

Complaints Policy & Procedure

Policy:	Complaints Policy
MAT board:	Finance, Audit, Premises and Personnel
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1.0 Purpose

Community Schools Trust takes complaints seriously and will make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible. Community Schools Trust aims to:

- Make clear who complaints should be directed to
- Make clear how complaint will be dealt with (ie. the complaints process and procedure)
- Be impartial and non-adversarial, dealing with complaints fairly and fully
- Communicate promptly and clearly with complainants
- Ensure that any decisions we make in relation to complaints are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with statutory obligations
- Deal with complaints swiftly and informally, wherever possible

2.0 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 we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of pupils at the school.

It is also based on [guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\)](#) on creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulations, and refers to [good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures from the Department for Education \(DfE\)](#).

3.0 Definitions & Scope

3.1 Definitions:

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint:

- A concern is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”. The school will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible.
- A complaint is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”

3.2 Scope:

It is in everyone’s interest for concerns and complaints to be resolved informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage.

There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.

This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN) Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaints.

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to the school 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.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the headteacher will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the headteacher 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.

4.0 How to raise a concern or make a complaint

- A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. It may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so
- Complaints against school staff (except the headteacher) should be addressed to the headteacher
- Complaints should be made via the school office. Please mark them as private and confidential
- Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher should be addressed to the chair of the local school board
- Complaints about members of the local school board should be addressed to the chair of the local school board, via the school office
- Complaints about the central team should be addressed to the CEO
- Complaints about the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a Chair of a local school board or a trustee of the Trust, should be addressed to Chris Rutt, Chair of Trustees, via the school office
- Complaints about the Chair of the Trust Board should be addressed to the Vice Chair of the Trust Board
- When raising a complaint, complainants should: follow this procedure, adhere to deadlines, treat all those involved with respect, refrain from sharing details about the complaint online

or via social media and should address the complaint to those detailed in this policy and not share the details of the complaint with others unnecessarily

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask a third-party organisation (for example, 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 or holding meetings in accessible locations.

5.0 Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, it is at the discretion of the headteacher and/or chair of the local school board/trust board to determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

6.0 Complaint campaigns

Where a school receives a large volume of complaints about the same issue or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school, 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

7.0 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.

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against the school in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

8.0 Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, the school 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.

9.0 Withdrawal of a complaint

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

10.0 Stages of the complaints procedure

10.1 – Informal complaints

It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis. The school will do everything in their power to work with parents/carers, complainant(s), to reach a satisfactory resolution to their complaint.

Concerns should be raised with either the head of year or the headteacher's personal assistant (PA), via the school office. All complaints will be acknowledged within 2 school days after the school day on which the complaint was received. The complainant(s) will be invited to attend an informal meeting—with the head of year and/or another appropriate member of staff. This informal meeting will be held no later than 5 school days after the school day on which the complaint was received, subject to the availability of the complainant(s) and other required witnesses or representatives.

The resolution of the complaint may be decided at the meeting and agreed verbally between the parties, in which case it will be confirmed in writing to the parents/carers by the member of staff who convened the meeting. Alternatively, the issue may be considered after the meeting and the school's position communicated to the parents/carers in writing as soon as possible after the meeting. This will be no later than 5 school days after the school day the informal stage meeting was held.

Complainants should not approach individual local school board/trust board members 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.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

11.1 Stage 2 – Formal complaints

Formal complaints must be made to the headteacher (unless they are about the headteacher), via the headteacher's PA. This may be done in person or in writing (preferably on the complaint form provided, via the school office). The headteacher's PA will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days after the school day on which the complaint was received.

The written complaint submitted should outline the nature of the complaint, what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to achieve.

The headteacher may investigate the complaint themselves or delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team. If delegated, the final decision on the complaint must still be taken by the headteacher.

During the investigation, the investigating officer 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 will provide a formal written response within 20 school days after the school day on which the complaint was received.

If the headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, 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 school will take to resolve the complaint.

If the complaint is about the headteacher, or a member of the local school board (including the chair or vice-chair), the appropriate person, identified in section 4.0, will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2.

10.3 Stage 3 – Panel hearing

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 consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school. This may be a member of another local school board within the Trust. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the clerk of the Local School Board, via the headteacher's PA or school office, within 5 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response. Requests received outside of this timeframe will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days after the school day on which the complaint was received.

The clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 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.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the chair and vice chair or
- the entire local school board or
- the majority of the local school board.

Stage 3 will be heard by the trustees and an independent panel member.

A complainant may bring a representative with them 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.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 10 school 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 days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee 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 committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee 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.

The chair of the committee will provide the complainant and the school with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days. If this is not possible, the chair will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

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 school/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 school/trust will take to resolve the complaint.

The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail 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 proprietor 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.

11.0 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 to the CEO to be investigated.

The CEO will write to the complainant acknowledging the complaint within 5 school days after the school day on which the complaint was received. The acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint will now be investigated under Stage 2 of this complaints policy and will confirm the date for providing a response to the complainant.

Following the investigation, the CEO will write to the complainant confirming the outcome within 20 school days after the school day on which the complaint was received. If this time limit cannot be met, the CEO will write to the complainant within 20 school days after the school day on which the complaint was received, explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised date.

If the complaint concerns the CEO 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.

NB. 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 CEO.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the previous stage, the complainant should write to the Clerk to the Trust Board, within 5 school days, asking for the complaint to be heard before a complaint 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 5 school 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 days of receipt of the 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.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the chair and vice chair or
- the entire Trust Board or
- the majority of the Trust Board.

Stage 3 will be heard by a completely independent committee panel.

The complaint panel will consist of three members. 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. This means that the independent complaint panel member will not be a trustee or an employee of the Trust.

A complainant may bring a representative 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.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 10 school 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 days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee 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 committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee 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.

The chair of the committee will provide the complainant with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days. If this is not possible, the chair will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

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 Community Schools 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 electronic mail 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 proprietor 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.

12.0 Dealing with vexatious or unreasonable complaints

If, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant continues to be dissatisfied or if the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the chair of the local school board/trust board is able to inform the complainant in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. If the complainant writes again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be recognised as vexatious and the school will then recourse to its procedures for unreasonable complaints.

If a complainant raises a new, separate complaint, it will be responded to in accordance with the school complaints procedure.

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

- Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure or is attempting to reframe a previous complaint that has already been resolved
- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
- Knowingly provides false information
- Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g., refuses to articulate the complaint, refused to co-operate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the time frames it sets out
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value
- Wants revenge or retribution
- Advances irrational beliefs or conspiracy theories, unsupported by evidence
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to

- have them replaced
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable or vexacious if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- Maliciously,
- aggressively,
- using threats, intimidation
- abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the number of communications with a school while a 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.

In the circumstance of an unreasonable or vexacious complaint, the chair of the local school board will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact a school in the Community Schools Trust causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from a school or schools in the Community Schools Trust.

12.1 Barring From the School Premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Schools will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

If a parent/carer's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask them to leave the school premises. In serious cases, the headteacher or CEO can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent/carer may wish to make. Parents/carers will be given the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing. Any decision to ban a parent from a school site will be reviewed by the chair of the local school board.

13.0 Next steps

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 3.

The ESFA will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the Community Schools Trust. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint-

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

14.0 Complaint form

Please complete and return to the headteacher's PA who will acknowledge receipt and explain next steps.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number: Email address:
Please give details of your complaint, including any actions you have already taken to resolve the matter.
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
Signature: Date:

15.0 Roles and responsibilities

Complainant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● explain the complaint in full as early as possible ● cooperate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint ● respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint ● ask for assistance as needed ● treat all those involved in the complaint with respect ● refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.
Headteacher's Personal Assistant (Complaints Co-ordinator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● follow the complaints policy ● and liaise with all parties to ensure the smooth running of the procedure ● be aware of issues regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ sharing third party information ○ additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person ● keep records via the Complaints Tracker
Investigating Officer	<p>The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what happened and who was involved ○ interviewing individuals relevant to the complaint ○ analysis of records and other relevant information ● liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right. <p>The investigator should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning ● keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting ● ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal ● be mindful of the timescales for response ● prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems ● The headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.
Clerk to the local school	<p>At stage 3 the clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:</p>

board/trust board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) ● set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible ● collate any written material relevant to the complaint (school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within the agreed timescale ● record the proceedings in writing and circulate minutes of the meeting ● notify all parties of the committee's decision.
Committee chair	<p>The committee chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● both parties are asked (via the clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint, by a specified date, in advance of the meeting ● the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that everyone is treated with respect and courtesy ● complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person ● the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant ● written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR. <p>If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself ● the issues are addressed ● key findings of fact are made ● the committee is open-minded and acts independently ● no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure ● the meeting is minuted ● they liaise with the clerk, headteacher and complaints coordinator

Committee member	<p>Committee members should be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the meeting must be independent and impartial so no local school board member/trustee may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or the circumstances surrounding it • the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant • we recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations • many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting • parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child • extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting • careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated <p>The committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.</p> <p>If the child/young person is the complainant, the committee should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.</p> <p>However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests. The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.</p>
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