



Complaints Policy

Review Summary

Adopted:	September 2022
Review Cycle:	Annually
Last Review:	July 2022
Next Review:	July 2023

NB: Complaints may have a shorter timeline if they are in relation to the Headteacher or Trust and need to be escalated more quickly.

[Policy Statement](#)

[Definition](#)

[Legal Framework](#)

[Who can make a Complaint](#)

[The difference between a Concern and a Complaint](#)

[How to raise a Concern or make a Complaint](#)

[Complaints Form](#)

[Anonymous complaints](#)

[Time Scales](#)

[Complaints received outside term time](#)

[Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints](#)

[Scope of the Complaints procedure](#)

[Complaints Coordinator](#)

[Resolving Complaints](#)

[Withdrawing a Complaint](#)

[Stage 1- Informal Complaint](#)

[Stage 2- Formal Complaint](#)

[Stage 3- Panel Hearing \(Local Governing Body\)](#)

[Stage 4- Complaints Escalated to/ about the Trust, CEO or Trustee](#)

[Complaint Process Timeline](#)

[Adoption of Policy](#)

Policy Statement

The Trust values its relationship with parents, carers, and our local community. We are happy to receive suggestions and comments outside of this complaints policy, as this can help us to identify areas of success and where we can make improvements.

This policy sets out the framework for how complaints are managed for all the schools within the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust (the Trust). The Trust reserves the right to alter this process, in exceptional circumstances. We encourage complaints to be raised informally, every effort will be made to resolve the matters quickly as possible before progressing. However, if this is not possible the procedures in this policy should be followed.

Definition

For the purpose of this document:

- a. The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust is referred to as **The Trust of Schools**;
- b. School refers to all academy schools within the Trust of Schools;
- c. Students refers to all students being educated or on site at any one of the schools within the Trust of Schools.

Legal Framework

This Policy will be published on the Trust's website and as a statutory policy will be included in the Trust's Policy Monitoring Schedule.

It is a requirement of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 Part 7 that a complaint procedure is in place for all the academies within the Trust. The model policy from the Department for Education has been used to inform the processes set out in this policy.

The Trustees are responsible for overseeing and reviewing the revision of statutory policies in line with the current Scheme of Delegation.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at a school within The Trust. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to The Trust of Schools about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

For the full scope of complaints, please refer to [Scope of the Complaints Procedure](#) section of this policy.

CONCERN	COMPLAINT
An expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought and a resolution is found at school level.	An expression of serious dissatisfaction of previous concerns communicated to, but not resolved at school level.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

It is in everyone's interest that concerns, and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure.

The Trust of Schools takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the complaints coordinator, will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the complaints coordinator will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important. Mediation may also be considered at any stage if trust in a relationship has broken down.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, The Trust of Schools will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.



How to raise a concern or make a complaint

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

Concerns are taken very seriously, and we pledge to respond to all concerns raised within **2 school term time days**. All safeguarding concerns will be dealt with as a matter of priority in accordance with school Safeguarding policies.

Formal complaints **must** be made in writing and wherever possible via the complaints form which can be found here: [Complaints Form](#)

Complaints should be addressed to the relevant authorised person as set out in the table below:

Complaints against:	Address to:	Where:
School systems and procedures or School Staff (except the Headteacher)	School Headteacher	Via the school office
Headteacher	Chair of Governors	Via the school office
Chair of Governors, individual governor, or whole governing body	Clerk to the Governing Body	Via the school office
Trust systems and procedures	Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO)	Via the clerk to the Trust
Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) Trustee of the Trust	Chair of Trustees	Via the clerk to the Trust

NB. Complaints against individuals will be addressed under the complaints policy if the complaint is in relation to how effectively the individual has responded to the concerns raised. If the complaint is in relation to an individual's conduct this will be investigated and addressed under HR policies and procedures as noted in page 7.

Complaints Form

To ensure we fully understand the complaint, we encourage complainants to use the **Complaint Form**.

You will be asked to complete the following information:

- details of your complaint
- actions, if any, already taken to try to resolve your complaint
- timeline and sequence of events leading to complaint
- actions you feel will resolve your complaint

If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office or complaints coordinator in your school. You can also ask a third-party organisation for example like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint, holding meetings in accessible location and providing translation and/or interpreter services where needed.

Complaints Coordinator

A list of contact details for School complaints coordinators can be found on the Trust website.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, The Trust of Schools wants to resolve the complaint.

If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology

Anonymous Complaints

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

Time Scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will not consider complaints made outside of term time. Complaints received outside of term time will be acknowledged on the first day of term for all students.

Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

The Ted Wragg Trust and its schools are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our academies. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

The Ted Wragg Trust defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the academy. The Ted Wragg Trust Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints Policy can be found here: [Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints](#).

Scope of the complaints policy

Some complaints are dealt with under other statutory procedures and therefore not included in this policy (see below).

Admissions to schools

- Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process – either through the appeals process or via the local authority.

Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation

- Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
- If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- LADO CONTACT:** 01392 384964/
childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecuremailbox@devon.gov.uk
- MASH CONTACT Devon:** 0345 155 1071 /mashsecure@devon.gov.uk
- MASH CONTACT Plymouth:** 01752 668000/gateway@plymouth.gov.uk

Whistleblowing

- We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.
- The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistle-blowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus
- Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the Local Authority or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.

Staff grievances

- Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.

Staff conduct

- Complaints about staff conduct will be dealt with under the HR policies, if appropriate.
- Any misconduct identified following an investigation will be addressed via internal disciplinary procedures.
- 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.

Exclusion*

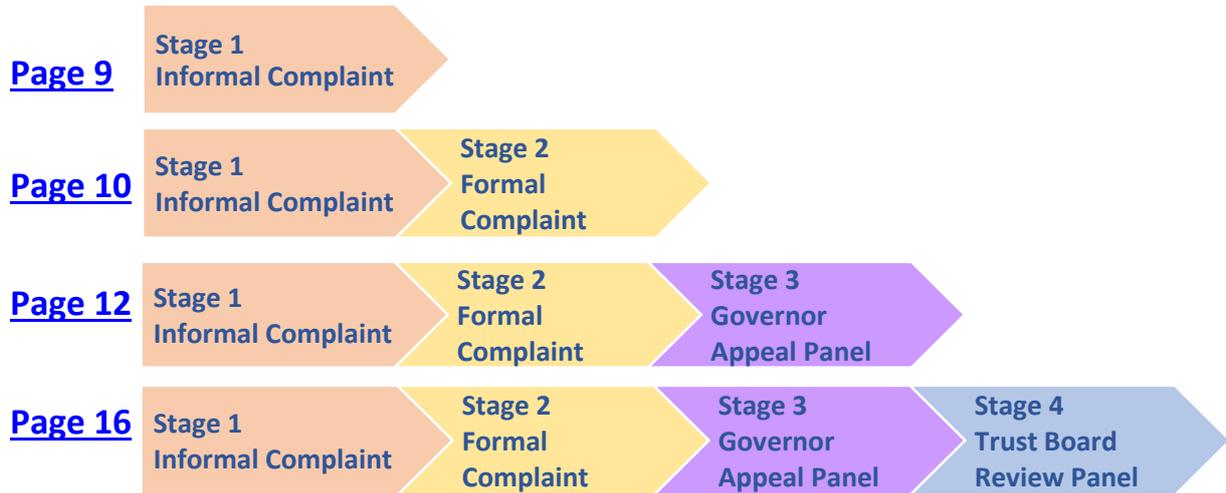
- Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions
- *complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through this complaints procedure*

Withdrawal of a complaint

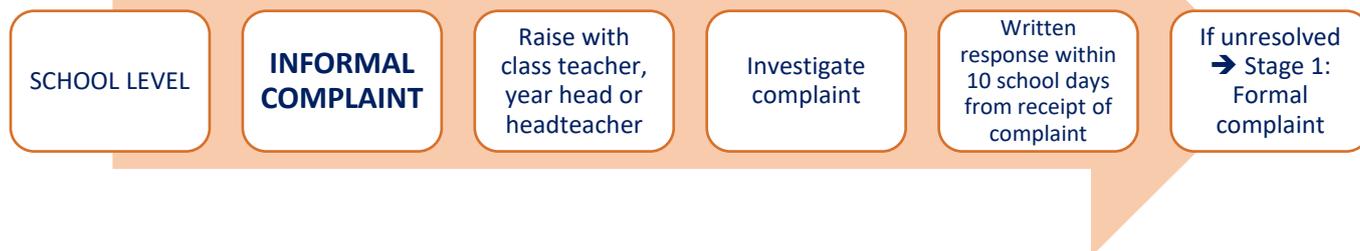
If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Stages of Complaint Procedure

The following pages set out the different stages for raising a complaint through to an appeal. Each stage must be followed:



Stage 1 - Informal Complaint



- It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis at school level.
- Mediation may also be considered if trust in a relationship has broken down.
- Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, year head / subject head or Headteacher.
- Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 3 of the procedure.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide an informal written response within **10 school term time days** of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint ([Stage](#)

Stage 2 - Formal Complaint



Where possible formal complaints must be submitted in writing, using our complaints form, which can be found here: [Complaint Form](#). Completing this form will enable us to deal with your complaint as efficiently as possible.

If there is any reason why you cannot complete this form, please discuss an alternative written method with the school complaints coordinator.

Acknowledgement:

The school will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **3 school term time days**.

Response:

- Within this response, the Headteacher or other appropriate person as detailed on page 5, will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see.
- Face to face meeting is always the preferred and most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The Headteacher, or other appropriate person, may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the Headteacher (or investigator) will:

- If necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- Keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.
- At the conclusion of their investigation, the Headteacher or other appropriate person will provide a formal written response within **10 school term time days** of the date of receipt of the complaint.
- If the deadline is unable to be met, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

- The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions The Trust will take to resolve the complaint.
- The Headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.
([Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure](#))

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2.

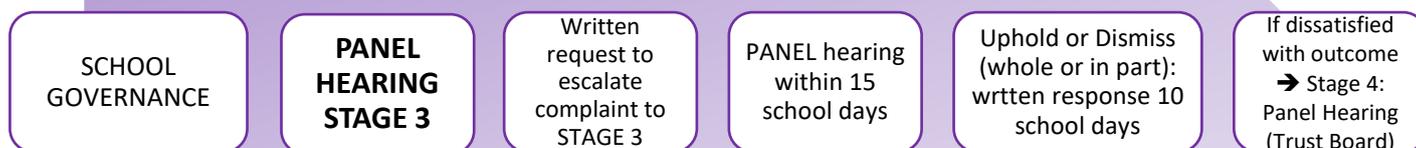
Complaints about the Headteacher or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 2 will be escalated via the Deputy CEO (DCEO) of the Trust.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing (Local Governing Body)



- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3 (a panel hearing).
- A panel hearing consists of at least three governors who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint along with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school (this could be a governor from another school within the Trust).
- **This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.**

A request to escalate to this Stage 3 panel hearing must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within **10 school term time days** of receipt of the Stage 2 response.

- The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **3 school term time days**.
- Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting **within 15 school term time days** of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- The entire governing body or
- The majority of the governing body

Stage 3 will then be heard by the trustees and an independent panel member, this will be a trustee or senior leader from an external Trust.

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under (Human Resources) staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least **5 school term time days** before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- Confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time, and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
- Request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least **5 school term time days** before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least **3 school term time days** before the date of the meeting.

The committee should not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

- The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the [Education and Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\)](#) if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by the Trust.
- The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the Trust will take to resolve the complaint.
- The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by email or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Company Directors, the Trustees and the Headteacher.
- A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision. Records will be kept in line with Data Protection policies and data retention destruction timelines.

All correspondence statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

The Panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from.

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

The Panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The Panel can:

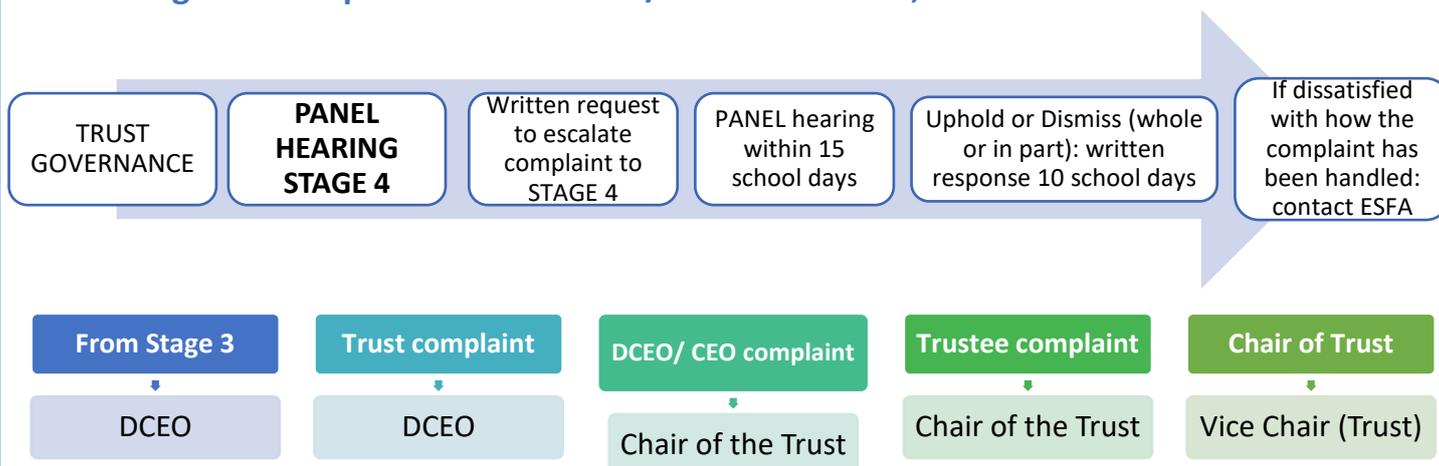
- **Uphold** the complaint in whole or in part
- **Dismiss** the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future
- provide the complainant and the school with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing from the Chair of the panel, within **10 school term time days**

(Stage 4 – complaints escalated to the Trust)

Stage 4 – Complaints Escalated to/ about the Trust, CEO or Trustee



If a complaint is escalated to the Trust or if a complainant wishes to complain directly about the Trust, then the complaint should be sent via the Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) to be investigated via the Clerk to the Trust.

Acknowledgment

- The DCEO will write to the complainant acknowledging the complaint within **3 school term time days** of the date that the written request was received. The acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint will now be investigated under Stage 4 of this Complaints Policy and will confirm the date for providing a response to the complainant.

Response

- Following the investigation, the DCEO will write to the complainant confirming the outcome of the investigation within **10 school term time days** of the date that the letter was received. If this time limit cannot be met, the DCEO will write to the Complainant within **10 school term time days** of the date that the letter was received, explaining the reason for the delay, and providing a revised date.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the investigation outcome by the DCEO, the complainant should write within **10 school term time days** of receipt of the outcome, addressed to the Clerk to the Trust Board asking for the complaint to be heard before a Complaint Panel.

If the complaint concerns the CEO, DCEO or a Trustee, the complaint should be investigated by the Chair of the Trust Board. If a formal complaint form is received about the Chair, the complaint will be referred to the Vice Chair for investigation.

Where the Chair of the Trust Board has investigated the complaint, they will write the letter of outcome to the complainant and provide a copy to the DCEO.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire trust board or the majority of the trust board

Stage 4 will be heard by a completely independent committee panel.

- The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **10 school term time days**. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.
- The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within **15 school term time days** of receipt of the Stage 4 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.
- If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The Complaint Panel will consist of three members (two Trustees and one independent member). None of the three members of the Complaint Panel will have been involved in the incidents or events which led to the complaint or have been involved in dealing with the complaint in the previous stages, or have any detailed prior knowledge of the complaint.

One of the Complaint Panel members will be independent of the management and running of the Trust of Schools. This means that the independent Complaint Panel member will not be a Trustee or an employee of the Trust.

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. For instance, if a trust employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

At least **5 school term time days** before the meeting, the Clerk will:

Confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time, and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.

Request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the Panel at least **5 school term time days** before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least **3 school term time days** before the date of the meeting. The Panel will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The Panel will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from [Stage 1 of the procedure](#).

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

The Panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The Panel can:

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

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the Panel will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint

Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Panel will provide the complainant and The Trust with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within **15 school term time days**.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the [Education and Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\)](#) if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by the Trust.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions The Ted Wragg Trust will take to resolve the complaint.

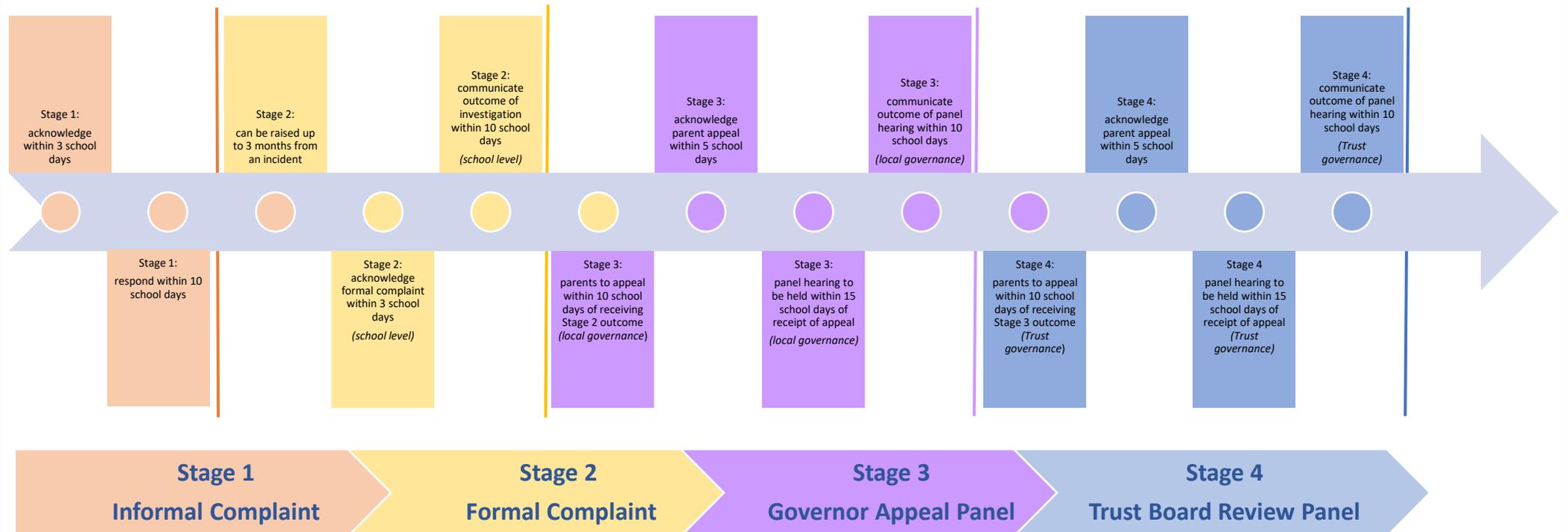
The Panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by email or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Company Directors, the Trustees and the Headteacher.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

All correspondence statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Complaint Process Timeline

There is an expectation that complaints would be resolved at school level and that mediation would take place to build trust in any breakdown in relationships between the complainant and the school. If the complaint escalates through the formal complaint stages set out in the Complaints Policy, the time span would range between 10 school days through to 80 school days.



NB: Complaints may have a shorter timeline if they are in relation to the Headteacher or Trust and need to be escalated more quickly.

Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust

If the complainant believes the school / Trust did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the ESFA after they have completed Stage 4.

The ESFA will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by [The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust](#). They will consider whether [The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust](#) has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and whether they have followed [Part 7 of the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

The complainant can refer their complaint to the ESFA online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
5 Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Adoption of the Policy

This Policy has been adopted by the Trustees of the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust.

Signed



Chair of Trust

Date: 13.07.22

Policy Date	Summary of change	Contact	Version/ Implementati on Date	Review Date

NB: Complaints may have a shorter timeline if they are in relation to the Headteacher or Trust and need to be escalated more quickly.

Complaint Form

Link to the Complaints Form- <https://forms.office.com/r/WZbN4ZvGA1>

1. Name of person making Complaint

Enter your answer

2. Phone Number

Enter your answer

3. Email Address

Enter your answer

4. Address for correspondence, please include postcode

5. Preferred contact method

- Email
- Phone call
- Either

6. School name that your complaint relates to

Enter your answer

7. What is your relationship with the school- please confirm parental responsibility if applicable.

Enter your answer

8. Please give details of the complaint

Enter your answer

9. **What action, if any, has already been taken to try and resolve the complaint.**

Enter your answer

10. **What actions do you feel will resolve the problem at this stage?**

Enter your answer

11. **Timeline-** *please give a sequence of events leading to complaint – in date/time order*

Enter your answer

12. Please attach any further paperwork/ information relevant to the complaint

↑ Upload file

File number limit: 10 Single file size limit: 1GB Allowed file types: Word, Excel, PPT, PDF, Image, Video, Audio

13. Name of person completing form

Enter your answer