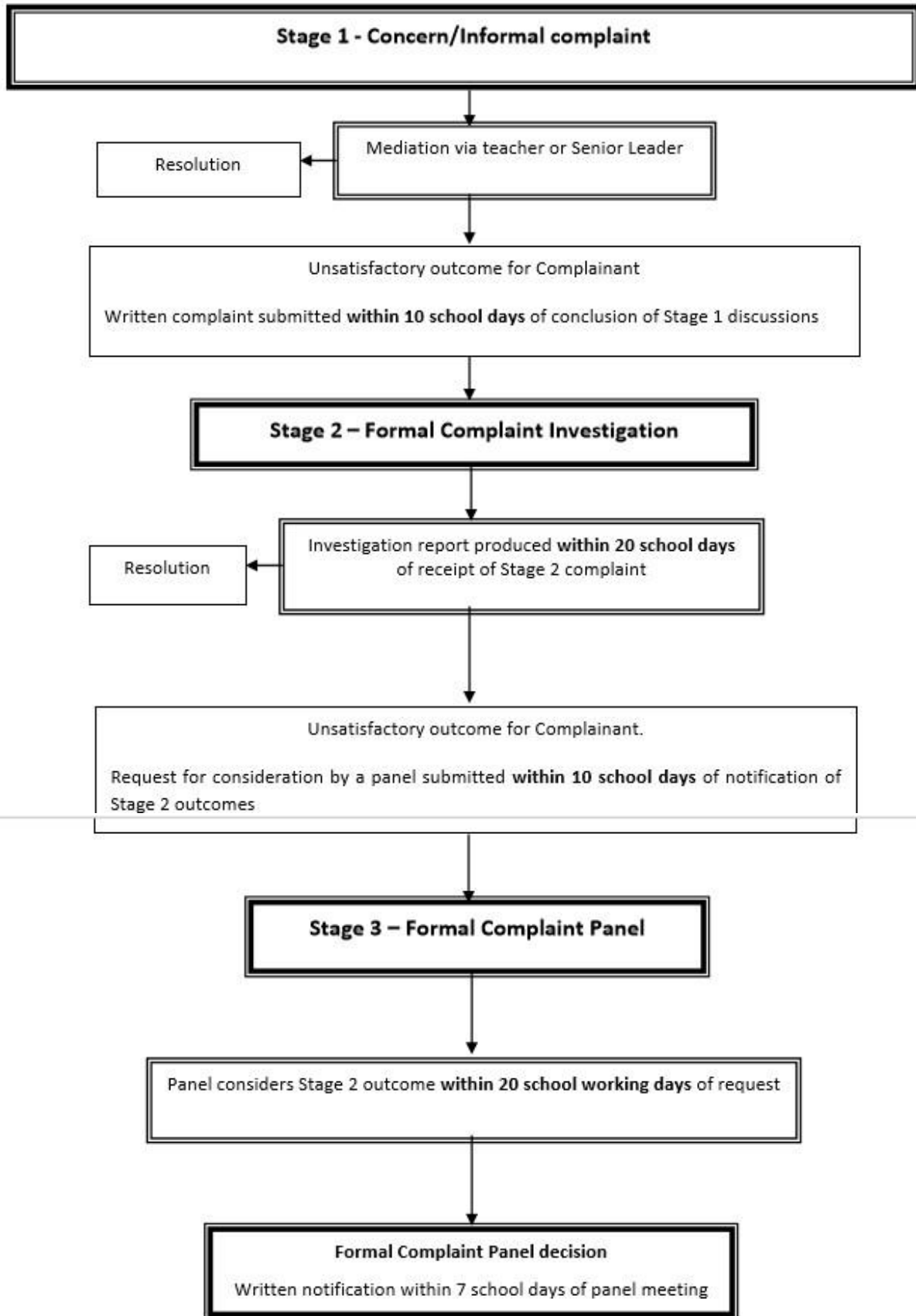
In turn we expect that:

- Our staff will be treated with respect
  - You will be mindful of the need to keep information relating to children confidential in the interests of all our students
  - You will enter into the procedure in the spirit of seeking resolution
  - If we consider that disciplinary action may be necessary against our staff then we will deal with this under our disciplinary procedure and in confidence

In the unlikely event that anyone bringing a complaint is considered by the Headteacher to be acting unreasonably or that the complaint is malicious or

vexatious then the Headteacher will intervene and appropriate restrictions may be imposed.

## GENERAL COMPLAINTS PROCESS



**Annex A**

## Parental communication Form

## Stage 1 - Initial Record of concern/complaint

<b>School</b>	
<b>Name of Complainant</b>	
<b>Name of Child</b>	
<b>Date of Contact with School</b>	
<b>Nature of concern</b>	
<b>Actions Taken</b>	
<i>Signature</i>	<b>Date</b>



**Stage 2 - Complainant Form**

Please complete and return to the Complaints Co-ordinator who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name:</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil:</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b>
<b>Telephone number:</b>
<b>Email:</b>
<b>Please give details of your complaint</b>
<b>What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.</b> (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?
<b>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</b>

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

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Official use**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**By who:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**

**Stage 3 - Complainant Form**

Please complete and return to the Complaints Co-ordinator who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name:</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil:</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b>
<b>Telephone number:</b>
<b>Email:</b>
<b>Please confirm that you are requesting that your complaint be taken to a governor's panel.</b>
<b>Please provide details of why you were dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation.</b>
<b>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</b>
<b>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.</b>

<b>Signature:</b>  <b>Date:</b>
<b><u>Official use</u></b> <b>Date acknowledgement sent:</b>  <b>By who:</b>  <b>Complaint referred to:</b>  <b>Date:</b>

## Management of stages within the Complaints Procedure

Complaint relates to	Stage 1: Informal	Stage 2: Formal Complaint Investigation  Investigating Officer	Stage 3:  Formal Complaint Panel
School procedure, Pupils, parents or staff (other than the Headteacher)	The appropriate member of staff	The Headteacher or other Senior Manager	Panel appointed by the Chair of Governors and including one member independent from the running and management of the academy
The Headteacher	The Headteacher	The Chair of Governors or another nominated non- staff Governor	Panel appointed by the Vice Chair of Governors. Panel to include a Trust Director and one member independent from the running and management of the academy
A Governor or Governors (other than the Chair of Governors)	The Chair of Governors	Another nominated non- staff Governor	Panel appointed by the Vice Chair of Governors or a Trust Director. Panel to include one member independent from the running and management of the academy
The Chair of Governors (or a group of Governors including the Chair of Governors)	The Vice Chair of Governors or a Trust Director	Another nominated non- staff Governor or Trust Director	Panel appointed by the Vice Chair of Governors or a Trust Director. Panel to include one member independent from the running and management of the academy
The whole body of Governors		Chair of the Academy Trust	<b><i>A panel appointed by the Vice Chair of the Academy Trust. Panel to include one member independent from the running and management of the academy</i></b>

**Note:** Any Governors or Directors involved in any of the previous management stages will not be part of the Stage 3 panel.

## Policy Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1	September 2015	First publication- Approved by the Trustees	
1.1	September 2017	Reviewed and sent to Trustees for approval	