

St George's School

	Complaints Procedure	
	Committee: Full Governing Board	
	Co-ordinator : Mr A Ford	
	Last Review : Summer 2025	Next Review : Summer 2027
	Linked Policies and Relevant Legislation: - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy - Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy - Expectations & Behaviour Policy - Suspension & Exclusion Policy - Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 - DfE Best practice guidance for academies complaints procedures - Education Act 2002 - <i>Particularly Section 29</i> - Equality Act 2010	

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the Complaints Policy and Procedure for St George's School Harpenden Academy Trust. It deals with both *concerns* and *complaints*.

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*'.

St George's was founded by the Revd. Cecil Grant as a non-denominational Christian boarding school. In remaining faithful to his original vision, the school is committed to academic excellence; the formation of character, and the nurturing of strong, compassionate relationships. The school strives to uphold the core values that define its community: aiming higher, showing obvious kindness, cultivating positivity, taking responsibility, and fostering togetherness.

A school rooted in the Christian faith, the school acknowledges that it is part of a fallen creation, and that as human beings, can often turn away from God's ways and fall short in what is done. In this light, the school recognises its capacity for error and imperfection. Yet the school's community are a people of hope and renewal, believing in the transforming grace of God. Guided by this understanding, the school is committed to listening, learning, and improving continually, so that it might better serve one another in the spirit of love and justice.

The school seeks to ensure that all concerns and complaints are handled with fairness, transparency, honesty and impartiality. The school is committed to responding to all complaints in a manner that is respectful, timely and proportionate, recognising the dignity of each individual involved.

St George's school is committed to equality, diversity, inclusion and justice is rooted in the Christian belief that all people are made in the image of God. The school believes everyone has inbuilt dignity, worth and potential. Therefore the school seeks to create a school community where all feel seen,

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valued and respected. It stands against discrimination and injustice in all its forms, and strives to ensure that all school policies, practices and relationships reflect its belief in the God-given value of every person.

2. Aims

The school aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents, carers or guardians of pupils at the school [referred to as “parents” in this policy]. This policy is only to parents of pupils who are currently on the school’s roll.

The only exception to this is complaints made by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this policy if the complaint was initially raised when the relevant pupil was still on the school roll. There is no formal procedure governing the making of a complaint to the school by any person who is not a parent of a pupil on roll. Any non-parent who wishes to make a complaint should do so by putting it in writing to the Headteacher who will consider how best to respond.

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

When responding to complaints, the school will aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect complainants’ desire for confidentiality
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
- Make sure that any decisions the school makes are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes

The school will try to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

The school will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.

To support this, the school will make this policy available by publishing it on the school website.

Throughout the process, the school will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

3. Legislation and guidance

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

It is also based on [best practice guidance for academies complaints procedures](#) published by the Department for Education (DfE)

This policy complies with the school’s funding agreement and articles of association

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4. Scope

This policy does **not** cover complaints procedures relating to:

Exceptions	Who to Contact
Admissions	The DfE – see published guidance
Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)	Concerns about statutory assessments of special educational needs should be raised directly with the relevant local authorities.
Safeguarding and Child Protection matters	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance If a complainant has serious concerns, they may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding (tel: 0300 123 4043) or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (tel: 0300 123 4043).
Suspension and permanent exclusion	Further information about raising concerns about exclusions is available from the DfE in their School discipline and exclusion guidance.
Whistleblowing	The school has an internal whistleblowing policy for members of staff, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers who do not wish to raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus . Volunteer staff who have concerns about the school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. A complainant may also be able to complain directly to the Local Authority or to the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of their complaint.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's grievance policy.
Staff conduct complaints	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. 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.
Services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities	Complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

5. Roles and responsibilities:

The complainant

Complainants are defined as parents of pupils at the school (see section 2). The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- Follow these procedures
- Cooperate with the school throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved with respect
- Do not approach individual governors about the complaint
- Do not publish details about the complaint on social media

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this document (Appendix 1). If a complainant requires help in completing the form, they should contact the headteacher's PA at admin@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk. A complainant can also ask a third-party organisation, for example, the Citizens Advice to help them.

In accordance with equality law, the school will make 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.

The investigator

The investigator is an individual, appointed by the school, to look into the complaint and establish the facts. They may:

- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
- Prepare a comprehensive report to the headteacher or complaints committee, which includes the facts and potential solutions

The complaints coordinator

The complaints coordinator can be:

- The headteacher
- The designated complaints governor
- Any other staff member providing administrative support

The complaints coordinator 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, chair of governors, and clerk to the governing board

Be aware of issues relating to:

- Sharing third-party information
- Additional support needed by complainants; for example, interpretation support or special educational needs

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Clerk to the governing board

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 the minutes and outcome of the hearing

Committee chair

The committee chair will:

- Chair the meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout
- Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the committee, and are allowed to present their case

6. Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, the school will try to clarify:

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

7. Timescales

The timescales under which the school aims to operate are set out in Section 8 and are dependent upon the stage of the complaint.

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident.

The school will consider exceptions to this timeframe in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

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

If at any point the school cannot meet the timescales set out in this policy, the school will:

- Set new time limits with the complainant
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay

8. Stages of complaint (not complaints against the headteacher or governors)

The school operates a 3-stage process for dealing with complaints:

- Stage 1 – informal resolution
- Stage 2 – formal investigation
- Stage 3 – review panel

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8.1. Stage 1: Informal

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

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible, and within the timescales set out in Section 7

The complaint should be addressed to the relevant member of school staff either by letter, telephone, email, or in person, this will normally be the Head of House or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school by emailing admin@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk or calling 01582 765477

The school will normally acknowledge informal complaints within 2 school days, which will confirm how the school intends to proceed, including an indication of the anticipated timescale.

The informal stage may involve a meeting between the complainant and the investigator. A written response will normally be provided by the school **within 10 school days**.

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

8.2. Stage 2: Formal

The formal stage involves the complainant putting the complaint to the headteacher:

- In a letter or email (this is preferred)
- Over the phone
- In person by appointment
- Through a third party acting on their behalf

The headteacher should receive the complaint **within five working days** of receiving the Stage 1 decision.

The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint.

If complainants need assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the school by emailing admin@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk or calling 01582 765477

The headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 2 school days. 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.

The headteacher (or other person appointed by the headteacher for this purpose) will then conduct an investigation. The written conclusion of this investigation will normally be sent to the complainant **within 15 school days**.

Where a complaint relates to a student disciplinary process or sanction, parents or carers 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 place on the basis of the available evidence. Should the stage 2 investigation reveal that a sanction set was not

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appropriate, an appropriate note will be made on the student record and any further necessary steps taken.

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they must inform the clerk to the governing board in writing within 10 school days. Requests received outside of this timeframe will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Complaints can be escalated by contacting the clerk to the governing board:

- By letter or email
- Through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

The clerk will need the details of the complaint as set out above, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The clerk will acknowledge receipt of the request within 3 school days.

8.3. Stage 3: Independent Review

Convening the panel

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

The panel will be appointed by, or on behalf of, the proprietor and must consist of at least 3 people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least 1 panel member must be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel cannot be made up solely of governing board members, as they are not independent of the management and running of the school.

The panel will have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress (see section 12).

The complainant must have reasonable notice of the date of the review panel. The clerk will aim to find a date within 20 school days of the request, where possible.

If the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, the clerk will set a date. The hearing will go ahead using written submissions from both parties.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting.

The board will ensure that the hearing is properly minuted.

At the meeting

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless required as part of reasonable adjustments. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending will be sought before meetings or conversations take place. If a person is brought as a supporter without prior knowledge to the school, the school may refuse entry. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

At the review panel meeting, the complainant and representatives from the school, as appropriate, will be present. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting. Any person not behaving with respect and decorum, may be asked to leave the meeting.

The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied if they wish. The school doesn't encourage either party to bring legal representation, but will consider it on a

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case-by-case basis. For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by their union.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called, as appropriate, to present their evidence.

The panel, the complainant and the school representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and school representative(s) have presented their cases, they will be asked to leave and the evidence will be considered.

The panel will put together its findings and recommendations from the case. The panel will provide copies of the minutes of the hearing, the findings and the recommendations to the complainant and, where relevant, the individual who is the subject of the complaint, and make a copy available for inspection by the proprietor and headteacher.

The outcome

The committee can:

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

If the complaint is upheld, the committee will:

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

The school will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 10 school days.

9. Complaints against the headteacher, a governor or the governing board

9.1. Stage 1: informal

Complaints made against the headteacher or any individual member of the governing board (including the chair or vice-chair) should be directed to the clerk of the governing board in the first instance.

A suitably skilled and impartial governor will then carry out the steps at stage 1 set out in Section 6 above.

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

Complaints about the whole governing board will be resolved at stage 2 below.

How to escalate a complaint

Complaints can be escalated by contacting the clerk to the governing board:

- By letter or email
- Over the phone
- In person by appointment
- Through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

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The clerk will need the details of the complaint as set out above, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

9.2. Stage 2: formal

Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher should be addressed to the chair of governors, via the school, marked as private and confidential.

Complaints about the chair of governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the clerk to the governing board via the school, marked as private and confidential.

Formal complaints can be raised:

- By letter or email
- Over the phone
- In person by appointment
- By a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

If the complaint is about the headteacher or an individual governor, a suitably skilled and impartial governor will then carry out the steps at stage 2 set out in Section 6 above.

If the complaint is: jointly about the chair and vice-chair or: the entire governing board or: the majority of the governing board, an independent investigator will carry out the steps in stage 2 set out in Section 6 above. They will be appointed by the governing board and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 15 school days.

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform the clerk to the governing board in writing within 10 school days. Requests received outside of this timeframe will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The clerk will acknowledge receipt of the request within 3 school days.

9.3. Stage 3: review panel

If the complaint is about the headteacher or an individual governor, the steps outlined in stage 3 of section 8 above will be followed.

If the complaint is: jointly about the chair and vice-chair, or: the entire governing board, or: the majority of the governing board, a committee of independent governors will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local schools, and/or the local authority and will carry out the steps at stage 3 (set out in Section 8 above).

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

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to the Department for Education (DfE). The DfE will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the school. The DfE will not overturn a school's decision about a complaint, but will intervene if a school has:

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- Breached a clause in its funding agreement
- Failed to act in line with its duties under education law
- Acted (or is proposing to act) unreasonably when exercising its functions

If the school's complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage:

www.gov.uk/complain-about-school. The school will include this information in the outcome letter to complainants.

11. Unreasonable and persistent complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore the school will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- 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 cooperate 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 or with good practice
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- Raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- 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 fully and properly implemented and completed, including referral to the DfE
- 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 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

Please note: the above list is not intended to be exhaustive and is for guidance purposes only. It is at the discretion of the school what is deemed to be unreasonable.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

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Steps the school will take:

The school will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's comments, and give them a clear statement of its position and their options. The school will maintain its role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when to meet with individuals. The school will follow its complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or chair of governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking. If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable, refer them to this policy and remind them to act in accordance with it. For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, the school may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as [Citizens Advice](#)
- Put any other strategy in place as deemed necessary

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the school will immediately inform the police and communicate its actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the school premises and ensuring appropriate measures of support are provided to staff where they are the subject of aggression and/or violence.

Serial/persistent complaints

If the complainant contacts the school again on the same issue, the correspondence may then be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent'. The school may stop responding to the complainant when the following conditions are met:

- The school has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options
- The complainant contacts the school repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time

The case to stop responding is stronger if:

- The complainant's communications are often or always abusive or aggressive
- The complainant makes insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff
- The school has reason to believe the individual is contacting the school with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience

Where the school decides to stop responding, the school will inform the individual of its intentions to do so. The school will also explain that it will consider any new complaints they make provided the concerns raised are materially different to those raised previously and/or are unconnected to the previous concern

Duplicate complaints

If the school have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, the school will assess whether there are aspects that it hadn't previously considered, or any new information it needs to take into account.

If the school is satisfied that there are no new aspects, it will:

- Tell the new complainant that the school has already investigated and responded to this issue, and that the local process is complete

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- Direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with the schools original handling of the complaint
- If a duplicate complaint is raised which in the view of the school warrants further consideration, the procedure outlined in Section 6 or 7 (as appropriate) will be repeated.

Group and Complaint Campaigns

The School does not normally hear group complaints, but where the school receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject (for example petitions, social media campaigns or co-signed letters) the school may respond to these complaints by:

- Publishing a single response on the school website
- Sending a template response to all of the complainants

If complainants are not satisfied with the school's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

12. Record keeping and confidentiality

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

This material will be treated as confidential and stored securely, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

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

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with general data protection law, our Privacy Notice and our Information Security, Online Safety and Data Protection Policy (which will generally mean six years from the end of the financial year in which the complaint was concluded, unless a longer period is defined in the schools data retention guidelines according to the nature of the complaint).

The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole governing board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point.

Where the governing board is aware of the substance of the complaint before the review panel stage, the school will (where reasonably practicable) arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.

Complainants also have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The decision to approve this request is made by the governing board, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

13. Learning lessons

The governing board (or a relevant committee) will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the headteacher, where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there

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are any improvements that the school could make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

14. Monitoring arrangements

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in making sure that complaints are handled properly. The governing board will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in Section 13.

The complaints records are logged and managed by the Headteacher's PA

This policy will be reviewed by the school's Senior Leadership Team every 3 years

At each review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

15. Links with other policies

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures
- Admissions policy
- Suspension and permanent exclusion policy
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Special educational needs policy and information report
- Privacy notices

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Appendix 1 - Complaint Form (page 1 of 3)

Please complete and return to Mr Andy Ford, headteacher, contact email admin@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

However, if the complaint is about the headteacher please return this form to Mr John Featherby Chair of Governors, via Mrs Julie Raybould, Clerk to the Governing Board, contact email Julie.Raybould@clerks.hfleducation.org.

If the complaint is about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole Governing Board please return it to Mrs Julie Raybould, Clerk to the Governing Board, contact email Julie.Raybould@clerks.hfleducation.org.

Your name:
Student's name:
Your relationship to the student:
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number: Email address:
Please give details of your complaint, including details of who at the school knows about it already, as a concern at 'Stage 1 - Informal Complaint' of the school's complaints procedure, and any outcomes following your approach:

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What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage – what are your desired outcomes?

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

Signature:

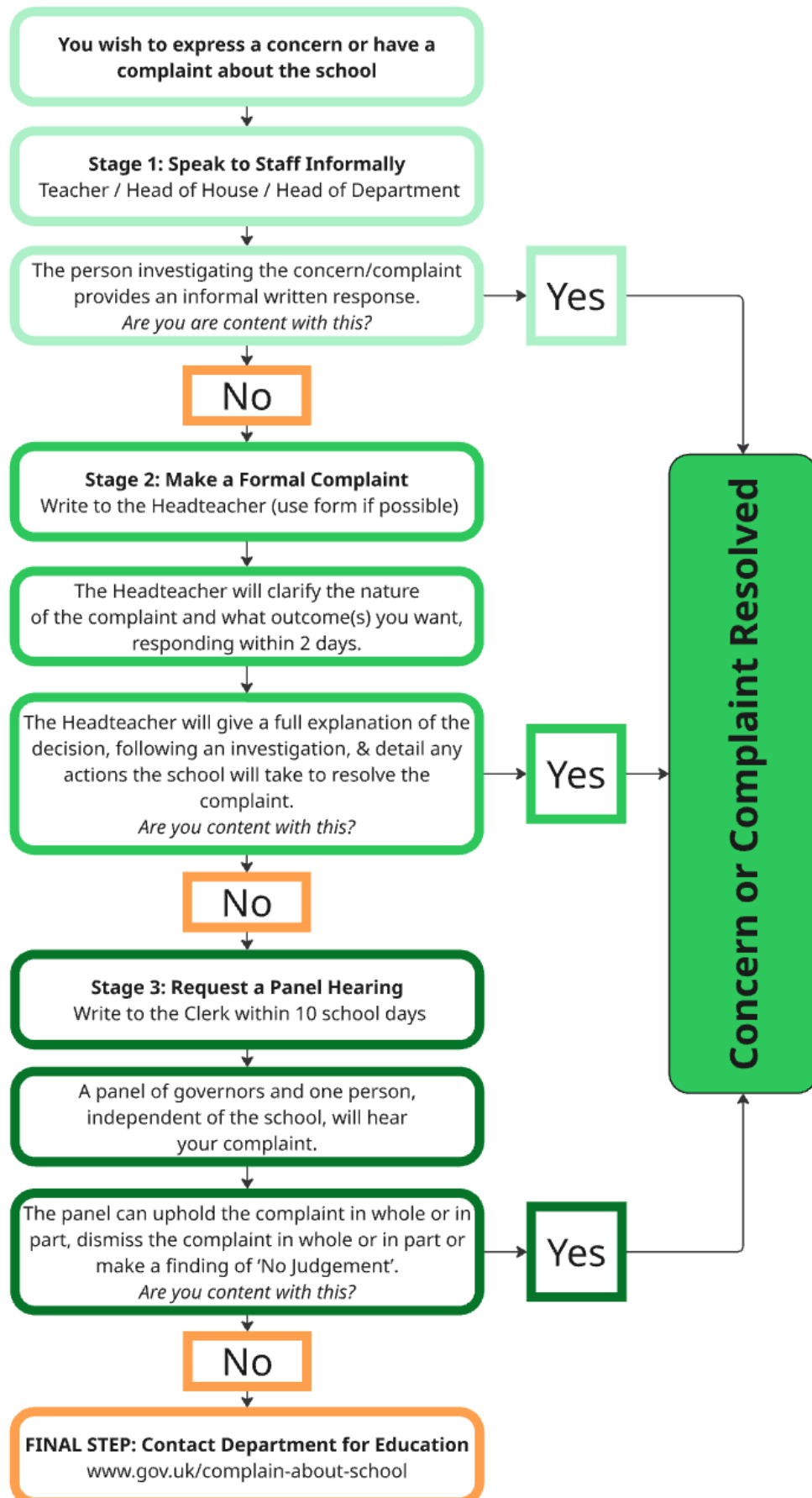
Date

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Appendix 1 - Complaint Form (page 3 of 3)	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
By who:	
Complaint referred to:	
Action taken:	
Date:	

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Appendix 2 – Concerns or Complaints Flowchart



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Appendix 3 - Definitions

This appendix explains some of the terms used in the Complaints Procedure that might be unfamiliar. The school has tried to make the language easy to understand.

Clerk to the Governing Board - The person who helps the governing board with administration and supports the complaints process.

Complainant - The person making the complaint. This is usually a parent or carer of a pupil.

Complaint - A way of telling the school you are unhappy about something that has happened, or something that has not happened.

Concern - An early worry or question about something that you feel may not be right, it does not have to be a serious issue..

DfE (Department for Education) - The government department responsible for education and children's services in England. They ensure that schools follow the law and that complaints are handled properly. If you are not satisfied with the way the school has dealt with your complaint, you can contact the DfE.

Exclusion - When a pupil is not allowed to attend school for a period of time (temporary exclusion), or is removed permanently.

Governor - A volunteer who helps lead and support the school by being a member of the Governing Board.

Independent Panel Member - A person who is not connected to the school and is invited to sit on a panel hearing to help ensure that a complaint is reviewed fairly.

Investigator - The person chosen by the school to look into a complaint, speak to those involved, and report on what they find.

Panel Hearing - A formal meeting where a group of people listen to all sides of a complaint before making a decision.

Persistent or Serial Complaint - A complaint that continues to be raised again and again, even after the school has responded.

Reasonable Adjustment - A change the school makes to help a student with a disability or an additional need so they can take part in school life. .

SEN (Special Educational Needs) - Extra help some students need with learning because of a learning difficulty or disability.

Safeguarding - The steps the school takes to keep students safe from harm.

Sanction - A consequence or disciplinary action given to a student when school rules are broken.

School Day - A day when the school will acknowledge, investigate or respond to a complaint. Also known as a "working day". Weekends, bank holidays, inset and school holidays are not school days.

Statutory - Something that must be done because the law requires it.

The School – Refers to St George's School, Harpenden

Whistle-blowing - When someone who works at the school raises a serious concern about wrongdoing, often involving safety or law-breaking.