



COMPLAINTS POLICY

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Owner	CFOO	Approver	Finance & Resources

This document applies to all schools and operations of the Galileo Multi Academy Trust:
www.galileotrust.co.uk

Policy Review Sheet

Date of changes:	17.08.2026
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Page/ Section	Changes to note	Reason for change <i>e.g., change in legislation</i>
Sections 1-3	Updated purpose, introduction and aims sections to improve clarity, accessibility and alignment with Trust values and best practice.	Policy review and best practice.
Section 3	Added reference to reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.	Equality and accessibility requirements.
Section 4	Clarified roles and responsibilities for complainants, investigating officers, complaints co-ordinator, clerk and committee chair.	Improved governance and accountability.
Section 5	Revised investigation principles and timescales. Introduced clearer guidance regarding delayed responses and complaint time limits.	Best practice and procedural clarity.
Section 5.2	Updated EYFS complaints requirements and Ofsted reporting information.	Compliance with statutory EYFS requirements.
Section 6	Simplified complaints procedure into a three-stage process. Clarified responsibilities for complaints against Headteachers and strengthened panel hearing arrangements.	Alignment with current DfE/ESFA complaints guidance and improved process clarity.
Section 7	Rewritten process for complaints against the Trust, CEO, CFOO and Trustees. Clarified investigation arrangements and panel membership requirements.	Strengthened governance arrangements and independence.
Section 8	Updated ESFA referral process and guidance following completion of the Trust complaints procedure.	Alignment with current ESFA guidance.
Section 9	Added clearer guidance on communication restrictions, duplicate complaints, complaint campaigns and anonymous complaints.	Best practice and protection of staff resources and wellbeing.
Section 9.1	Added provision regarding excessive, repetitive and/or AI-generated correspondence and clarified expectations for concise complaint submissions.	To support efficient handling of complaints and protect staff resources.

Section 10	Expanded record keeping and confidentiality requirements, including data protection, safeguarding and records retention requirements.	GDPR compliance and improved record management.
Section 11	Updated monitoring arrangements and review cycle. Policy review frequency amended to every two years.	Governance review.
Appendix A	Complaint form updated and simplified to improve accessibility and consistency with revised complaints procedure.	Improved usability and consistency.
Date of final approval:		

Contents

1. Purpose	5
2. Introduction.....	5
3. Aims.....	5
4. Roles and responsibilities	6
5. Principles for Investigation	7
5.1 Timescales	7
Complaints should normally be raised within three months of the incident occurring.	7
5.2 Complaints about our fulfilment of early years requirements	8
6. Complaints Procedure (excluding complaints against the Trust, CEO, CFOO, or Trustees)	8
6.1 Stages of Complaint	8
6.2 Stage 1: Informal resolution	8
6.3 Stage 2: Formal Investigation	9
6.4 Stage 3: Complaints Committee Panel Hearing.....	10
7. Complaints about the Trust, CEO, CFOO, or Trustees.....	11
8. Referring complaints on completion of School and Trust Procedures	13
9. Persistent, serial, Unreasonable, or vexatious complaints.....	14
9.1 Unreasonably persistent or unreasonable complaints.....	14
9.2 Duplicate complaints	15
9.3 Complaint campaigns	16
9.4 Anonymous complaints	16
10. Record Keeping and Confidentiality.....	16
11. Monitoring of policy.....	17
Appendix A – Complaints Form.....	18

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, fair and transparent process for addressing concerns or complaints about a member of staff, a school within Galileo Multi Academy Trust, or the Trust itself in relation to the services, facilities, or educational provision provided.

The Trust is committed to resolving concerns as quickly and informally as possible. Where a concern cannot be resolved informally, this policy sets out the formal complaints procedure to be followed.

This policy is not intended to cover complaints regarding matters for which there are separate statutory procedures or policies, including:

- School Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Safeguarding matters
- Suspension and permanent exclusions.
- Whistleblowing.
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline
- Withdrawal from the curriculum (parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of Religious Education and acts of collective worship without providing a reason)

Please refer to the relevant Trust or school policy for information regarding these matters.

