



Complaints & Resolutions Procedure

May 2025

COM-01



APPROVAL COMMITTEE	DATE APPROVED	REVIEW DUE DATE
Communications	May 2025	May 2027

Contents

Introduction	3
Aims and Objectives.....	3
Areas not covered by this procedure	3
The difference between a concern and a complaint	5
How to raise a concern or make a complaint	5
Anonymous complaints.....	6
Time scales	6
Complaints received outside of term time	6
Resolving complaints.....	6
Withdrawal of a Complaint.....	6
Informal School Procedure	7
Stage 1 – Formal School Procedure	7
Step 1 - Complaint Form.....	7
Step 2 - Face to Face Meeting.....	7
Step 3 - Formal Investigation	8
Stage 2 – Panel Stage.....	9
Panel Hearing Procedure	10
Record of the Panel Hearing.....	11
Outcome of the Panel Hearing.....	11
Serial or Persistent Complaints.....	11
Complaints Campaigns	12
Appendix: Flow Chart Summary	13
Appendix; Complaints form.....	14

EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The governing board has reviewed this procedure to ensure that it does not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, or socio-economic status. This procedure has been developed with due regard to the school's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization.
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups.
- Foster good relations between different groups.

The governing board is satisfied that this procedure reflects the school's commitment to promoting equality and inclusion.

Chalfont St Giles Infant School & Nursery

School Lane, Chalfont St Giles,
Buckinghamshire, HP8 4JJ

tel: 01494 872160

email: infantoffice@csgvillageschool.org

Chalfont St Giles Junior School

Parsonage Road, Chalfont St Giles,
Buckinghamshire, HP8 4JW

tel: 01494 873090

email: junioroffice@csgvillageschool.org



Introduction

Our governing board has approved this procedure to deal with concerns or complaints from members of the school community or general public. The school aims to review this procedure every 2 years to ensure changes in policy, practice and/or legislation are captured.

Aims and Objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Careful consideration will be given to all concerns and complaints and we will deal with them as swiftly as possible. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed.

IN ALL CASES WE WILL PUT THE INTERESTS OF THE CHILD ABOVE ALL OTHER ISSUES

Our procedure is underpinned by the following framework of principles: -

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- ensure the relevant procedure is easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to use and understand
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation by person(s) independent of the complaint
- where necessary
- respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

Areas not covered by this procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Chalfont St Giles Village School other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

EXCEPTIONS	WHOM TO CONTACT
Admissions to schools Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Buckinghamshire County Council.



<p>Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</p>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Child Protection Framework Policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you should contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding, or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Further advice on reporting safeguarding issues can be found in our Safeguarding Advice and Guidelines for Volunteers leaflet.</p> <p>The Child Protection Framework Policy and Safeguarding Leaflet can both be found here: https://www.csgvillageschool.org/safeguarding/</p>
<p>Exclusion of children from school*</p>	<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 Management Policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p>
<p>Whistleblowing</p>	<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 Local Authority (LA) or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<p>Staff grievances</p>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<p>Staff conduct</p>	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school'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>



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.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

In addition, Ofsted has the power to investigate certain (qualifying) complaints about maintained schools, including those from parents. A qualifying complaint is one that affects the whole school, not an individual. More information can be obtained from the school or Ofsted.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, 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 Chalfont St Giles Village School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

All other complaints are handled by the school according to the arrangements set out below. A flowchart summarising the school's complaints procedure can also be found at the end of this document.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

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'.

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.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

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

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. Governors have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

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.



Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident/knowledge 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 timeframe if exceptional circumstances apply. This is at the joint discretion of the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Chalfont St Giles Village School wants 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.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

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



Informal School Procedure

If you have any concerns about the school, or the education we are providing, please discuss the matter with your child's class teacher at the earliest opportunity. Most concerns can be resolved at this level, however, if after speaking to your child's class teacher, you are still concerned please discuss the matter with the Deputy Head/Headteacher.

If your concerns or complaint relate to a member of staff, not including the Headteacher, initial concerns are to be discussed with the Headteacher. If your concern or complaint relates to the Headteacher you may not wish to discuss the matter with the Headteacher in the first instance, in which case you should proceed in accordance with Stage 1 (as set out below).

It is not appropriate to publicise any concerns you may have on social networking sites. Please speak, or write, to someone at the school at your earliest convenience, rather than using any other means.

The school considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved following discussion and a shared understanding of the issues. All members of staff work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school and is making good progress and they always want to know if there is a problem so they can help to resolve it as quickly as possible.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Chalfont St Giles Village School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined below in this complaints procedure.

Stage 1 – Formal School Procedure

Most concerns are resolved through discussion with school staff, however if you remain dissatisfied and wish to take the matter further you will be asked to complete a complaint form (see Appendix). What follows are details of the process the school will take in following the Stage 1- formal procedure:

Step 1 - Complaint Form

The aim of the form is to ensure each party has a clear and common understanding of the complaint and includes a section on what actions might resolve the problem at this stage. It can be used by anyone making a complaint about the operation of the school which is not covered by an alternative procedure

We are happy to provide the assistance of someone unconnected with the complaint, if you would like support in completing the form.

The form (see Appendix) must be returned to the Chair of the governing board, via the school office, marking the envelope 'FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION OF THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS – ADDRESSEE ONLY'. If your complaint is about the Chair of the governing board, your completed form should be returned to the clerk of the governing board and marked accordingly for their attention.

You will receive an acknowledgement of the receipt of your complaint form within 5 working school days.

Step 2 - Face Face Meeting

We believe that discussing concerns directly with senior staff often enables an understanding to be reached more quickly and effectively than a formal investigation.



For this reason, we will consider the option of offering you an opportunity to attend a meeting with senior staff, at which the Chair of Governors (or another governor if appropriate) will act as facilitator and mediator. It may not be appropriate in all instances to offer such a meeting; if this is deemed to be the case by the school, you will be notified as such and the next steps explained to you.

Following the parties being satisfied of the outcome of the meeting, you will be sent a letter within 10 working school days confirming what was agreed and the conclusion reached.

You do not have to take the option of a meeting if it is offered and, should you choose not to do so, or if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the meeting, a formal investigation will be conducted into your complaint (see Step 3 below).

Step 3 - Formal Investigation

The purpose of this step is for the investigator to collate all the relevant information on the complaint, review any relevant documentation and information and seek the views of relevant people, where necessary. The aim is for the investigator to be in a position to reach a conclusion on how best to resolve the issue and for that resolution to be of satisfaction to all the parties.

An investigation will be carried out into the complaint either by the Chair of Governors or another experienced governor and will usually be undertaken within 15 days of either:

- Receiving the complaint or
- The rejection of a step 2 meeting or
- An unsatisfactory outcome to a step 2 meeting.

The investigation should include:

- Discussion with the complainant
- Discussion with any other person who is either the subject of the complaint or who may have information on the circumstances giving rise to the complaint

A written record of any meetings/interviews will be made and kept in relation to the investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation the person undertaking it will provide you with a formal written response. If the investigator is unable to meet any of the deadlines, they will provide you with an update, within the given period, to explain why and include a revised timetable. It is our intention, however, to meet the deadlines whenever possible.

The formal written response should set out:

- A summary of your complaint
- Details of what steps have been taken in the investigation
- What conclusions have been reached
- What action will be taken (if appropriate)

If, at any time, it becomes apparent that the complaint is a staff disciplinary or capability issue, the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate HR procedure rather than the complaints procedure. You will be advised if any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate; however you are not entitled to know the detail of the final outcome, due to the rights of confidentiality afforded to the member of staff involved.



If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the Governing Board (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about a member of the Governing Board must be made to the Clerk to the Governors, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire Governing Board or
- the majority of the Governing Board

Stage 1 will be considered by an investigator appointed by the Governing Board and independent of the school. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

If, following the outcome of the investigation, you feel your concern has not been resolved, you may choose to refer your complaint to Stage 2 of the procedure. This must be done in writing to the Chair of Governors (or to the Clerk if the complaint is about a governor) via the school within 10 working school days of you being notified of the completion of Stage 1.

Stage 2 – Panel Stage

Upon receipt of a request for instigation of Stage 2, a complaint co-ordinator will be assigned to the complaint. The complaint co-ordinator will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 working school days. Requests received outside of this timeframe will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

Stage 2 requires the complaint to be considered by a panel, normally comprising three non-staff governors, who have no detailed prior knowledge of or involvement in the complaint, or connection with you. If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire Governing Board or
- the majority of the Governing Board

then Stage 2 will be heard by a panel of governors independent of the school who have no knowledge of the case.

The panel will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the Governing Board.

The complaint co-ordinator will aim, within 10 working school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request, to arrange a date to hear the complaint. If this is not possible, the Complaint Co-ordinator will provide an anticipated timeframe and keep you informed. The panel meeting will normally take place within 15 working school days of your request to commence Stage 2.

If you reject the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the complaint co-ordinator will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in your absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.



The committee will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. The panel will not review the way in which the Stage 1 investigation took place. If you raise the conduct of the previous investigation as an additional reason for complaint, this, along with any new complaint must be dealt with under Stage 1 of this procedure.

The panel will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to your needs.

You have the opportunity to submit written evidence on the complaint ahead of the panel convening. Should you wish to do this you should provide this evidence as soon as possible after triggering Stage 2 and in any event within 5 working school days of submitting your Stage 2 request. If it is not possible to provide your evidence within this period, please inform the school in writing together with the intended timescale for provision of the evidence.

The panel will need to consider all relevant written evidence, policies/procedures and associated paperwork prior to the substantive panel meeting and therefore it is important there is sufficient time beforehand for this to be done.

Those attending the meeting should include the panel members, you as the complainant, any person about whom the complaint is made, the Headteacher/Chair of Governors, and a minute taker. You may be accompanied by a friend/partner. You may choose to be accompanied by a lawyer as your friend. If this is the case they may be allowed to attend the meeting, although it is not the intention of the policy to be a legalistic process. If you ask to bring a lawyer as well as a friend, governors can:

- ask you to choose one person you wish to be accompanied by or
- agree to both being present on the understanding that you recognise that the circumstances are exceptional and that only one person is to assist you and that the other person will be present as an observer only and will not actively participate in the process

The Headteacher will be given the same opportunities.

The Headteacher and the complainant may choose not to attend the panel hearing, and should advise the complaint co-ordinator if this is the case.

In exceptional circumstances the panel may meet remotely, via videoconference or telephone, subject to agreement by all parties.

Attendees should be reminded that the process is not a legal one and that all parties are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. If the panel chair considers that those present are not adhering to the rules at any time, they can be asked to leave and all parties reminded of the procedure.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend the panel meeting.

Both parties will be given the opportunity to make their case to the panel who will then ask questions. You will also be able to ask questions of the other party.

Panel Hearing Procedure

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



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.

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 systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

Record of the Panel Hearing

Notes of the hearing should be taken by an independent note taker and passed to the panel Chair for agreement as soon after the meeting as is practicable.

The purpose of the notes is to act as a record of the meeting and for that reason they will not be routinely circulated to the Headteacher or the complainant, unless a specific request to do so is received, in which case all parties will be informed accordingly.

Outcome of the Panel Hearing

The panel will write to you within 5 working school days of the meeting, with an update on their deliberations and set out a timeframe for delivery of its conclusions. The panel's conclusions will be provided within the timeframe given but in any event no later than 15 working school days of the update letter. The panel's decision is final.

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 Chalfont St Giles Village School will take to resolve the complaint.

If you are still not satisfied, you may wish to put your complaint to the Department for Education, who can review whether the school has acted reasonably and followed the correct procedures. The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Chalfont St Giles Village School. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The address is Department for Education, School Complaints Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD or online via <https://www.gov.uk/complain-to-dfe>

Serial or Persistent Complaints

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, if people pursue their complaints in a way which is unacceptable or which can impede the investigation of their complaint, this can have significant resource issues for the school.

The school defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints, 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
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information and insists on it being taken into account and commented on
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues
- 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 adhered to
- 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 already 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

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before considering behaviour to be unreasonable.

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the school 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.

