



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

There may be an occasion when you need to tell us that something has gone wrong. If this is the case, please follow the below procedures. (The complaints procedure can be located on the school website and printed copies available upon request at the school office for parents of students).

Complaints about Admissions, Child Protection, Exclusions, Staff Grievances, Safeguarding and Whistleblowing are dealt with under a separate process to these procedures.

If you have a serious concern about the safety or welfare of your child or another student it should be dealt with under our Child Protection procedures; in such circumstances, please contact Michelle Edwards (*Deputy Principal, Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Lead*). You should take any **serious concerns** about the behaviour of a staff member directly to the *Executive Principal, Mr Andy Crofts*; examples of serious concerns include those involving violence, anything of a sexual nature or persistent bullying or humiliation.

All other complaints, including those that may point to poor practice by a member of staff, will be dealt with through this *Complaints Procedure*. There are two sections to this procedure; *Informal Complaints Procedure* and *Formal Complaints Procedure*.

Complaint campaigns will be managed on a case by case basis by *The Collegiate Trust*.

Duplicate Complaints - If after closing a complaint at the end of the procedure a duplicate complaint is received, e.g. from a spouse, partner or other family member, about the same subject, the new complainant will be informed that the School has already considered that complaint and the local process is complete. Should there be any new aspects to the complaint then these will be investigated separately in accordance with this procedure.

Serial or Persistent Complaints - If all stages of the complaints procedure have been followed and the complainant remains dissatisfied and tries to re-open the same issue, they will be informed that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed. If the complainant contacts the school again on the same issue, the correspondence may then be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and the School can choose not to respond.

Section A – Informal Complaints Procedure

Most concerns can be dealt with by liaising with your child's Head of Department/Head of Year or other appropriate staff at the school; please contact the relevant colleague directly via email or by calling the main switchboard and asking for the relevant colleague to contact you. Your call or email will be acknowledged by the next working day. Please make sure you outline your concern fully and then allow the colleague an opportunity to address the issue and, if necessary, put it right.

Should this *Informal Complaints Procedure* not resolve a matter, you should then use our *Formal Complaints Procedure*.

Section B – Formal Complaints Procedure

Within the Trust we take complaints very seriously, and we have a four-stage *Formal Complaints Procedure* to ensure they are handled properly. You must ensure that the process outlined below is followed and each stage exhausted before moving to the next.

[If your complaint is about the Head of Department you should send it in the first instance to the Deputy Principal Philippa Bigden, via pbigden@woodcotehigh.org.uk].

If your complaint is about the Head of Year, you should send it in the first instance to the Deputy Principal, Michelle Edwards, via medwards@woodcotehigh.org.uk]

[If your complaint is about the Executive Principal of Woodcote High School, you should send it in the first instance to the CEO of the Trust, Mr Soumick Dey, via admin@tct-academies.org]

[If your complaint is about the CEO, you should send it in the first instance to the Chair of the Trust Board, via the Governance Manager, sara.scott@tct-academies.org]

[If your complaint is about the Chair of the Trust Board or the Chair of the LGB, an individual governor or the whole Local Governing Body at Woodcote High School, you should send it in the first instance to the Governance and Compliance Manager, sara.scott@tct-academies.org. The Governance and Compliance Manager will determine the most appropriate course of action depending on the nature of the complaint.]

As this complaints procedure is not a legal process, it is not intended that any party has legal representation. Such representation will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement of either the Executive Principal, the Stage 3 investigator, or the Complaint Panel, dependent on the stage.

Stage 1

You should put your complaint in writing to the Philippa Bigden, Deputy Principal (if an academic issue) or Michelle Edwards, Deputy Principal (if a pastoral issue). Complaints must be made within three months of the event. Complaints after this period will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Within two school days of receipt of your complaint, the Deputy Principal will inform you of the action to be taken to investigate your complaint, the expected time it will take to do so and commit to providing a written response at the end of the investigation.

Following the investigation and written response from the Deputy Principal, if no further communication is received from you within five school days, then it is deemed the complaint has been resolved and is ended.

Stage 2

Within five school days of receipt of the written response from the Deputy Principal in response to Stage 1, should you feel the actions taken by the Deputy Principal under Stage 1 of this procedure have not resulted in a full investigation of the cause of the original complaint, or if the evidence suggests the Deputy Principal has come to an incorrect judgement, you can begin Stage 2 of this procedure. To enter Stage 2, you must outline to the Executive Principal in writing and within five school days of the written response to Stage 1 the reasons why you feel the Deputy Principal has not carried out a full investigation of the original complaint or has come to an incorrect judgement and what further investigations you feel need to be conducted. The Executive Principal will reply within five school days of receipt of the Stage 2 complaint outlining either:

- Why he feels the cause of the original complaint **has** been fully investigated by the Deputy Principal under Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure and that there is no further investigation that can be carried out;

or

- the action to be taken to investigate your Stage 2 complaint, the expected time it will take to do so and commit to providing a written response at the end of the investigation. This written response will outline whether the complaint is upheld and therefore suggest a resolution, or rejected.

Following any final written response from the Executive Principal to conclude Stage 2 of this procedure, if no further communication is received from you within five school days, then it is deemed the complaint has been resolved and is ended.

Stage 3

If you still feel that the issue has not been fully investigated, or feel that the evidence suggests the *Executive Principal* has come to an incorrect judgement, or you are unhappy with a proposed resolution, you will need to complete the stage 3 complaint form and email it to the *Governance and Compliance Manager* of the Trust at sara.scott@tct-academies.org within five school days of receipt of the written response from the *Executive Principal*. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

Provided the complaint is within the remit of the LGB, a *Complaints Panel* will be arranged and will meet within twenty school days of receipt of the Stage 3 complaint (if this is not possible, the Governance and Compliance Manager will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed) and you will be invited to attend and can be accompanied if you may wish. If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Governance and Compliance Manager 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 Governance and Compliance Manager will inform you when supporting documents, relevant to the complaint, must be submitted, so that these can be shared with all parties at least 5 days prior to the panel hearing.

The panel will consist of 3 people who have not been directly involved in the matter detailed in the complaint and one member of the panel will be a person who is independent of the school but may be a Governor or a Director within the Trust.

The panel will listen to your complaint and/or your reasons for rejecting an offered resolution, as well as hearing from the *Executive Principal* the reasons for his decision at the end of Stage 2 of the *Complaints Procedure*. The panel can then either dismiss the complaint, or uphold the complaint, in full or in part. If upheld in whole; or in part, the panel will decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint and where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future. You will be given a date by which a decision will be taken and you and the school will be notified of the outcome via email with a hard copy posted. *The letter should be in your preferred language.*

As with all formal complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld), a copy of the letter, supporting documentation, which will include the outcome and any resolutions/findings/recommendations, will be held confidentially at The Collegiate Trust by the Governance and Compliance Manager and be available for inspection by the Proprietor, CEO, Principal and Secretary of State or any inspection body under section 109 of the 2008 Act.

This is the final stage of the school-based complaints procedure.

Stage 4

If you are dissatisfied with the handling or the outcome you have the right to refer the case to the *Department for Education*. Further details are available from:

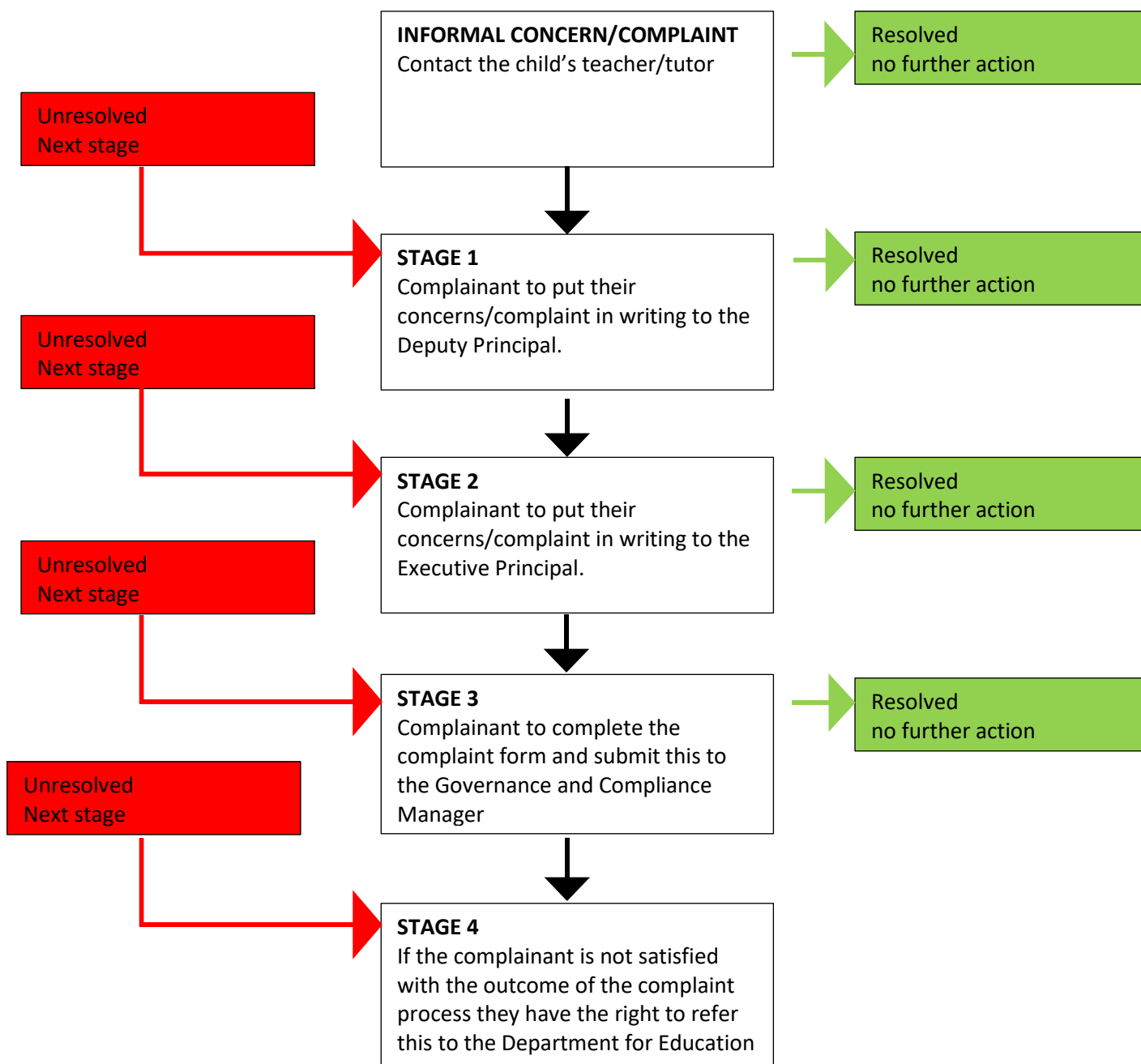
<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/complaintsprocedure/b00212240/making-complaint-school/how-to-complain>

Contact details are: -

Email	www.education.gov.uk/contactus
Telephone	0370 000 2288
Address	Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit Education and Skills Funding Agency Cheylesmore House 5 Quinton Road Coventry CV1 2WT

The school is an academy and is therefore governed by The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended) ("the Regulations"), Schedule, part 7. In the case of any variance between the procedure outlined in this Complaints Policy and the Regulations, the procedure outlined in the Regulations will apply

Flowchart for the procedure of handling concerns/complaints for schools within The Collegiate Trust.



- If your complaint is about the Executive Principal/Principal of the school, you should send it to the CEO of the Trust.
- If your complaint is about the CEO of The Collegiate Trust, you should send it to the Chair of the Trust Board, via the Governance and Compliance Manager.
- If your complaint is about the Chair of the Trust Board, Chair of the LGB, the LGB or an individual Governor then you should send it to the Governance and Compliance Manager.