2. Introduction

Galileo Multi Academy Trust prides itself on the quality of education and services provided for all pupils. We are committed to working in partnership with parents, carers and members of the wider community and recognise the importance of listening to concerns and responding appropriately when issues arise.

A complaint may be made by a parent or carer of a registered pupil attending a school within the Trust, or by any individual who has received a service from the Trust or one of its schools.

Throughout this policy, this individual is referred to as the complainant.

Schools may nominate a member of staff with responsibility for administering the complaints procedure. In most cases, concerns should initially be raised with the member of staff most directly involved. For pupils, this will usually be the class teacher. Where the concern relates to that member of staff, the concern should be raised with the Headteacher.

A concern may become a complaint when the complainant believes that the school or Trust has made an incorrect decision, taken inappropriate action, or failed to take appropriate action.

At any stage of the process, efforts will be made to achieve an informal resolution. A complaint may be resolved or withdrawn at any point during the procedure.

3. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently, and promptly, with the objective of achieving a satisfactory resolution wherever possible.

The Trust welcomes feedback, concerns and complaints as an opportunity to improve services, strengthen relationships and enhance outcomes for pupils and stakeholders.

In line with the Education Act 2002, the Trust will:

- Encourage resolution of concerns through informal means wherever possible.
- Ensure the complaints procedure is easily accessible and publicly available.
- Be impartial and objective.
- Ensure the procedure is straightforward to understand and use.
- Be non-adversarial.
- Ensure complaints are handled promptly, with clear timescales and regular communication regarding progress.
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an appropriately independent person where necessary.
- Respect confidentiality and only share information where necessary.
- Address all points raised and provide an appropriate response and, where relevant, suitable redress.
- Make reasonable adjustments, where required, to ensure access to the complaints procedure in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Use complaint outcomes to identify opportunities for improvement and inform future practice.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective and timelier response if they:

- Follow the stages of this procedure.
- Co-operate with the school or Trust throughout the process and respond promptly to requests for information.
- Provide all relevant information and supporting evidence as early as possible.
- Ask for support or reasonable adjustments where required.
- Treat all those involved in the complaint process with courtesy and respect.
- Refrain from publishing details of the complaint on social media whilst it is being investigated.

The investigating Officer

An investigating officer will be appointed to establish the facts and conduct a fair and impartial investigation.

- Establish the facts relevant to the complaint.
- Interview all relevant parties and keep appropriate notes.
- Consider records and any written evidence, ensuring this is held securely.
- Reach findings based on the evidence available.
- Prepare a report for the Headteacher, CEO, CFOO or Complaints Committee, including findings and, where appropriate, recommendations.

The complaints co-ordinator

The complaints co-ordinator can be:

- The headteacher,
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

- Chief Financial & Operating Officer (CFOO)
- A designated member of the complaints committee.
- A nominated staff member providing administrative support.

The complaints co-ordinator will:

- Keep the complainant up to date at each stage in the procedure.
- Make sure the process runs smoothly by liaising with staff members, the headteacher, designated complaints committee member (s), clerk, and the CEO and CFOO of the Trust.
- Be aware of issues relating to:
 - Sharing third-party information
 - Additional support needed by complainants; for example, interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person.
- Monitor compliance with the timescale set out within this policy.
- Keep records.

The Clerk

The clerk will:

- Be the contact point for the complainant and the complaints committee, including circulating the relevant papers and evidence before complaints committee meetings.
- Arrange the complaints hearing.
- Record and circulate an accurate record of the hearing and outcome.

Committee chair

The committee chair will:

- Ensure that the hearing is conducted fairly, impartially and respectfully.
- Ensure that all parties have the opportunity to present their case.
- Ensure that all parties have access to the relevant information.
- Ensure that the panel reaches its decision based on the evidence presented.

5. Principles for Investigation

When investigating a complaint, the school or Trust will seek to establish:

- What has happened.
- Who was involved.
- Whether policies and procedures were followed.
- What outcome the complainant is seeking.
- Whether any action is required to resolve the complaint and prevent recurrence.

5.1 Timescales

Complaints should normally be raised within three months of the incident occurring.

Where a complaint relates to a series of incidents, it should normally be raised within three months of the most recent incident.

The Trust reserves the right to consider complaints outside of this timeframe where there are exceptional circumstances and where a fair investigation remains possible.

When complaints are made out of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Where it is not possible to meet the timescales set out in this policy, the complainant will be informed of:

- The reason for the delay.
- Revised timescales.
- Any actions being taken to progress the complaint.

5.2 Complaints about our fulfilment of early years requirements

We will investigate all written complaints relating to the trust's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements and notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint. Schools will keep a record of the complaint (see section 10) 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 4666
- Emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- Using the online contact form available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted#org-contacts>

6. Complaints Procedure (excluding complaints against the Trust, CEO, CFOO, or Trustees)

6.1 Stages of Complaint

The Trust has adopted a three-Stage process for dealing with complaints:

- Stage 1 – Informal resolution
- Stage 2 – Formal investigation
- Stage 3 – Complaints committee panel hearing

The decision of the Complaints Committee is the final stage of the Trust's complaints procedure.

6.2 Stage 1: Informal resolution

Raising your concern with a member of staff

The Trust recognises that most concerns can be resolved informally and quickly.

Complainants are encouraged to raise concerns with the member of staff most directly involved as soon as possible. Concerns may be raised in person, by telephone, or in writing.

A preliminary discussion may be held to:

- Establish what has happened and who has been involved.
- Clarify what remains unresolved.
- Identify what outcome the complainant is seeking.
- Determine whether the matter can be resolved informally.

The member of staff dealing with the concern should ensure that:

- Discussions take place at a mutually convenient time.
- Meetings are conducted in a positive and professional manner.
- Appropriate notes are kept where necessary.
- Any misunderstandings are clarified.
- Any agreed actions and next steps are clearly communicated.

The school will aim to resolve informal concerns within **10 school days**, where possible.

Where the concern cannot be resolved informally, the complainant should be advised that they may submit a formal complaint to the Headteacher.

A complaint form is provided at **Appendix A** to support this process.

The complaints co-ordinator should be informed of the outcome of any informal resolution.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, or the member of staff concerned is the subject of the complaint, the matter may progress to Stage 2.

6.3 Stage 2: Formal Investigation

Complaint heard by the Headteacher

If a complainant remains dissatisfied following Stage 1, they may submit a formal complaint to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **5 working days**.

The Headteacher may:

- Meet with the complainant.
- Review written evidence.
- Speak to those involved.
- Appoint a senior member of staff to investigate and gather evidence.

Responsibility for determining the outcome of the complaint will remain with the Headteacher.

The investigation may include:

- Discussions with relevant staff members.
- Interviews with witnesses.
- Review of policies, procedures and records.

- Consideration of written statements and supporting evidence.

Written records will be maintained throughout the investigation.

The Headteacher will provide a written response outlining:

- The findings of the investigation.
- The reasons for the decision.
- Any action taken or proposed.
- Information on how to escalate the complaint if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

The Headteacher will aim to provide a written response within **30 school days** of acknowledging the complaint.

Complaints about the Headteacher

Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the complaint should be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who will undertake or commission an appropriate investigation.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a Complaints Committee Panel Hearing within **10 working days** of receiving the response.

6.4 Stage 3: Complaints Committee Panel Hearing

Complaint Heard by the Complaints Committee

The complainant should submit their request for a panel hearing in writing to the Clerk.

The Clerk will acknowledge receipt within **5 working days**.

The panel will consist of three members who have had no prior involvement in the complaint. At least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school.

The panel may include:

- Members of Local Governing Bodies (where applicable).
- Trustees.
- Independent members.

Arranging the Hearing

The Clerk will aim to arrange a hearing within **10 working days** of receiving the request.

The complainant will receive reasonable notice of the hearing date.

If the complainant rejects three proposed dates without good reason, the Clerk may determine a final date, and the hearing may proceed based on written submissions.

Any documentation to be considered by the panel will normally be shared with all parties at least **5 working days** before the hearing, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

The Hearing

The hearing will be conducted in private.

The complainant may attend and be accompanied by a supporter if they wish.

Legal representation will not normally be permitted and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

At the hearing:

- The complainant will have the opportunity to present their case.
- The school representatives will have the opportunity to respond.
- Witnesses may be called where appropriate.
- Panel members may ask questions of all parties.
- Both parties will have an opportunity to respond to questions.

Once all parties have presented their evidence, they will withdraw while the panel considers its decision.

Outcome

The panel may:

- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

Where a complaint is upheld, the panel may:

- Recommend actions to resolve the complaint.
- Recommend improvements to policies, procedures or practice.

The panel's decision, findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant in writing within **10 working days** of the hearing.

The decision of the Complaints Committee represents the final stage of the Trust's complaints procedure.

7. Complaints about the Trust, CEO, CFOO, or Trustees

Stage 1: informal Resolution

The Trust aims to resolve concerns informally wherever possible. The Trust will aim to respond to informal concerns within **10 working days**, where possible.

Concerns regarding members of the Trust's Executive Team should be raised with the appropriate senior officer:

- Concerns regarding the CFOO should be raised with the CEO.
- Concerns regarding the CEO should be raised with the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- Concerns regarding a Trustee should be raised with the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- Concerns regarding the Chair of the Board should be raised with the Vice-Chair of the Board.

If the complainant is unsure who to contact, they should contact the Trust Office for advice via:

Email: info@galileotrust.co.uk

Telephone: 01642 777963

Stage 2: Formal Investigation

If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily at the informal stage, the complainant must submit a formal complaint in writing.

The complainant will receive written acknowledgement of their complaint within **5 working days**.

An appropriate investigating officer will be appointed as follows:

- Complaints regarding the CFOO will be investigated by the CEO.
- Complaints regarding the CEO will be investigated by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- Complaints regarding a Trustee will be investigated by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- Complaints regarding the Chair of the Board of Trustees will be investigated by the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- Complaints involving multiple Trustees or members of the Executive Team may be investigated by an independent investigating officer appointed by the Trust.

The investigating officer will investigate the complaint in line with the principles set out in Section 5 and provide a written response to the complainant within **20 working days**.

The written response will include:

- The findings of the investigation.
- The reasons for the decision.
- Any action taken or proposed.
- Information on how the complaint may be escalated if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

Stage 3: Complaints Panel hearing

Complaints will be escalated to the panel hearing stage if the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint at the formal investigation stage.

The panel will consist of three individuals with no prior involvement in the complaint. Panel members may include Trustees, or appropriately independent individuals appointed by the Trust.

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the Chair and Vice-Chair; or
- About the entire Trust Board; or
- About the majority of the Trust Board,

the panel will be entirely made up of independent individuals with no previous involvement in the matter.

The complainant will be given reasonable notice of the date of the panel hearing. The Clerk will aim to arrange a hearing within **10 working days** of receiving the request, where possible.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates without good reason, the Clerk will set a date. The hearing will proceed using written submissions from both parties.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least **5 working days** before the date of the hearing unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Hearing

The hearing will be conducted in private.

The complainant and representatives from the Trust, as appropriate, will be present at the hearing. Each will have the opportunity to present written or oral submissions.

The complainant may attend the hearing and be accompanied by a supporter if they wish.

The Clerk will ensure that an accurate record of the hearing is maintained.

At the hearing:

- Each party will have the opportunity to present their case and supporting evidence.
- Witnesses may be called where appropriate.
- The panel, complainant and Trust representative(s) will have the opportunity to ask questions.
- All parties will have the opportunity to respond to questions raised.

Once all parties have presented their evidence, they will withdraw while the panel considers its findings and decision.

Outcome

The panel may:

- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

Where the complaint is upheld, the panel may:

- Recommend actions to resolve the complaint.
- Recommend improvements to Trust policies, procedures or practice.

The panel's findings, recommendations and decision will be communicated in writing to the complainant within **10 working days** of the hearing.

The decision of the Complaints Panel represents the final stage of the Trust's complaints procedure.

8. Referring complaints on completion of School and Trust Procedures

If a complainant remains dissatisfied following completion of the Trust's complaints procedure, they may refer their complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The ESFA will not normally reinvestigate the substance of a complaint or overturn decisions made by the school or Trust. However, it will consider whether the complaint has been handled properly and in accordance with the school's or Trust's published complaints procedure and relevant legal requirements.

Complaints should be submitted to the ESFA via the Department for Education's online complaints form or by writing to:

Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit

Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
5 Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

The ESFA may consider whether the school or Trust has:

- Failed to follow its published complaints procedure.
- Failed to comply with a legal duty.
- Breached a provision of its funding agreement.

- Acted unreasonably in the exercise of its functions.

If the ESFA finds that the complaints procedure has not been followed correctly, it may require the school or Trust to reconsider the complaint or review its procedures.

Further information about academy complaints can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-an-academies-complaints-procedure/best-practice-guidance-for-academies-complaints-procedures>

9. Persistent, serial, Unreasonable, or vexatious complaints

9.1 Unreasonably persistent or unreasonable complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid and will therefore be treated seriously. However, in a small number of cases, a complainant may pursue a complaint in a manner that is unreasonable, despite the complaint itself potentially having merit.

A complaint may be considered unreasonable where the complainant:

- Raises the same complaint repeatedly after the complaint's procedure has been completed.
- Refuses to identify the specific grounds of a complaint or the outcomes they are seeking.
- Refuses to engage with the complaints procedure whilst insisting their complaint is addressed.
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of this complaint's procedure.
- Persists in pursuing a complaint where the Trust has already provided a full and fair response.
- Submits lengthy, repetitive, excessive and/or AI-generated correspondence that does not materially advance the complaint, repeats issues already addressed, or places an unreasonable demand on school or Trust resources.
- Makes excessive demands on school or Trust resources through frequent, lengthy, complicated or repetitive contact.
- Behaves in a manner that is abusive, offensive, threatening or intimidating towards staff, governors, trustees or others involved in the complaint process.
- Publishes misleading, defamatory or inaccurate information about the complaint on social media or other public forums.
- Seeks outcomes that are unreasonable, disproportionate or outside the power of the school or Trust to provide.

Steps the School or Trust Will Take

The school or Trust will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns and maintain an objective and fair approach throughout the process.

Where a complainant's behaviour becomes unreasonable, the school or Trust may implement proportionate measures to manage communication. These may include:

- Appointing a single point of contact.
- Limiting communication to a specified method or timescale.

- Limiting the frequency of correspondence where excessive contact is occurring.
- Requiring future communications to be made in writing.
- Requesting that a third-party act on the complainant's behalf.
- Implementing any other reasonable and proportionate measure necessary to manage the situation.

The school or Trust will notify the complainant in writing if any communication restrictions are to be applied and explain the reasons for the decision.

Ending Contact

The school or Trust may decide to cease responding to a complainant where:

- All stages of the complaint's procedure have been exhausted.
- The school or Trust has provided a clear and comprehensive response.
- The complainant continues to contact the school or Trust repeatedly without presenting any new information or grounds for reconsideration.

The complainant will be informed in writing if a decision is made to end correspondence. Any new complaint or any complaint containing significant new evidence will still be considered in accordance with this policy.

Unacceptable Behaviour

The Trust will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or threatening behaviour towards staff, governors, trustees, pupils or members of the wider school community.

This includes:

- Verbal abuse.
- Written abuse.
- Online abuse or harassment.
- Threatening behaviour.
- Physical aggression.

Where appropriate, the school or Trust may:

- Report the matter to the police.
- Seek legal advice.
- Restrict access to school or Trust premises.
- Take any other reasonable action necessary to protect staff and pupils.

9.2 Duplicate complaints

A duplicate complaint is a complaint received from a person who was not the original complainant but relates to the same subject matter that has already been fully investigated under this procedure.

Where a duplicate complaint is received, the Trust will consider whether:

- There is any new evidence that was not previously available.
- New issues have been raised that were not addressed during the original investigation.

If there is no new information, the Trust will:

- Inform the complainant that the matter has already been investigated.
- Provide information on how the original complainant could escalate the complaint, where appropriate.
- Confirm that the complaints procedure has been exhausted.

Where new information is provided, the school or Trust will determine whether further investigation is required.

9.3 Complaint campaigns

Where the school or Trust receives a high volume of complaints regarding the same issue, particularly from individuals who are not directly connected to the school or Trust, it may respond by:

- Publishing a single response on its website.
- Issuing a standard response to all complainants.

Any complainant who remains dissatisfied may still pursue the complaint through the stages of this procedure where appropriate.

9.4 Anonymous complaints

The Trust encourages complainants to provide their name and contact details when raising concerns or complaints.

Anonymous complaints will generally not be investigated. However, the Trust may decide to investigate an anonymous complaint where:

- The issues raised are serious.
- There is a safeguarding concern.
- There is sufficient information available to allow an investigation to take place.

Any anonymous complaints received will be recorded and monitored to identify recurring themes or concerns.

10. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

The school or Trust will maintain a written record of all formal complaints and their outcomes, including:

- The nature of the complaint.
- The date the complaint was received.
- Actions taken during the investigation.
- Correspondence, statements and evidence gathered.
- The stage at which the complaint was resolved.
- The outcome of the complaint and any recommendations or actions arising from it.

Records may include copies of letters, emails, notes of meetings, telephone conversations and any other relevant documentation.

Complaint records will be treated as confidential and stored securely in accordance with data protection legislation, the Trust's Privacy Notice and Records Retention Policy. Access will be restricted to those individuals who need the information to investigate, respond to, or review a complaint.

In the case of complaints relating to the Trust, its Executive Team, or Trustees, records will be maintained securely by the Trust and access will be restricted to those involved in managing the complaint.

Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible. However, information relating to a complaint may need to be shared where:

- There is a safeguarding concern.
- Disclosure is required by law.
- Disclosure is necessary to conduct a fair investigation.
- The Secretary of State, ESFA, Ofsted or another regulatory body requests information as part of their statutory functions.
- Disclosure is required under data protection legislation or the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Trust will keep records of complaints only for as long as necessary and in accordance with its Records Retention Policy.

The Trust Board will receive regular reports on complaint numbers, themes and outcomes. Individual complainants will not be identified in these reports unless there is a lawful reason for doing so.

11. Monitoring of policy

The Trust Board is responsible for ensuring that this policy remains effective, compliant with current legislation and guidance, and reflective of best practice.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier where changes in legislation, statutory guidance, regulatory requirements, or operational practice make this necessary.

Appendix A – Complaints Form

Please complete and return this form to the Headteacher (or the Trust Office if the complaint relates to the Trust, CEO, CFOO, or Trustees). Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged and the next steps explained in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Policy.

Full Name:	
Pupil's name (if applicable)	
Relationship to pupil (if applicable)	
Address (including postcode)	
Telephone number	
Details of Complaint Please provide details of your complaint, including dates, times, locations and the names of any individuals involved where appropriate. **To support the efficient investigation of complaints, complainants should provide a summary of their complaint of no more than 1,000 words. Additional evidence may be submitted separately where necessary. The school or Trust reserves the right to request a shortened version of excessively lengthy submissions.	

Informal Resolution

What steps have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint?
Please include who you spoke to and any responses received.

Desired Outcome

What outcome are you seeking, or what actions do you feel would help to resolve your complaint?

Are you attaching any supporting documentation?

If so, please provide details.

Signature	
Date	
Official use	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
By whom:	
Complaint referred to:	