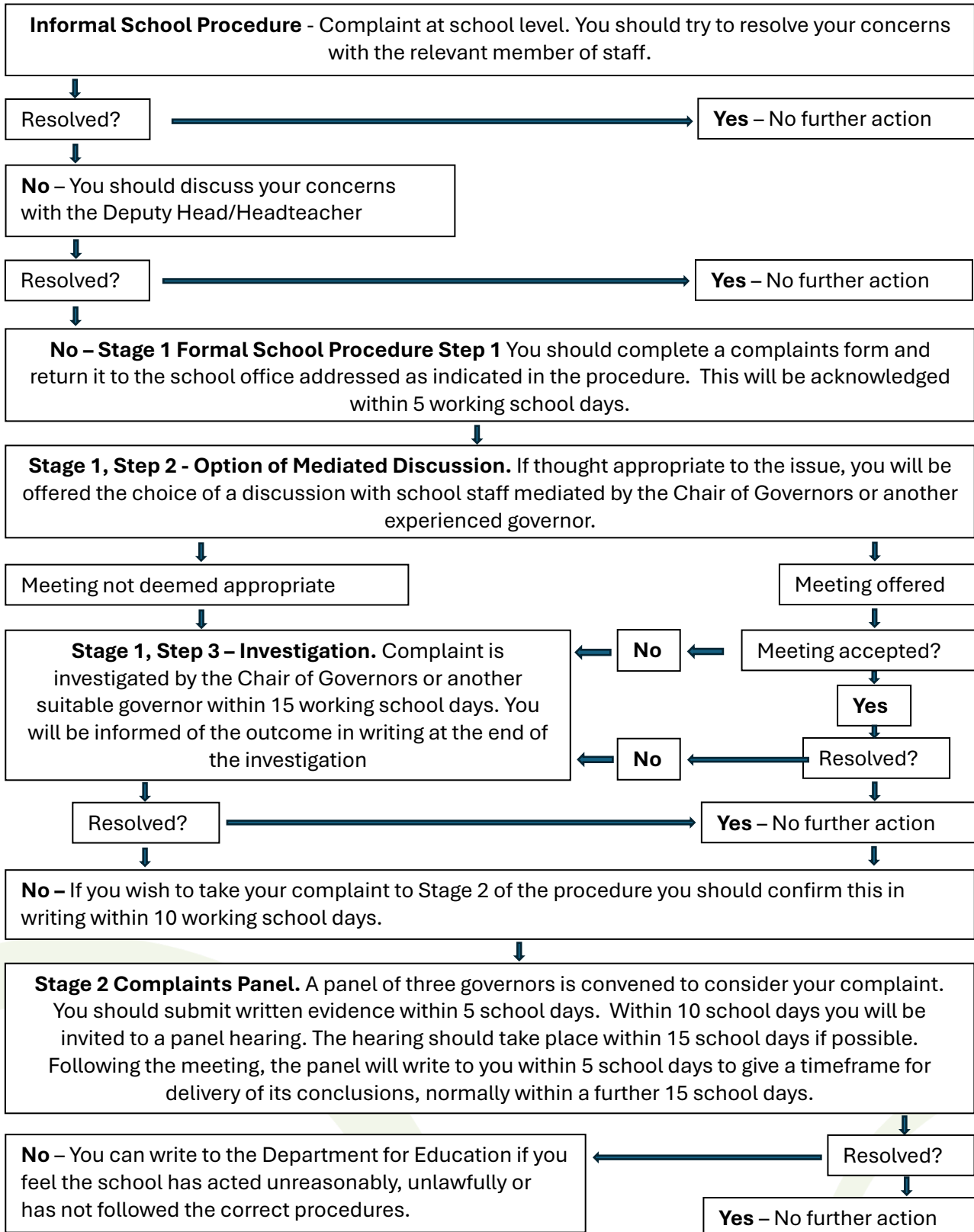
In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the school.

Complaints Campaigns

The school is committed to giving careful consideration to all concerns raised and complaints received. If the school receives a large volume of complaints all based on the same subject or from complainants unconnected to the school it may have become the focus of a complaints campaign. If the Headteacher and Chair of Governors consider that this is the case a template response to the complaints will be sent.



Appendix: Flow Chart Summary





Appendix; Complaints form

Please complete (using additional sheets if necessary) and return to The Chair of Governors who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken. If your complaint is concerning the Chair of Governors, please return it to the Clerk to the Governing Board via the school office.

Your name: Pupils name: Your relationship to the pupil: Address Postcode Daytime telephone number Evening telephone number
Please give concise details of your complaint, including dates, names of witnesses etc, to allow the matter to be fully investigated
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to/write to and what was the response)?



What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.	
Signature:	Date:
School Official Use:	
Complaint acknowledgement sent by:	Date:
Complaint referred to:	Date: