



#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Whilst outlining a structured approach to handling complaints, these guidelines do not aim to inhibit or to be over prescriptive.

1.2 Complaints are not easy to define and it is therefore important to bear in mind that what may be initially presented as a complaint, is in fact a problem or a concern.

1.3 Complaints need to be investigated speedily, efficiently, fully and fairly. All aspects of each complaint must be given due consideration.

1.4 The aim of this complaints procedure is to ensure that a complaint is fully considered and, wherever possible, resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

1.5 It may be that a complaint can be resolved without formally invoking these procedures, particularly where the complaint can be redefined as problem or concern. These model procedures should not be seen as replacing the good practice of resolving concerns or problems as they arise.

#### **2. Scope**

2.1 The procedures do not cover complaints relating to the following matters, which are dealt with under other (statutory) arrangements:-

- admissions of pupils
- exclusions of pupils
- assessments of special educational needs.

2.2 During the investigation of a complaint under these procedures, it may become clear that other procedures will need to be invoked - for example: child protection, staff discipline or staff grievances procedures.

2.3 Any complaint must be raised with the school within 30 working days of the incident.

#### **3. Principles**

3.1 Complaints, however received, will be dealt with as quickly and as fairly as possible, and will be recorded in writing.

3.2 Complainants will be kept fully informed at every stage of the procedure.

3.3 Governors will provide information about the procedure in the school's prospectus.

3.4 All staff will be made aware of the procedures and will be given guidance in distinguishing between a worry, a problem or concern and an actual complaint.

3.5 It will be at the Headteacher's discretion whether or not anonymous complaints are investigated.



#### **4. Procedures**

##### **4.1 Introduction stage**

4.1.1 Every effort will be made to resolve concerns and complaints as they arise by informal means.

4.1.2 Wherever possible, this will be done by discussion with the member of staff most directly involved.

4.1.3 Only where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of such discussions will it be necessary to move to the next formal stage of the procedures.

##### **4.2 Stage One**

4.2.1 All complaints must be made in writing to the Headteacher. If the complaint is directed against the Headteacher, the person designated to deal with the complaint shall be the Chair of Governors (or his/her nominee). A copy of the letter and the school response will be placed in the complaints file.

4.2.2 The complainant will be advised who is to deal with the complaint and how that person can be contacted, and the date of the initial investigation, which should be within 10 school days of the receipt of the complaint.

4.2.3 The complainant will be informed that he/she may be accompanied by a friend or relative and that all conversations and correspondence will be treated as confidential.

4.2.4 The person dealing with the complaint will, as appropriate, interview the complainant and any witnesses in the presence of another member of staff not involved in the complaint.

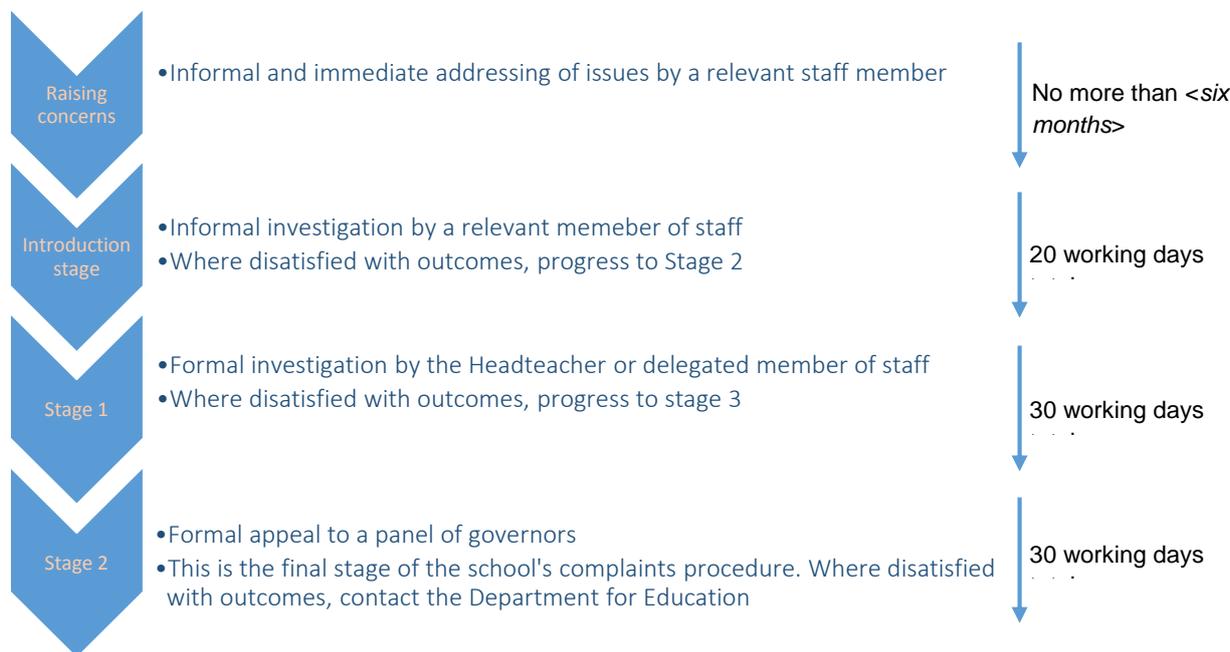
4.2.5 Following this investigation, the complainant will be informed in writing and within five days (and within 30 days of receiving the complaint) of the outcome:-

- the complaint is upheld and appropriate action will be taken
- the complaint is not upheld and no action will be taken
- the complaint is a matter of staff discipline and will be pursued under the school's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- the complaint is a matter which is subject to child protection procedures and will be dealt with under the appropriate code of practice.

##### **4.3 Stage Two**

4.3.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of stage one, he or she may request a hearing of the complaint by a panel of the Governing Body.

4.3.2 The Governors' panel will meet within 30 working days of receiving the complaint. The Governors' panel will adhere to the procedures for investigating the complaint and reporting to the complainant as set out in 4.2.4 and 4.2.5 above.



### Timeframes

Richard Challoner School will endeavour to abide by timeframes stated under each stage but acknowledges that in some circumstances, this is not always possible due to the complexity of information needed to review a complaint or difficulties regarding individual's availability to deal with the complaint, for example. If it becomes apparent that it is not possible to complete any stage of the complaints procedure within a given timeframe, the individual responsible for handling the complaint will contact the complainant as soon as possible and come to an agreed timeframe that works for all parties involved.

Richard Challoner School reserves the right not to investigate complaints that have been made three months after the subject of the complaint took place, except in exceptional circumstances. What is meant by exceptional circumstances is where new evidence has come to light, where the complaint is of an especially serious matter or where there is reasonable justification for why the complainant has been unable to raise the complaint before this time. The Headmaster will review the situation and decide whether or not to enact the complaints procedure, informing the chair of governors of the decision.

### 5. Conduct of the Governors' Panel Hearing.

5.1 The aim of each meeting is to resolve the complaint and achieve a reconciliation between the school and the complainant. The chairperson of the panel will open the meeting by introducing to each other those present and explaining the reason for the meeting.

5.2 The clerk to the panel will take minutes of the meeting and these will be made available to all parties.

5.3 The complainant, or his/her representative, will be invited to present his/her case and to explain why they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the previous stage.



5.4 The Headteacher and members of the panel will be given the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant.

5.5 The Headteacher, or his/her representative, will be invited to present his/her case, explaining the action taken so far and the reasons for the outcome.

5.6 The complainant and members of the panel will be given the opportunity to ask questions of the Headteacher.

5.7 The Headteacher, or his/her representative, will have the opportunity to sum up their case. This summing up may not introduce new evidence.

5.8 The complainant, or his/her representative, will have the opportunity to sum up their case. This summing up may not introduce new evidence.

5.9 When the Governors are satisfied that the complaint and, where possible, any solutions have been fully discussed, they should ask all parties (except the clerk) to withdraw so that they can consider their decision. The Governors may ask the complainant and the Headteacher to wait while they consider their decision so that they may call them back to seek further clarification. If this occurs, all parties should be present.

**Updated: May 2018**

**Review due: May 2020**



|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name   |  |
| Name of pupil, year group and your relationship to them (where applicable)                     |  |
| Contact address  |  |
| Contact telephone day  |  |
| Contact telephone mobile   |  |
| Contact email address  |  |
| Details of the complaint   |  |
|  |  |
| Action taken so far (including staff member who has dealt with it so far) or solutions offered |  |
|  |  |
| The reason that this was not a satisfactory resolution for you                                 |  |
|  |  |
| What action would you like to be taken to resolve the problem?                                 |  |
|  |  |

Signed:

Date:

*Official use*

Date received:

Signed: