



MOSAIC
SCHOOLS LEARNING TRUST

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

All schools in Mosaic Schools Learning Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Staff Responsible:	Trust Governance Manager
Date of Review:	September 2024
Date of Next Review:	September 2026

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Change
September 2024	New Policy for Mosaic based on CSAT Complaints Handling Policy

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1. Aims

All schools in the Mosaic Learning Trust work hard to establish and maintain good relationships with everyone in the school communities. We recognise however that, occasionally, expectations are not met, and that there will be issues which need to be resolved. This policy sets out our processes and procedures for dealing with any concerns or complaints which are raised.

Our schools aim to meet their statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of pupils at the school, and others.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial.
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or Complaints Review Panel, where necessary.
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response.
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality.
- Treat complainants with respect.
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process.
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes.

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed. The schools will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.

To support this, we will ensure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on each of the schools' websites through a link to the Trust website where this policy is published.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that any complaint is handled sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level, and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is:

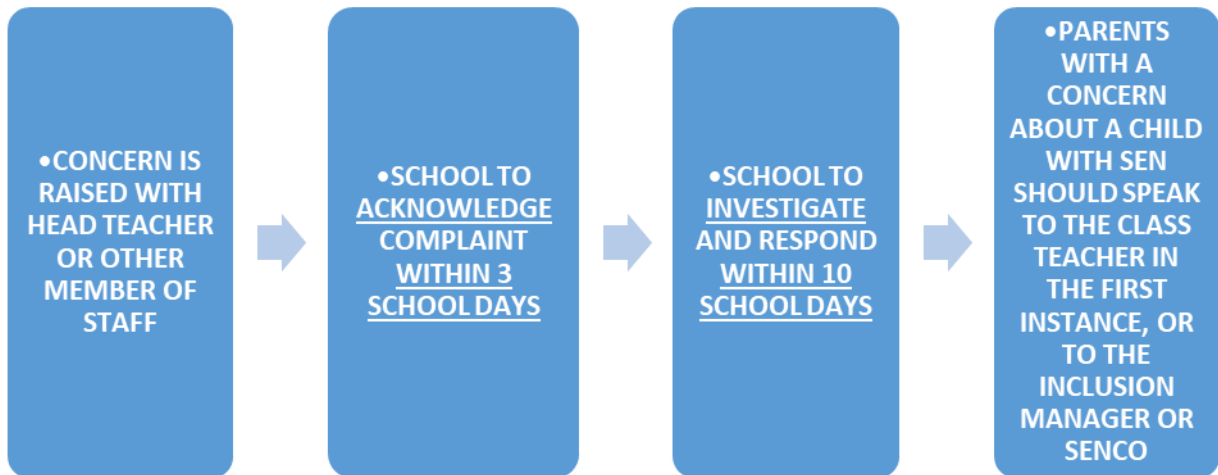
- Good for relationships.
- Good educational practice.
- Good business practice.

2. Summary of Complaints Process

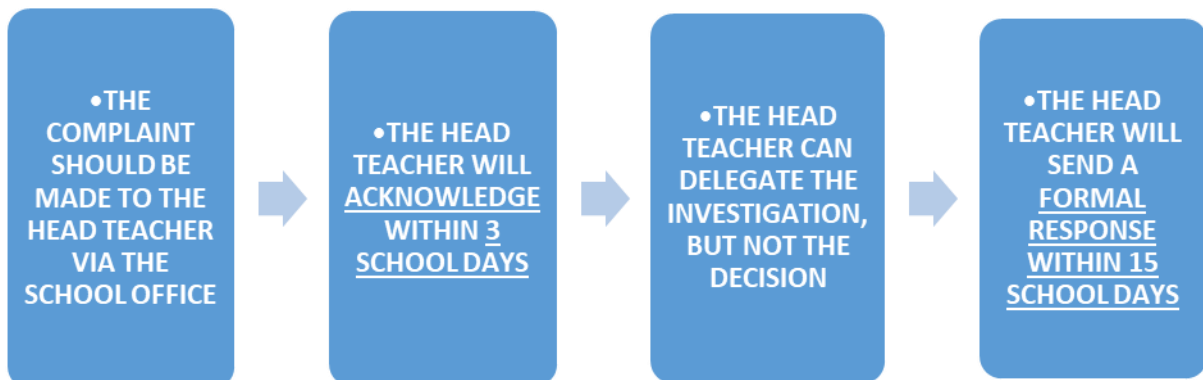
COMPLAINTS HANDLING QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

(N.B. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED OUTSIDE TERM TIME WILL BE TREATED AS IF THEY WERE RECEIVED ON THE FIRST DAY BACK AFTER THE HOLIDAY)

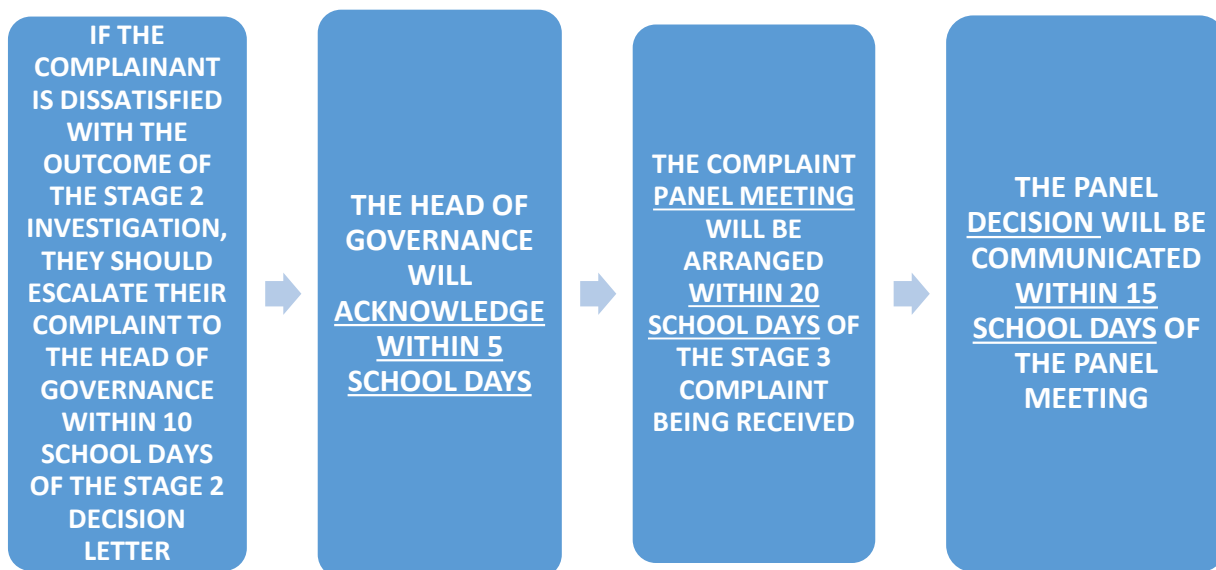
STAGE 1 INFORMAL (NOT ABOUT THE HEAD TEACHER – SEE BELOW)



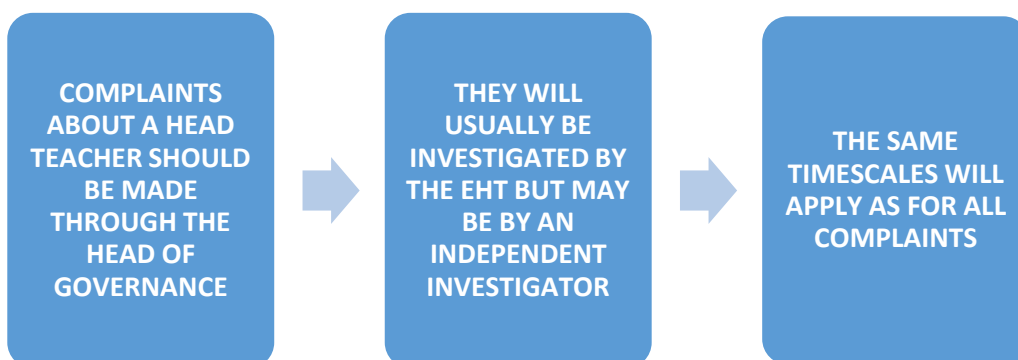
STAGE 2 – FORMAL (NOT ABOUT THE HEAD TEACHER – SEE BELOW)



Stage 3 COMPLAINTS PANEL



COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE HEADTEACHER



3. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to [the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of pupils at the school. 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).

In addition, it addresses duties set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework](#) with regards to dealing with complaints about the schools' fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Who can make a Complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at our schools. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with SEN about the school's support are within the scope of this policy. Such complaints should first be made to the Inclusion Manager or SENCO; they will then be referred to this complaints policy. The Schools' SEN policies and information reports include information about the rights of parents of pupils with disabilities who believe that one of our schools has discriminated against their child.

5. Third Party Providers

If your complaint relates to the service provided by a third party on school premises, for example, an after-school club run by an outside agency, you should use the complaints procedure of the external provider and not this procedure. Contact details of outside providers can be obtained from the school offices should you require them.

6. Multiple Complaints Regarding the Same Incident

Occasionally, we may receive a number of complaints all based on the same subject. Where this happens, we will consider whether they should be dealt with as a single complaint or as separate complaints. Generally, where the complaints are based on the same facts and circumstances, they will all be dealt with together, using the process below. When managing multiple complaints based on the same subject together, we may consider sending a single response to all complainants.

7. The Difference between a Concern and a Complaint

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint.

A **concern** is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”.

A **complaint** is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. We take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Head Teacher will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Head Teacher will refer you to another staff member. That 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.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, we will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints' procedure.

8. How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing, by email or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. Concerns should usually be addressed to the class teacher or to the Head Teacher at the school as appropriate. We would expect issues to have been raised as concerns in the first instance in order to allow the school involved to consider them. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, then they might wish to raise a formal complaint.

Complaints against school staff (except the Head Teacher) should be made in the first instance to the Head Teacher of the school marked as Private and Confidential.

Complaints against Mosaic Central staff (except the CEO or an Executive Head Teacher) should be made in the first instance to the Head of Governance at headofgovernance@mslt.org.uk. Please mark as Private and Confidential.

Complaints against the Head Teacher should be addressed to the Head of Governance either via the School Office or via email at headofgovernance@mslt.org.uk. Please mark it as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Head of Governance at headofgovernance@mslt.org.uk. Please mark it as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), an Executive Head Teacher or a Trustee of the Trust, should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees via the Head of Governance headofgovernance@mslt.org.uk. Please mark it as Private and Confidential. If a formal complaint form is received about the Chair, the complaint will be referred to the Vice Chair for investigation. If a complainant wishes to complain directly about the trust, then the complaint should be addressed to the CEO to be investigated.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this policy. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask a third-party organisation for example the Citizens Advice Bureau to help you. In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in

alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

9. Anonymous and/or Vexatious Complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation. This may involve recording conversations in case any more substantive complaints come to light. Whilst whistleblowing is an important principle and covered in a separate policy, it might be the case that little can be done, especially but not limited to where accompanying information or evidence is not included. We are not bound to reply to anonymous complaints.

Whether anonymous or not, we receive, albeit rarely, some complaints which are vexatious. Examples include:

- Complaints without substance but are deliberately designed to discredit or waste Trust resources.
- Social media driven disagreements.
- Agendas which are nothing to do with Trust matters.

In these cases, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation. This may involve recording conversations in case any more substantive complaints come to light. A reply will be given as per this policy and follows guidance in section 17. below.

10. Time Scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame only if exceptional circumstances apply.

11. Complaints Received Outside Term Time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period. This will apply for all stages of the Complaints process.

12. Scope of this Complaints Policy

This policy covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by any of our schools, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to Contact
<p>Admissions to schools</p> <p>Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</p>	<p>Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process – either through the appeals process or via the Local Authority. Please see details of the Admissions Appeal process on our schools’ websites.</p> <p>Concerns regarding statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs should be raised with the Local Authority.</p>
<p>Matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation</p>	<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 the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).</p> <p>London Borough of Bromley LADO – Gemma Taylor 0208 461 7775 or 0208 313 4325. London Borough of Bromley Call children’s services (Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5pm): 020 8461 7373 / 7379</p> <p>Kent LADO - Ali Watling County LADO Manager kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk 03000 410888</p>
<p>Exclusion of children from school*</p>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusions can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-disciplineexclusions/exclusions.</p> <p><i>*Complaints about the application of a school’s Behaviour Policy can be made through the Trust’s Complaints Handling Policy.</i></p>

Whistleblowing (for other regulatory or financial malpractice)	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. Please see the Trust website for details:</p> <p>https://www.mosaicschoolslearningtrust.org/mslt-policies</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 directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contact-dfe</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about one of our schools should complain through the Trust’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>
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Trust’s internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Trust’s internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <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.</p>

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 policy or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale. If a complainant commences legal action against our one of our schools or the Trust in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

13. Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure, we want to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- An explanation.
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- An assurance that we 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 policies in light of the complaint.
- An apology.

14. Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

15. Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

We also intend to address complaints as quickly as possible. To achieve this, realistic and reasonable time limits will be set for each action within each stage. Where further investigations are necessary, new time limits will be set, and the complainant will be sent details of the new deadline with an explanation for the delay.

Complaints about the fulfilment of early years requirements

We will investigate all written complaints relating to a school's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, and notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint. The school will keep a record of the complaint (see section 9) and make this available to Ofsted on request.

Parents and carers can notify Ofsted if they believe that a school is not meeting Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, by calling 0300 123 4234 or 0300 123 4666, or by emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. An online contact form is also available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted#org-contacts>.

We will notify parents and carers if we become aware that the school is to be inspected by Ofsted. We will also supply a copy of the inspection report to parents and carers of children attending the setting on a regular basis.

16. Stages of a complaint (not complaints against the Head Teacher or a governor)

Stage 1: informal Concerns

The school will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

The complainant should raise the concern as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the Head Teacher, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office. Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 3 of the procedure

The school will acknowledge informal concerns within 3 school days, and investigate and provide a response within 10 school days.

The informal stage will involve a meeting between the complainant and the class teacher or the subject of the informal concern, if appropriate (not where the subject is a pupil). If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with the Senior Leadership Team. At this stage, concerns raised directly to the Head Teacher will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher or a senior leader unless the Head Teacher deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, it may be escalated to a formal complaint.

Arrangements for handling concerns from parents of children with SEND.

In the first instance, parents are encouraged to speak with their child's class teacher if they have any concerns. If, however parents feel that their issues have not been resolved then they should make an appointment with the Inclusions Manager. If the matter remains unresolved then parents should follow the procedure set out below.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

For all Complaints that are not about a Head Teacher or member of the Local Governing Body

Formal complaints must be made to the Head Teacher (unless they are about the Head Teacher – see below) via the school office. This may be done in person or in writing.

The Head Teacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 3 school days.

Within this response, the Head Teacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Head Teacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The Head Teacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the Head Teacher (or investigator) will:

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

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Head Teacher will provide a formal written response within 15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the Head Teacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date. 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 we will take to resolve the complaint.

In their response, the Head Teacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.

There may be occasions when a complaint is made which is not about the Head Teacher, but where the Head Teacher has been directly involved in a situation, and so may not be seen as being totally impartial. In this case, the Head Teacher can direct that another member of staff of suitable seniority undertakes the investigation and makes the final decision. That investigator will follow the process and timescales as set out above.

For complaints that are about the Head Teacher or a member of the Governing Body

If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, this will be referred to an Executive Head Teacher (EHT) by the Trust Governance Manager, who will investigate and will complete all the actions at Stage 2. If the EHTs have been directly involved in the complaint previously and have knowledge of it, or if there is not an EHT available to complete the investigation within the required timescales, then the matter will be referred to an independent investigator appointed by the Trust. The Chair of Governors will always be informed that a complaint has been received and they will receive a copy of the outcome letter at the end of stage 2 if the matter has been resolved.

If the complaint is about a member of the Governing Body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), an independent investigator will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2.

Complaints about the Head Teacher or member of the Governing Body must be made through the Head of Governance at headofgovernance@mslt.org.uk.

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair; or
- The entire governing body; or
- The majority of the governing body

Stage 2 will be escalated to the Board of Trustees.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response and wishes to proceed to the next stage of this procedure, they should inform the Trust Governance Manager in writing within 10 school days.

Stage 3: Complaints Review Panel Hearing

This is the final stage of the Complaints Policy. Complaints will be escalated to the Complaints Review Panel hearing stage if the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint at the second, formal, stage. The panel will consist of at least three people.

Stage 3 Panel Membership

For most Stage 3 Complaints Panels:

- One member of the Panel will be a school Governor who is not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and has no detailed knowledge of it.
- One member of the panel will be a Trustee who is not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and has no detailed knowledge of it.
- One panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school against which the complaint has been made.

However, if the complaint is:

- Jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair; or
- The entire governing body; or
- The majority of the governing body

Then the Stage 3 Panel will be heard by a panel of two Trustees and an independent panel member.

Stage 3 Panel Training

All members of a Complaints panel must have undertaken appropriate training for the role. This training can be accessed through the NGA website www.nga.org.uk

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Neither party will be permitted to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. Parents may be asked to confirm that they will not attend the Stage 3 Complaints Panel with legal representation. Mobile phones will not be allowed in the panel hearing and no electronic recording devices may be used, unless this is needed as a reasonable adjustment, and has been agreed with all attendees beforehand.

There may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate for a staff member. For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under (Human Resources) staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

The Head Teacher will always attend a Stage 3 Complaints Panel to represent the school. In exceptional circumstances, a Deputy Head Teacher could attend in the Head Teacher's place. The individual who conducted the Stage 2 investigation may be invited to attend the Stage 3 Complaints Panel.

