COMPLAINTS POLICY

Our Vision:
We are committed to quality teaching and learning in a positive and compassionate Christian environment, where everyone is valued as an individual.

We expect everyone to, 'Treat others as you want them to treat you.' (Matthew 7:12).

We have high expectations of all, and strive to provide a safe, challenging and stimulating environment where everyone can flourish spiritually.

Our Values:

To ensure the well-being and safety of all individuals in our school community are met through our school values of:

Respect – by respecting each other and preventing all forms of bullying to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our school community.
Compassion – by considering the needs of all individuals, valuing diversity and expecting everyone to look after each other and keep everyone safe.
Creation – creating a positive, safe and secure environment which allows children to thrive and flourish and adults to feel included.
Perseverance – To persevere in providing an inclusive, welcoming and friendly environment in which Christian and caring values are central to the ethos of the school, ensuring all children and families feel valued and secure.
Service – by building trusting relationships and ensuring equal opportunities for all the children we serve, to help to keep everyone safe.

RATIONALE

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, Governing Bodies of all maintained schools in England have been required to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

There is a difference between a concern and a complaint; taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the number that develop into formal complaints. The formal procedures will need to be invoked only when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

AIMS

We will endeavour to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and will always put the interests of our children above all else. We will give careful consideration to all complaints and we aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding.

Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions)

Our complaints procedure will:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- be easily accessible and publicised;
- be simple to understand and use;
- be impartial and 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 an independent person where necessary;
- respect confidentiality;
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress;
- provide information to the school's senior management team and Governors so that services can be improved.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Immigration Act 2016
- The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy has also due regard to guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- HM Government (2016) 'Code of Practice on the English language requirement for public sector workers'

- DfE (2021) 'Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020'

GUIDELINES

All complaints shall be considered whether made for example in writing, by email or, in person or by telephone.

For a general complaint:

Step 1 If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education or support that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher; most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can act before it seriously affects the child's progress.

Step 2 Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider all matters of concern very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly. Most complaints would normally be resolved at this stage.

Step 3 Only when an informal complaint fails to be resolved by the Headteacher should a formal complaint be made to the Governing Body. Complaints should be made using the appropriate Complaints Procedure Form stating the nature of the complaint, who has been spoken to already and the preferred outcome. The parent should send the Complaints Procedure Form to the Chair of Governors via the school office.

For a complaint about the Headteacher:

Step 1 If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the behaviour, leadership, or management of the Headteacher, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the Headteacher; most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way.

Step 2 Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the Headteacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Chair of the Governing Body. The Chair will consider all matters of concern very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly. Most complaints would normally be resolved at this stage.

Step 3 Only when an informal complaint fails to be resolved by the Chair should a formal complaint be made to the Governing Body. Complaints should be made using the appropriate Complaints Procedure Form stating the nature of the complaint, who has been spoken to already and the preferred outcome. The parent should send the Complaints Procedure Form to the Governing Body via the School Business Manager (Mrs Zoe Taylor), via the school office admin@willastonce.cheshire.sch.uk).

For a complaint about a School Governor:

Any complaint made against the Chair of Governors, or another member of the Governing Body should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body. Where a complaint is against the Chair of Governors or another Governor, the complaint will move straight to step 3 of the procedure.

Governing Body Complaints Committee

The Governing Body must consider all written complaints within 21 school working days of receipt.

The Chair of Governors will nominate a Governor to co-ordinate the procedure and will appoint a Complaints Panel consisting of 3 Governors who are not employees of the school. The nominated co-ordinator will Chair the Complaints Panel.

The co-ordinator will arrange a meeting of the complaints panel to discuss the complaint and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting so that they can explain the complaint in more detail. The school will give the complainant at least five days' notice of the meeting. If the complainant cannot attend the suggested date, a further date will be set. If the complainant does not attend the second date, a third and final date will be set, at which time the meeting will proceed without the complainant present.

The Headteacher will write a report addressing the complaint and ensure that the complaints panel members and the complainant receive a copy 4 days before the meeting. (If it is a complaint about the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will write the report).

The complainant is invited to write a report addressing the issue and must ensure that the Complaints Panel members and the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) receives a copy 2 days before the meeting. Other written evidence will not be accepted at the meeting, except in exceptional circumstances.

Check list for a panel hearing

The panel must take the following points into account:

- the hearing is as informal as possible;
- after introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint (with the support of Parent Partnership or other advocate if required);
- the panel members and Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) may ask questions;
- the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) is then invited to explain the school's actions (with support of DHT, SENCo or other supporter if required);
- the panel members or complainant may ask questions;
- the complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint;
- the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint;
- the Chair of the Panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within 3 working days;
- both parties leave the meeting while the panel decides on the issues.

When the panel has fully investigated the complaint, the Chair of the Panel, on behalf of the Governing Body, will write to the complainant confirming the outcome of the complaint and any agreed action to be taken. The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Investigating Complaints

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint should make sure that they:

- establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meet with the complainant or contact them;
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of the interview.

Matters Outside the Scope of a Complaints Procedure

The exceptions listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures, will not be dealt with via the school complaints procedure:

Exception	Who to Contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) • School re-organisation proposals • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities (LA). For school admissions the admission authority is the LA. Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.
• Exclusion of children from school	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions
• Whistleblowing	Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.
• Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures	These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.
• Complaints about services	Providers should have their own

	provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.	complaints procedure to deal with complaints about

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure we will look for a way in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

It should be noted that an admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

If you believe that the Governing Body has acted unreasonably, you can complain in writing to the Secretary of State for Education.

Unresolved complaints
From 1 August 2012 complaints about maintained schools not resolved by the school that would have been considered by the Local Government Ombudsman or the LA should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Education.

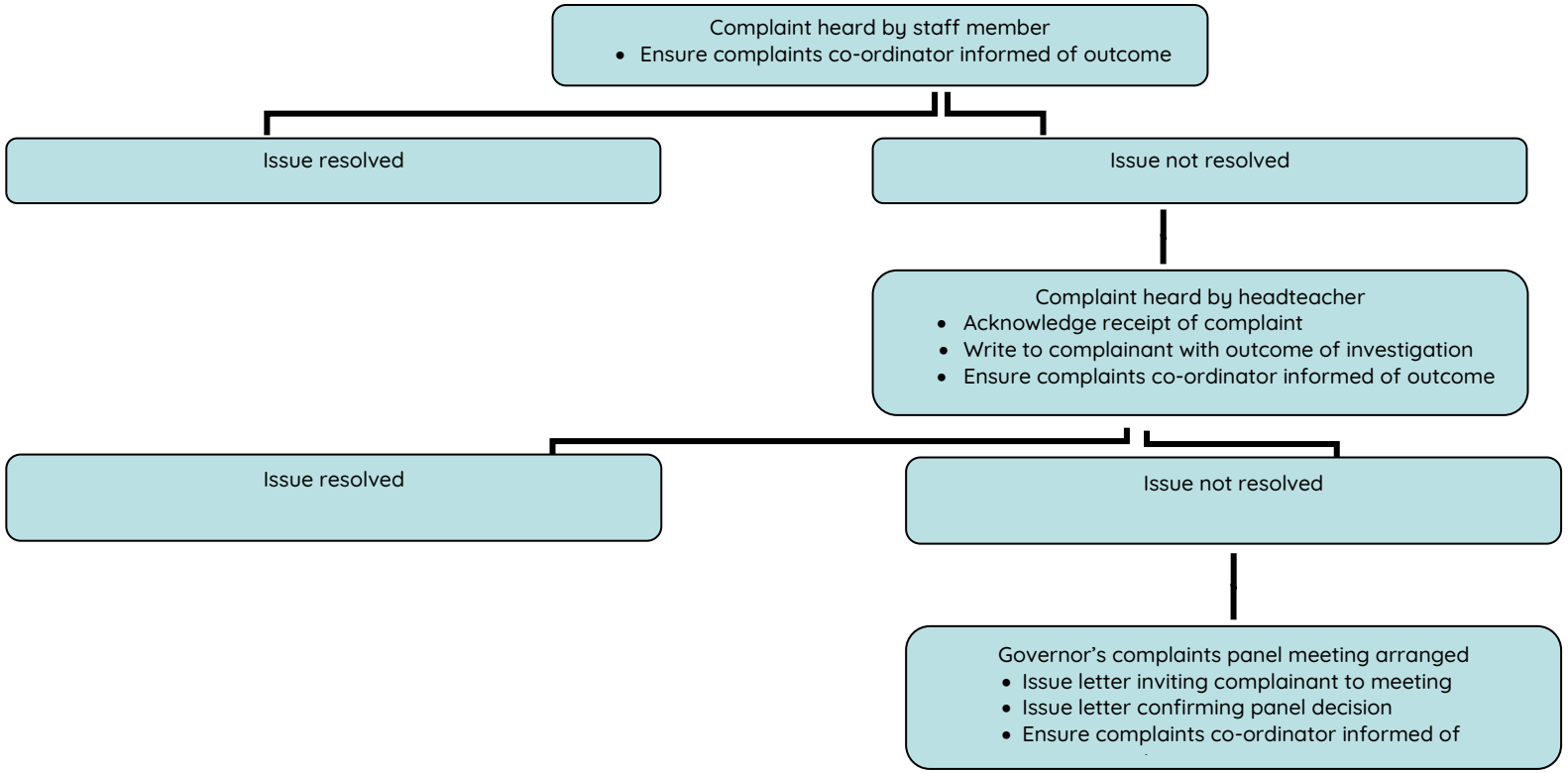
Further information can be obtained by calling the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288 or going online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus or by writing to:
Department for Education
School Complaints Unit
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Approved by Governors, 14th October 2025

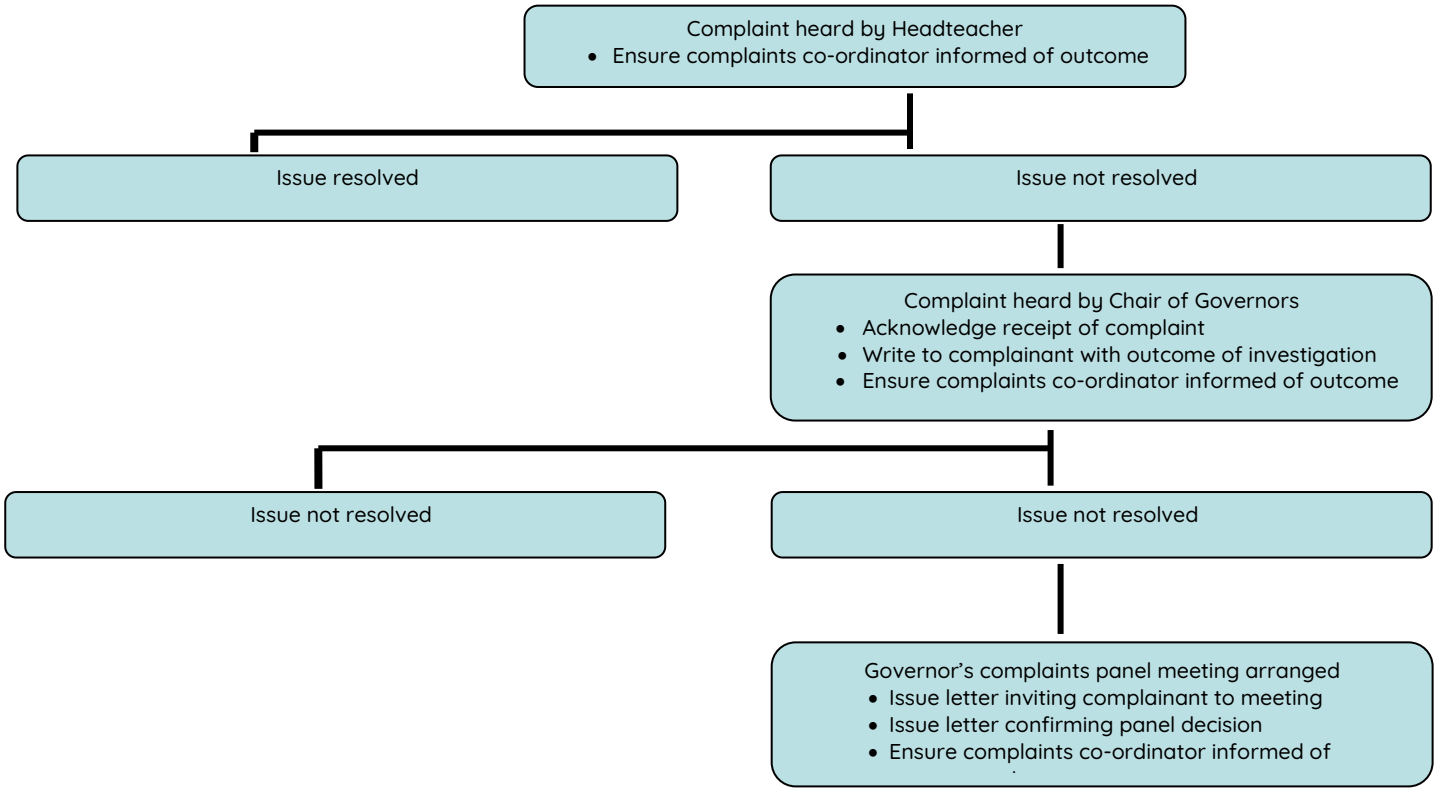
Signed Chair of Governors

Annex A

Summary of Dealing with Complaint



Summary of Dealing with Complaint against Headteacher



Annex B

Complaints Form

Please complete and return to Zoe Taylor admin@willastonce.cheshire.sch.uk (complaints co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name:
Your relationship to the pupil:
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint.
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak 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:
Official use Date acknowledgement sent: By who: Complaint referred to: Date: