


St George's School

	Complaints Procedure	
	Committee: Full Governing Board	
	Co-ordinator : Mr P Storrie	
	Last Reviewed : Autumn 2023	Next Review : Autumn 2024
	Policy links to : Accessibility Plan 2022 to 2024, SEND Information Report	

ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE STATEMENT

HOW TO COMMENT OR COMPLAIN

Each day we make many decisions and try hard to do our best for all our pupils. Your comments – either positive or negative – are helpful for future planning. You may want to talk to us about a particular aspect of St George's, which is not a complaint. Many parents pass on their ideas and thoughts informally to staff and we value their support. There are many opportunities for you to do this.

However, if you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, as explained in the school prospectus and information given to you when your child joined the school, you have the right to complain.

This procedure applies to all concerns and complaints other than regarding

- School admissions
- Matters likely to require a child protection investigation
- Statutory assessments for special educational needs
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities and
- Exclusions and suspensions
- Public examination outcomes
- Staff grievances
- Disciplinary procedures
- Whistleblowing

Which sit outside the scope of this policy, and where different procedures apply.

These procedures meet the requirements set out in schedule 1, part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and follow the DfE document "Best practice guidance for academies complaints procedures" 2021

If you are concerned about a child protection safeguarding issue or that a child is at risk of being abused you should immediately contact the school by telephone and ask to speak with the school's Child Protection Officer or Designated Senior Person.

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Timescales

We aim to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage of the complaints procedure are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. For the purposes of this procedure, a "working day" is defined as a weekday during term time, when the academy is open. The definition of "working day" excludes weekends and holidays.

Procedure Aim and Statement

Aim

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that a concern or complaint by a parent is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practice, it is fair to those concerned and it helps to promote parents' and pupils' confidence in our ability to safeguard and promote welfare. We will try to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way with the aim of resolving the issue in a transparent and appropriate manner. We also look to enable staff to progress their important responsibilities without burden of responding to unnecessary or disproportionate challenge.

The academy expects that most concerns can be resolved informally. All concerns will be taken seriously and kept confidential to those involved.

Except in exceptional circumstances, the complaints procedure must be initiated by a complainant within 3 months of the matter under dispute or requiring review becomes apparent.

Stage 1

Most concerns, where a parent seeks clarification, intervention, reconsideration or some other action to be taken, can be resolved informally. Examples might include dissatisfaction about some aspect of teaching, disciplinary matters or issues outside the classroom.

Parents should raise the concern initially with the student's house or form tutor, or with the leader of the curriculum area, or with the member of staff direct as appropriate. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO) can also be contacted if it is about special learning needs and the Assistant Head responsible for Student Services if it relates to our provision for social emotional and mental health needs. You may want to come and talk to the Head of House – please remember that appointments are necessary as all staff have busy teaching schedules. In a large secondary school there are various managers who will deal with pupil issues at different levels, and we will try to ensure that your issue is picked up by the most appropriate person. In the case of a boarding issue this would be a senior member of boarding staff and ultimately the Director of Boarding; subject issues by the department concerned; exam issues by the Examinations Officer.

If your complaint is concerning an EHCP, please contact: Area ISL Manager and County Lead for SEND Specialist Advice and Support Service 01992 555352

We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally. If we are at fault we will do our best to put matters right: we may also provide you with an explanation as to how and why as professionals we have made a certain decision. Because our priorities are teaching and learning and all complaints should be investigated it may take some time for staff involved to look into the matter. Most issues are dealt with within 5 to 15 working days. You will be told if it will take longer and the reasons for this. The Deputy Head has responsibility for comments and complaints and you may wish to contact him.

In the case of complaints raised under stage 1 of this procedure, the only record of the complaint and its resolution will be file notes by the person dealing with the complaint and/or file correspondence between the person raising the complaint and the respondent.

Stage 2: Unresolved complaint

If a stage 1 complaint remains unresolved in the view of the parent after 15 working days ~~from~~ of it being received by the school, the parent and complaint can progress to stage 2 in the following way.

Stage 2

1. Notification

Should a parent remain unhappy with the school response to a stage 1 concern, their view should be set out in writing with full details and sent with all relevant documents and full contact details for the attention of the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, as appropriate (complaints regarding the Headteacher should go to the Chair of Governors using an email addressed to clerktothegovernors@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk). Annex B details the paperwork to be completed, and this can be downloaded from the school website or a paper copy obtained from the Head's P.A.

Once completed the form must be sent to:

The Headteacher
St George's School Academy Trust
Sun Lane
Harpenden
AL5 4TD

Or attached to an email addressed to: admin@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk marked for the attention of the Headteacher, with the subject line: **Stage 2 Complaint**.

Stage 2 complaints should be submitted as soon as possible and within 10 working days of receipt of the schools response at stage 1. Complaints sent after this period will not *normally* be considered, as they will be deemed 'out of time'. This is to ensure that any complaints are investigated as soon as possible and acted upon promptly.

Parents should note that an issue will not be considered at stage 2 without being dealt with at stage 1. Characterising a complaint as "formal", or contacting the Headteacher as a first step, does not entitle a parent to start the process at other than stage 1.

Parents should also note that where staff have acted manifestly within governors procedure, within the authority vested in them by the Headteacher, and within reasonable professional norms, a stage 2 process is unlikely to lead to a "finding of fault" or reversal of decisions made. This includes matters relating to admission to the 6th form and any complaint about student outcomes if the student's outcome is within one grade of their benchmark grade.

In some instances, the Headteacher may determine that on information immediately to hand, taking a complaint through a full stage 2 investigation may not be the most appropriate action, and can respond to explain this, and that an alternative method of finding a resolution is more appropriate.

The Headteacher may determine that it is not appropriate to progress an issue to stage 2 if a parent has declined to engage fully with staff dealing with stage 1, such as by failing to attend a meeting with staff when requested to do so.

Where a complaint relates to a student disciplinary process or sanction, parents should not expect that a stage 2 complaint will put that disciplinary process on pause. Because of the time taken for a stage 2 process, the Headteacher may determine that disciplinary action takes

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place on the basis of the available evidence. Should the stage 2 investigation reveal that a sanction set was not appropriate, an appropriate note will be made on the student record and any further necessary steps taken.

While a complaint might lead to disciplinary action involving staff or other students, complainants will not be given details other than that such processes are being followed. Complainants should note that the school cannot direct certain outcomes which are within the remit of an individual teacher. Complainants should recognise that they cannot dictate who undertakes the investigation, the outcome of the procedure, nor any further action which may be taken as a result.

2. Acknowledgement

The stage 2 complaint will be acknowledged in writing normally within 3 working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays. The acknowledgement will indicate the action that is being taken and the likely timescale for resolution.

3. Investigation and resolution

Should the Headteacher deem it appropriate, the Headteacher may deal with the matter at stage 2 personally or delegate a senior member of staff to act as “investigating officer.” The “investigating officer” may request additional information from the complainant and will fully investigate the issue. In some cases the Headteacher of the Academy or investigating officer will meet or speak with the parent/carer to discuss the matter.

The investigator will confirm with you the agreed main areas of your complaint that will be subject to thorough investigation.

A written response will be provided for all complaints investigated at the second stage.

The response will provide a clear conclusion on whether or not the complaint has been upheld and may link together similar issues for conciseness and clarity. On occasions, where the evidence is inconclusive because of differing opinions that cannot reasonably be resolved through independent corroboration, the outcome will be recorded as ‘no conclusion could be reached’. Where this occurs, the reasons for not reaching a conclusion will be clearly explained.

As part of carrying out the investigation, the investigator will consider in detail all the information submitted and issues raised. The investigator will only consider direct evidence that can be substantiated.

It should be noted that investigation responses to complainants not directly linked to an incident may be limited by the information that can be disclosed to a third party under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Where multiple complaints are received about the same incident or issue of concern, the Headteacher may direct that a single investigation is undertaken covering a similar complaint from different individuals. This would lead to a single investigation response which would be communicated to all complainants.

Our aim is to respond to all complaints as quickly as possible. A written response will be sent to complainants as soon as is practicable and normally within 15 working days of the date of receipt of the formal complaint form. The complaint response will include an explanation of any steps that the school will take as a result of the investigation but will not detail any action taken under the staff discipline or pupil discipline policies.

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4. Record of complaints

Written records will be kept of any meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. That record will be kept whether the complaint is resolved by a formal procedure, or proceeds to a panel hearing, and will include action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.

5. Unresolved Complaints following Stage 2

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the academy's response to their stage 2 complaint they may request to have their complaint considered by an independent complaints panel. This right also extends to staff who have been the subject of a stage 2 complaint.

Stage 3 – Complaint heard by the Independent Complaints Panel

1. Request

A request for a complaint to be heard by an independent complaints panel must be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governors and within ten working days of the date of the academy's decision made at stage 2.

2. Acknowledgement

Where a stage 3 complaint is received, the academy will within 3 working days refer the matter to the Clerk to the Governors who will act as clerk to the complaints panel. The clerk will inform the complainant of the steps involved in the process. The clerk will be the contact point for the complainant.

3. Panel Hearing

The clerk will aim to convene a complaints panel hearing as soon as possible, normally no later than 20 working days after receipt of the stage 3 request.

4. Panel Membership

The panel will consist of two governors who have not previously been involved in the complaint and one person independent of the management and running of the academy (the process used for selecting the independent person will conform to relevant DFE guidance). The panel will select its own chair.

5. The remit of the Complaints Panel

The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- recommend appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the academy's policies and/or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

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The aim of the hearing, which will be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the academy and the complainant. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as informal as possible.

6. Attendance

The following are entitled to attend a hearing, submit written evidence and address the panel:

- the parent and/or one representative
- the Headteacher and/or one representative
- any other person who the complaints panel considers to have a reasonable and just interest in the appeal and whose contribution would assist the panel in their decision making. A student under the age of 18 would not be involved other than to submit written evidence where the panel felt it appropriate.

7. Evidence

All parties will be given the opportunity to submit written evidence to the panel in support of their position including:

- documents
- chronology and key dates
- written statements setting out further detail

All written evidence must be received by the clerk no later than 7 working days in advance of the panel hearing. The clerk will distribute the evidence to all parties no later than 5 working days in advance of the panel hearing.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the clerk:

All panels considering complaints must be clerked. The clerk would be the contact point for the complainant and be required to:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- ensure no member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- copy and collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing
- record the proceedings
- notify all parties of the panel's decisions

The role of the Chair of Governors or nominated governor:

- check that the correct procedure has been followed

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The role of the chair of the panel:

The chair of the panel has a key role, ensuring that:

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made where this is possible
- parents or others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease
- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- the panel is open minded and acting independently;
- each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions;
- written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be given to all parties for the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

The school may make provision for the proceedings to be recorded, subject to agreement of all parties. Covert recording of the hearing is not allowed, nor will evidence gained by means of covert recording be admitted.

9. Decision

The panel will reach a decision, and make any recommendations within ten working days of the hearing. The decision reached is final. The academy will keep a record of all appeals, decisions and recommendations of the complaints panel.

10. Notification of the Panel's Decision

The panel's findings will be sent, in writing, by the clerk, to the parents/carers, the governors and the Headteacher and where relevant, to the person complained about. The letter will state the reasons for the decision reached and any recommendations made by the panel. Once the complainant has been told the outcome of the third stage of the complaint that ends the complaints procedure and the complaint will be deemed to have been dealt with and concluded.

The school will not pay financial compensation as a response to complaints.

The Independent Complaints Panel will also make available both to the complainant and, where relevant, any person complained about, by electronic mail or otherwise, any recommendations they have for the governing body.

A copy of these findings and recommendations is available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be 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.

St George's School is an academy and operates independently of the local authority. Accordingly, the local authority is unable to investigate complaints regarding St George's. If you wish to escalate a complaint about St George's which you believe has not been satisfactorily resolved through this complaints procedure you should contact the Secretary

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of State at the Department for Education as soon as possible after the conclusion of the third stage of your complaint and request that the complaint be passed to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The Secretary of State can be contacted at The Department for Education, Education & Skills Funding Agency Cheylesmore House 5 Quinton Road Coventry CV1 2WT.

HOW THE SCHOOL WILL HANDLE COMPLAINTS MADE BY:

- Boarder students
- A member of staff about another member of staff or the Headteacher
- A member of the governing body about a member of staff
- A member of staff about a member of the governing body
- A member of staff about the action/decision of the governing body
- Members of the public (not parents)
- A parent whose child no longer attends the school
- Anonymous complaints
- Complaint campaigns or petitions
- Complaints about the Chair of Governors or any Individual governor

Complaints by boarders

Boarders are encouraged by staff to offer their views and it is considered a vital aspect of the pastoral care that we offer. These views might be concerns, ideas, suggestions, anxieties or opinions. Boarders should be able to present their views both privately, confidentially and publicly as appropriate in a way that does not necessarily constitute a formal complaint but does require action. This policy outlines the procedures for expressing a view as well as for making a formal complaint.

There are a number of people with whom boarders may talk including the Director of Boarding and members of residential boarding staff, the School Chaplain, the First Responder, or the Learning Support department. There are also two independent listeners whose contact telephone numbers are clearly displayed on houses. It is also helpful for boarders to consider the team of boarding prefects and even if they cannot help directly, they will be able to suggest the right person to talk with. There are a number of aspects of life that boarders might need to talk about or which might give cause for expressing a concern or making a complaint.

Each house has a Boarding Voice box into which boarders can share an idea, a suggestion or a concern. Complaints can also be made using this box although it is more likely that a complaint would be presented formally.

Each boarding house has an area of notice board set aside on which recent ideas and actions, questionnaire results are displayed.

Houses have a grumbles book into which minor concerns are recorded.

Heads of boarding houses meet with house committees. Securing boarders' views is a key item on the agenda. Minutes are taken.

The Director of Boarding meets with groups of boarders. Securing boarders' views is a key item on the agenda. Minutes are taken.

Boarders complete questionnaires, both formally in which they are able to offer their views freely. The results of such questionnaires are clearly displayed with any action or follow up clearly stated. There are other informal forums through which boarders can offer their views e.g. suggestion surgery, one-to-one tutorials.

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Boarders are frequently encouraged to express their views, both verbally and by prominent signage through the houses.

Whilst boarders are fully entitled to give their views anonymously, it is made clear to boarders that this may hinder the effectiveness with which a particular view may be dealt with. Therefore, boarders are strongly encouraged to be open when presenting their views.

In addition to this the boarding houses signpost students to external agencies, such as ChildLine, the Samaritans, the NSPCC and the office of Children's Commissioner.

Students in the boarding house may initiate a stage 1 complaint; and if the matter is not resolved it can progress to stage 2 and independent review.

Complaint made by one member of staff against another (including the Headteacher)

Complaints from members of staff are not covered by this procedure. They will be dealt with by the Headteacher (where appropriate) or the Chair of Governors informally in the first instance. If this approach fails to resolve the issue, the next step would be for the staff grievance procedure to be invoked (by the person bringing the grievance).

Complaint made by a governor about a member of staff

This will be dealt with through this complaints procedure. The governor concerned will have to withdraw from any meeting at which the complaint or its outcome is being discussed. If the complaint is related to the conduct of a member of staff, it may be dealt with through the school's disciplinary procedures.

Complaint by a member of staff against an individual governor acting in a personal capacity

The chair of the governing body (or the vice chair if the complaint is against the chair) should attempt to resolve the matter informally. If such a resolution is not possible, and with the agreement of the governor concerned, a complaints panel of governors will be set up to consider the matter as under the complaints procedure in this document.

Complaint by a member of staff against the action/decision of the governing body

If the decision was taken at a meeting of the full governing body the matter will be put on the agenda for review at another meeting and if the decision was then confirmed that would be the end of the matter. If a committee or individual with delegated authority took the original decision then a panel of governors who were not involved in the decision will review the matter, ensuring that the member of staff concerned was given an opportunity to state his/her case to the panel. Any decision by the panel will be final.

Complaint by a member of the public (not a parent)

Complaints from members of the public will be dealt with as above starting at stage 1.

Complaint by a parent whose child no longer attends the school

The purpose of this complaints procedure is to ensure that if an error has been made, or an injustice done, some action can be taken to remedy matters for the injured party. Where parents have removed their child from the roll of a school it is clearly impossible for the governing body to put things right for that child. However, the governing body has a duty of care to the pupils who remain on roll and we will investigate the circumstances to satisfy themselves that no-one had acted inappropriately and

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that procedures and policies had been followed correctly, following the procedure above and starting at stage 1.

Anonymous complaints

Should a complaint be made anonymously, the school will not deal with it unless it receives at the same time evidence, which the school can independently verify, in support of the complaint. While the matter will be progressed, no response will be made to an anonymous complainant.

Complaint campaigns or petitions

Where the school receives a large volume of complaints about a single subject, or from complainants unconnected to the school, the school may respond by sending a template response where possible to all complainants, and / or publishing a single response in the school newsletter or website.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors or any individual governor

These should be made to the clerk to the governing body.

Vexatious Complaints:

If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied and looks to continue the complaint in an inappropriate way. Please see Appendix C and D for further details of how such complaints will be dealt with and examples of behaviour, which will not be tolerated.

Complaints made in parallel with the complainant seeking redress elsewhere

The school reserves the right to pause processing of a complaint while other relevant pathways are being pursued by the complainant

Appendix A: Checklist

Checklist for a panel hearing:

The hearing is as informal as possible.

Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.

1. After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses
2. The Headteacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken
3. The Headteacher is then invited to explain the academy's actions and be followed by the academy's witnesses
4. The complainant may question both the Headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken
5. The panel may ask questions at any point
6. The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint
7. The Headteacher is then invited to sum up the academy's actions and response to the complaint
8. Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues
9. The chair explains that both parties will hear the panel within a set timescale

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Appendix B: Complaint Form

ACADEMY - COMPLAINT FORM to progress an issue to Stage 2

Please complete and return to the Head's PA who will acknowledge receipt.

Your Name

Pupil's name

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant)

Address

.....

Telephone number (day)

Telephone number (evening)

Please give brief details of your complaint

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.....
.....
.....
.....

What action have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was their response?)

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.....
.....
.....

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

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.....

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

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.....
.....
.....

Signature (Complainant)

Date

For office use – date received:.....

Appendix C: Procedure on unacceptable behaviour

The governors and Headteacher are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service to those who make them. As part of this service it would not normally limit the contact an individual has. However the governors do not expect the academy's staff to tolerate behaviour which is unacceptable, for example, which is abusive, offensive, or threatening, and it will take action to protect staff from that behaviour. In implementing this procedure the school will seek to ensure that its actions are in accordance with its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Convention Rights embodied within it in order to protect the human rights of stakeholders.

These are some of the actions and behaviours which schools often find problematic. It is by no means an exhaustive list and local factors may vary, but these are examples that frequently come to our attention.

- foul and abusive language towards staff, other parents and pupils
- behaviour that staff consider to be harassing and intimidating, including in person, over the telephone, or any other type of communication
- undermining school policies by actively encouraging pupils to ignore staff requests
- making unnecessarily excessive demands on the time and resources of staff. This may manifest itself through excessive telephoning or sending emails to numerous staff; writing lengthy complex letters which allow no response time for one issue to be addressed before another is raised.

The decision to restrict access to the academy will be taken by the Headteacher.

Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate.

The options most likely to be considered are:

- requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only), and blocking contact by email;
- requiring contact to take place with a single named member of staff;
- restricting telephone calls to specified days and times; and/or
- asking the complainant to enter into an agreement about their conduct.

In all cases we will write to tell the individual why we believe his or her behaviour is unacceptable, what action we are taking and the duration of that action.

Where an individual continues to behave in a way which is unacceptable, we may decide to terminate contact with them and discontinue any investigation into a complaint. However the governors will seek to limit any detriment to any pupils who attend the academy, as far as is reasonable within these circumstances e.g. access to parents evenings, newsletters, and any other correspondence.

Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of the academy's staff, we will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the individual prior warning of that action.

Appendix D: Procedure on unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants

The governors are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service to those who make them. As part of this service it does not normally limit the contact complainants have with the academy.

However there may be a small number of complainants who, because of their frequent contact with the academy, hinder consideration of their or other people's, complaints. Such complainants are referred to as 'unreasonably persistent complainants' and, exceptionally, the Headteacher will take action to limit their contact with academy.

Actions and behaviours of unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants

These are some of the actions and behaviours of unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants which schools often find problematic. For the purpose of this procedure, a persistent complainant is a parent, carer or member of the public who complains about issues, either formally or informally, or frequently raises issues that the complainant considers to be within the remit of the school and whose behaviour is unreasonable. Such behaviour may be characterised by:

- a) actions which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific or repetitious;
- b) prolific correspondence or excessive e-mail or telephone contact about a concern or complaint;
- c) an insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes;
- d) an insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner.

Problematic behaviours can include but are not limited to:

- refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of assistance with this from the academy's staff.
- refusing to cooperate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
- refusing to accept that issues are not within the remit of the complaints procedure despite having been provided with information about the procedure's scope.
- insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure
- making what appear to be groundless complaints about the staff dealing with the complaints, and seeking to have them replaced.
- changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds and/or contradicting statements he or she made at an earlier stage.
- introducing new information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raising large numbers of detailed questions which are particularly time consuming and costly to respond to and insisting they are all fully answered.
- electronically recording meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the other persons involved.
- seeking to involve other organisations such as a Member of Parliament/a councillor/the authority's independent auditor/the local authority/local police/solicitors/the Ombudsman/OFSTED before the academy procedure has been completed
- making unnecessarily excessive demands on the time and resources of staff whilst a complaint is being looked into, by for example excessive telephoning or sending emails to numerous academy staff, writing lengthy complex letters every few days and expecting immediate responses.

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- submitting repeat complaints, after the complaints processes have been completed, essentially about the same issues, with additions/variations which the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints which should be put through the full complaints procedure.
- refusing to accept the decision – repeatedly arguing the point and complaining about the decision.
- submitting repeated complaints, which are essentially dealing with the same core issues, when the complaints procedure has already been completed and its findings shared with those involved.

Conduct of a complainant can amount to harassment in that it appears to be targeted over a significant period of time on one or more members of school staff or causes ongoing distress to individual member(s) of school staff, or has a significant adverse effect on the whole or parts of the school community, or is pursued aggressively.

Should the Headteacher determine that a complainant falls within the remit of being unreasonable (or the Chair of Governors in the case of complaints about the Headteacher), the parent will be informed that they are liable to having work on their complaint(s) cease; and that consequence will follow should the complainant persist, or reform their conduct only temporarily. While in default of this procedure, and prior to being put back on good standing, the school would not consider any new complaint from such a parent other than one relating to child protection, nor can a complaint be progressed from one stage to another stage.

The decision to restrict access to the academy will be taken by the Headteacher and will normally follow a prior warning to the complainant. Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate. The options we are most likely to consider are:

- requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only) and blocking email;
- requiring contact to take place with a named member of staff;
- restricting telephone calls to specified days and times; and/or
- asking the complainant to enter into an agreement about their future contacts with us.

Where a complainant who has been told the school's final and definitive position persists in communicating with us about it, we may decide to terminate contact with that complainant. In such cases, we will read all correspondence from that complainant, but unless there is fresh evidence which affects our decision on the complaint we will simply acknowledge it or place it on the file with no acknowledgement.