If complainants seek to invoke Stage Three following failure to reach an earlier resolution and where dissatisfied with the decision in respect of their formal complaint, they may, in writing addressed to the Head of Governance, headofgovernance@mslt.org.uk, request that their complaint is further considered by an independent Complaints Review Panel set up for this purpose. This request must be made within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response. Requests received outside this time frame will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Within this request, the complainant should explain why:

- 1) they are not satisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, and
- 2) they are escalating it to Stage 3.

The Trust Governance Manager will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

The Trust Governance Manager will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Trust Governance Manager will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Trust Governance Manager will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties. Other than in this express situation, the complainant must be allowed to attend the Complaints Review Panel and be accompanied by a friend or family member if they wish, although it is not permissible for the complainant to bring a legal representative.

Timings

At least 7 school days before the meeting, the Trust Governance Manager will:

- confirm and notify the complainant and the school of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant and school is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.

- circulate to all parties the submitted evidence pack from the parent and the school.

The committee will not accept as evidence recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded. The Stage 3 Complaints Panel will also 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 will be held in private and face to face. A virtual (online) Stage 3 Complaints Panel will only be considered if the parent, Head Teacher or a Panel Member has a disability or a special set of circumstances that means that they cannot meet safely face to face. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not 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 will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The Stage 3 Complaints Panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee 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 committee will:

- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Stage 3 Complaints Panel in conjunction with the Trust Governance Manager will provide a written response to the complainant and the school with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it within 15 school days. The letter will include details of how to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and where appropriate, it will include details of actions the school will take to resolve the complaint. The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor (Trust) and the Head Teacher.

The Trust Governance Manager will minute both the panel meeting, and the panel's deliberations after the meeting. Minutes from the Stage 3 Panel are the Panel's own notes of the proceedings. Minutes are not intended to be a verbatim record of the meeting. Rather, they are intended to capture the main discussion points, questions, answers and actions. Once agreed by the Stage 3 panel members and its Chair, minutes **will not** be changed, unless

personal data is recorded incorrectly. Stage 3 Panel minutes are not sent to parents or the school for amendment or comment in advance of them being agreed.

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

17. Referring complaints on completion of the school's procedure

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to the ESFA. The ESFA will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the school. The ESFA will not overturn a school's decision about a complaint. However, it will look into:

- Whether there was undue delay, or the school did not comply with its own complaints procedure
- Whether the school was in breach of its funding agreement with the secretary of state
- Whether the school has failed to comply with any other legal obligation

If the school did not deal with the complaint properly, it will be asked to re-investigate the complaint. If the school's complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the ESFA online at: 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

18. Managing serial and persistent complaints

We are 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 any of our schools or the Trust. 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. Specifically we will not tolerate shouting at our staff or threats of violence and our staff are instructed in these circumstances to end the conversation and report the matter to the Head Teacher.

Complainants should try to limit communication relating to their complaint while the complaint is being progressed. It can become confusing if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

There may be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaint procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If a complainant tries to re-open the same issue, they will be informed that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.

If the complainant makes contact again on the same issue, the correspondence may then be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and we may choose not to respond. We will not mark a complaint as 'serial' before the complainant has completed the procedure.

We may receive complaints that we consider to be vexatious. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint as:

- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
- insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value

We will not refuse to accept further correspondence or complaints from an individual we have had repeat or excessive contact with. The application of a 'serial or persistent' marking will be against the subject or complaint itself rather than the complainant.

Whenever possible, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before deeming that the conduct is "unreasonable". If the behaviour continues, the Head Teacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively make contact causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication, for example restricting the individual to a single point of contact via an email address and limiting the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

Once the school has decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, the complainant will be informed in writing, either by letter or email. The school will ensure when making this decision that complainants making any new complaint are heard, and that the school acts reasonably.

19. Record-keeping

The school will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and held centrally, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the Complaints Review Panel.

This is except where the Secretary of State (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept for 7 years.

20. Learning lessons

The Local Governing Body will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Head Teacher/SLT where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

21. Monitoring arrangements

The Board of Trustees will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly. They will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in section 10.

The complaints records are logged and managed by the Head Teacher.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years. At each review, the policy will be approved by the Mosaic Board of Trustees.

22. Links with other policies

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures
- Admissions policy
- Exclusions policy
- Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- SEN policy and information report
- Whistleblowing Policy

Appendix 1 - Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the appropriate person as described in the stages of the policy. This will be acknowledged and an explanation given about the action to 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: Email address:
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 whom:
Complaint referred to:
Action taken:
Date:

