

Policy and Procedure: Complaints

Potteries Educational Trust

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Feb 2026	Policy format updated. Part Four added: repetitious and vexatious complaints and complaints pursued in an otherwise unreasonable manner. References to Headteacher/Principal updated to reflect academy executive leader. Review and monitoring of complaints section updated to reflect reporting mechanism. Appendix 3 – updated Appendix 5 – flowchart added	Sue Hawley (Governance Professional)

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Potteries Educational Trust – Mission and Values

Our Trust mission is 'We shape young people to transform the future'.



Complaints Procedure

Potteries Educational Trust (PET) strives to ensure that its children and young people are healthy, happy and safe, so that they are able to achieve their full potential. PET recognises that parents, guardians and/or carers play an important part in making this happen. Co-operation between the parents, guardians and/or carers, staff, governors and trustees leads to a shared sense of purpose and a good culture and ethos in PET across the Trust.

The aims of this policy and procedure are to deal with concerns and complaints about an academy, the Academy Trust (PET) or any individual connected with it by following the correct procedure, thoroughly and in an open, honest and fair manner.

All staff will be made aware of this complaints policy and procedure and are expected to refer to the policy and procedure regularly in order that they are familiar with the process of dealing with complaints and can be of assistance when an issue is brought to their attention.

1. Scope of the Complaints Procedure

This policy and procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services provided by the Potteries Educational Trust or any of its academies, other than matters excluded from the scope of this policy and procedure including those listed as in Appendix 1.

2. Who can make a complaint?

This procedure is not limited to the parents and carers of children and young people that are registered at a PET Academy.

Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to an individual academy within the PET or to the PET itself, about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

This policy and procedure does not apply to concerns and complaints in the matters excluded from the scope of the policy. (Appendix 1)

Where a complaint is in respect of a specific child, PET or the PET academy, we will only deal with persons who are recorded on our system as the person with parental responsibility. We cannot divulge or discuss information or data about PET children and young people with anybody who is not properly registered as the person with parental responsibility.

Part One of this policy outlines how parents and carers of a registered pupil currently attending an academy within the Trust can raise a concern or complaint.

Part Two of this policy outlines how to make a formal complaint about an Executive Leader or a Trust matter.

Part Three of this policy outlines how complaints from other persons will be dealt with.

Part Four of this policy outlines how the Trust will address repetitious, vexatious or unreasonable complaints.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use PET premises or facilities should be made to the provider concerned and, where relevant, will be dealt with in accordance with their policy and procedures.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- a concern may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’;
- a complaint may be defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a perceived lack of action’. Complaints can be resolved formally or informally;
- ‘Meeting’ and ‘Hearing’ means an in person or virtual meeting or hearing (i.e. telephone or video conference where all parties can participate verbally), virtual meetings/hearings will only be held if all parties have access to appropriate equipment to attend and are happy to do so;
- ‘Parent’ means a biological parent, carer or anyone who has parental responsibility or care for a child;
- ‘School days’ excludes weekends and academy holidays and periods of partial or total academy closure;
- ‘Trust’ means Potteries Educational Trust;
- Executive Leader of an academy refers to the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher, Principal or Head of Academy.

4. Key principles

The Trust acknowledges that raising concerns or complaints can be a difficult, emotional, and stressful time, particularly for parents and carers. We expect our staff to always be respectful and courteous when dealing with a complainant. We also expect a complainant to treat our staff with the same respect and courtesy. We will not accept abusive and threatening behaviour towards our staff from anybody at any time. In circumstances where this happens the Trust will take the action outlined in Part Four of this policy and procedure.

The Trust expects all complainants to make reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution. This will usually be the most effective way to swiftly resolve any concerns.

The Trust encourages parents and others to approach the academy with any concerns and refrain from airing concerns about the academy and its staff on social media sites. Posting negative comments on social media can cause damage and upset and is often counter-productive to learner education.

To investigate your complaint properly and fairly, we have implemented a staged approach. We anticipate that almost all complaints that arise will be resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2 outlined below.

5. How to raise a concern or make 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. Potteries Educational Trust and its academies take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

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

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a parent or carer if they have appropriate authority to do so.

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, head of year, curriculum leader or executive leader of the relevant academy. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

If a complainant has difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, their views will be respected. In these cases, and similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the complainant will be referred to another designated staff member by agreement with the academy executive leader. 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.

On rare occasions, an academy or the Trust may receive complaints from a number of individuals relating to the same issue. In order to deal with these complaints efficiently the academy/Trust will follow the procedure set out in the Complaints Campaigns section of this policy.

Complainants should not approach individual governors or trustees 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.

Complaints against academy staff (except the executive leader of an academy) should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher/Principal/Head of Academy of the individual academy via the academy office. For confidentiality reasons, please mark as Private and Confidential - Complaint.

Complaints that involve or are about the executive leader of the academy, executive headteacher, or central services matters should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, c/o The Governance Professional via email to info@potteries.ac.uk or by post to the Trust Central Office, Potteries Educational Trust, c/o City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College, Leek Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2RU. For confidentiality reasons, please mark as Private and Confidential - Complaint.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Governance Professional via email to: info@potteries.ac.uk or by

post to the Trust Central Office, Potteries Educational Trust, c/o City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College, Leek Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2RU. Please mark as Private and Confidential - Complaint.

Complaints about the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or a trustee of the Trust, should be addressed to Chair of Trust Board, via the Governance Professional, email info@potteries.ac.uk by post to the Trust Central Office, Potteries Educational Trust, c/o City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College, Leek Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2RU. Please mark as Private and Confidential - Complaint.

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 office at the individual academy. You can also ask a third-party organisation to help you, for example, Citizens Advice.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments as necessary to enable complainants to access and complete this procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

6. Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the CEO or other Executive Leader of an academy, or the Chair of the Trust Board, if appropriate, will determine whether there are exceptional circumstances to justify conducting an investigation into the issues raised.

7. Time scales

Complaints are expected to be made as soon as possible after an incident arises to amend the issue in an appropriate timescale.

The Trust upholds a three-month time limit in which a complaint can be lodged regarding an incident (or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 3 calendar months of the last of these incidents).

Complaints made outside this time limit will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The timescales referred to in this policy are our usual timeframes and the Trust / academy will seek to adhere to these timescales where possible. If it becomes necessary to alter the timescales and deadlines set out within this procedure, you will be advised accordingly and given an explanation as to why this has been the case and provided with revised timescales.

Where a complaint is raised but we do not have clarity from the complainant on the issues and/or desired outcomes, we will inform the complainant what information we need to progress the complaint and pause this procedure until reasonable clarity is achieved.

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 Potteries Educational Trust or one of its academies in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

8. Complaints received outside of term time

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

9. Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, the PET and PET academies want to resolve the complaint. Where appropriate, the complaint will be upheld in whole or in part, or will not be upheld. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation that following investigation, the evidence does not substantiate the concern;
- an explanation that there is insufficient evidence and thus the complaint cannot be upheld;
- * an acknowledgement 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 the event complained of will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made (details of disciplinary procedures that have taken place as a result of the complaint will not be shared);
- an undertaking to review Trust or academy relevant policy or procedure in light of the complaint;
- an apology.

*Note * An acknowledgement that the academy or Trust could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of unlawful or negligent action.*

10. Withdrawal of a complaint

Where a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, the Trust will ask them to confirm this in writing.

The Trust will still take the complainant's voice seriously and, if appropriate, despite the complaint having been withdrawn, learn from the matter raised in an attempt to avoid causing similar distress to others in the future.

The Trust will not under any circumstances ask or pressure an individual to withdraw a complaint.

11. Acceptable behaviour

Whilst we recognise that the process of raising a concern or complaint can be a difficult, emotional, and stressful time, particularly for parents and carers. Potteries Educational Trust will not tolerate aggressive, violent, abusive or anti-social behaviour towards anyone on any Trust site at any time or through email, written or telephone correspondence. Parents and carers, and members of the public are required to behave in a polite and courteous manner and for communication to remain calm at all times. The procedure under Part Four will only be used on very rare occasions to deal with repetitious and/or vexatious complaints or complaints pursued in an otherwise unreasonable manner.

Academy staff are expected to behave in a courteous and professional manner when dealing with parents and carers, and members of the public at all times.

12. Records of complaints

A confidential written record will be kept of all complaints and any action taken by the Trust or an academy as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether they were upheld, resolved at the informal stage, formal stage or proceeded to a complaints committee hearing.

Records of complaints will be available for inspection by the Trust and the academy Executive Leader.

Findings and recommendations of a Complaints Committee will also be available for inspection by the Trust and the academy Executive Leader.

The Trust or academy will retain records of complaints and related documents in line with the Data Protection Policy and Records Management Policy. Personal data will only be kept for as long as necessary.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where:

- access is requested by the Secretary of State;
- disclosure is required in the course of an academy inspection;
- an individual has a legal right to access their own personal data contained within such documentation; or
- under other legal authority.

13. Review and monitoring of complaints

The Local Governing Body of an academy will monitor the level and nature of complaints for an individual academy and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and recommend changes where necessary.

The Trust Audit and Risk Committee will monitor the level and nature of complaints across the Trust and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary and ensure mitigation of relevant risk.

The Headteacher / Principal / Head of Academy, supported by the Governance Professional will report any official complaints received in a report to the Local Governing Body. The CEO, supported by the Governance Professional will provide a relevant report to the Trust. Information will be collated from the academy and Trust Complaints Record Form.

As well as addressing an individual's complaint, the process of listening to and resolving complaints will contribute to Academy improvement. When individual complaints are heard, the Local Governing Committee may identify underlying issues that need to be addressed. The monitoring and review of complaints by the academy and the Local Governing Body will also be a useful tool in evaluating the academy's performance.

14. Part One: Complaints procedure for parents – academy level

Stage 1 – Informal complaints (Academy level)

An informal concern can be raised in person, by email or by telephone. Most enquiries and concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily by the class teacher, year or phase leader, subject leader, senior leader, academy executive leader or other members of staff (as delegated by the academy executive leader) without the need to resort to the formal procedure.

We value informal meetings and discussions and encourage parents to approach staff with any concerns they may have, and aim to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding.

It is always helpful if the complainant can fully explain the nature of the concern and identify the outcome they are looking for. Where appropriate, the complainant may be invited to an informal meeting with the member of staff most appropriate for dealing with that concern. The member of staff dealing with the concern will make sure that the complainant is clear on what action (if any) has been agreed. This may be put in writing if appropriate.

If the matter is brought to the attention of the academy executive leader, they may decide to deal with the concerns directly at this stage and allocate an investigation officer.

If the concerns are about the academy executive leader these should be referred directly to the Potteries Educational Trust CEO (c/o the Governance Professional) under **Stage 2** of this procedure.

Staff members should log all informal concerns in accordance with the agreed Trust procedures and inform the academy executive leader of any serious concerns.

There is no suggested timescale for resolution at this stage given the importance of informal discussion, although it would be expected that most issues will be resolved within **15 academy days**. Where no satisfactory solution has been found, the complainant will be advised that if they wish their concerns to be considered further they should write to the academy executive leader under **Stage 2** of this procedure within **15 academy days**.

Stage 2 – Formal complaints (Academy level)

If your concerns are not resolved under **Stage 1**, you are entitled to make a complaint in writing (preferably on the Formal Complaint Form), and send this to the **Academy Executive Leader** via the academy office, unless the complaint is about the Academy Executive Leader – in which case please see **Stage 2 – Trust Level**. You should use 'confidential complaint' as the subject of the email or mark it clearly on the letter of complaint. This will ensure that correspondence gets the priority it deserves from a large volume of communications the academy and the Trust receives each day.

It is very important that the complaint is described clearly and includes a clear statement of the actions that the complainant would like the academy / Trust to take to resolve the complaint. We strongly encourage the complainant to use the Complaint Form provided. If help is required to complete the form, please contact the relevant academy office. A complainant can also ask third

party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help. In all cases the written complaint must include:

- the nature of the complaint;
- details of how the matter has been dealt with so far;
- the names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of all relevant documents; and
- a clear statement of the actions that the complainant would like us to take to resolve the complaint.

The academy executive leader will record the date the complaint is received and will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) **within 5 academy days of receipt**. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the Trust's complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This will normally be within **15 academy days of receipt of the formal complaint**.

Within this response, the academy executive leader will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome or resolution the complainant would like to see.

The academy executive leader (or someone appointed by them to be the investigation officer) can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this and may invite the complainant to a meeting to clarify the complaint and to explore possible resolutions. If the complainant accepts that invitation, they may be accompanied by one other person, such as a friend, relative or interpreter, to assist them. Where possible, this meeting will take place within **10 academy days** of receipt of the written complaint.

Note: The academy executive leader may delegate the investigation to another member of the Academy's senior leadership team.

If the complaint is particularly complex, involves legal matter or if there is a conflict of interests it may be appropriate for the Trust to engage an independent, external investigation officer. In these instances, timescales may need to be extended.

The academy executive leader or designated investigation officer will:

- review the complaint and if necessary arrange to interview the complainant to clarify details of the complaint and to identify a desired outcome
- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter or event, and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish and providing an opportunity to respond
- If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil will usually be interviewed
- as appropriate they may interview potential witnesses and advise witnesses that witness statements could be disclosed to other relevant parties who should be permitted to challenge those statements as part of the investigation
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, a summary investigation report will be produced with any relevant recommendations. The academy executive leader will consider whether to uphold the complaint in whole or in part or dismiss the complaint.

Once the relevant facts have been established as far as possible, the academy executive leader will provide a formal written response (by email or letter as appropriate) of the outcome of the

complaint to the complainant within **15 academy days** of the date of receipt of the complaint. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide an explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions that will be taken to resolve the complaint (if any). *(Please note that it is not always possible to provide full details in order to preserve confidentiality, for example, where HR action has been taken.)*

Where the situation is recognised as complex, and it is deemed to be unable to be resolved within this timescale, the academy executive leader will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The outcome letter will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome to **Stage 2**.

Stage 3 – Committee hearing (Academy level)

This is the final stage of the complaint procedure.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at **Stage 2**, they may escalate the complaint to **Stage 3** – Complaint Committee. A Complaint Committee will principally consider how the complaint was handled at the previous stages but has discretion to review other aspects of the complaint as it sees fit. The Complaint Committee will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Governance Professional, via the Trust Central Office, c/o City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College, Leek Road, Stoke on Trent ST4 2RU or by email to info@potteries.ac.uk **within 15 academy days** of receiving notice of the outcome of **Stage 2**. The request must be marked Confidential / Complaint. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The complainant should ensure that they provide copies of all relevant documents and state all the grounds for their dissatisfaction with the outcome of Stage 2 and the outcome that they are looking for from Stage 3. The Trust Governance Professional will record the date the request for escalation to Stage 3 is received and acknowledge receipt of the request in writing (either by letter or email) **within 5 academy days** of receipt. The Trust Governance Professional will notify the CEO, and the academy executive leader of the request.

The Governance Professional will arrange for a Complaint Committee to be convened, which is a panel hearing consisting of at least three committee members including:

- governors of the academy Local Governing Body and/or Trustees of the Trust (as appropriate) with no prior involvement in the matter; and,
- one person who is independent of the management and running of the academy (for example, this might be a local governor from another academy within the Trust, a governor or Trustee from another local academy trust / school / college or an educational professional who has no link to the Academy).

If there are insufficient governors from the Local Governing Committee available, the Governance Professional will source any additional, independent governors through another PET Academy

Local Governing Body, in order to complete the Committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent Committee may be convened to hear the complaint at **Stage 3**.

The Governance Professional shall appoint one of these committee members to be the Chair of the Complaints Committee.

The Governance Professional will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. Every effort will be made to enable the meeting to take place within **20 academy days** of the receipt of the **Stage 3** request. If, despite best efforts, it is not possible to find a mutually convenient date and time for a meeting within a reasonable timeframe or if the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Governance Professional 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 Professional will as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event **at least five academy days** before the meeting,

- 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.
- Provide brief details of the Committee members who will be present. Fair consideration will be given to any bona fide objection to a particular member of the Complaints Committee. The complainant will also be informed of the name of the person who will be presenting the case on behalf of the Academy. This may be the person who is the subject of the complaint, the person who undertook the investigation at **Stage 2** and/or another person with sufficient knowledge of the matter.

A complainant may bring one other person along to the Committee meeting to provide support. This can be a relative, friend or interpreter. The Governance Professional must be notified in advance if this is the complainant's intention. We do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the Committee meeting. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend. The Committee itself may take legal advice and/or be supported by a legal advisor at the hearing on matters of law and procedure.

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.

A copy of the complaint and any other documents provided in support of the complaint, or by the academy representative in defence of the complaint, will be provided to the Complaints Committee as soon as practicable upon receipt and at least **3 academy days** before the date of the meeting. The Complaints Committee reserves the right not to consider any documentation presented by either party less than **3 academy days** prior to the hearing. The Complaints Committee is under no obligation to hear verbal evidence from those other than the parties (e.g. witnesses) but may do so and/or may take written statements into account.

The Committee will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint or information that was not included in the original complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Notes of the meeting will be produced, however, these may not be verbatim but will accurately reflect the content of the meeting. The Trust holds the right to use AI tools / recording devices, where appropriate, to support the production of sufficient notes which provide an accurate reflection of the points considered and any decisions taken or actions agreed. Recording devices will not be used without the prior consent of all parties. The electronic recording of the hearing will not under any circumstances be shared with any other parties and will be used solely by the Governance Professional for the production of notes. The recording will be deleted once the notes have been documented. Any other electronic recordings of the hearing will not normally be permitted and, in any event, would require the consent of all those present.

The Trust will not accept as evidence any recordings that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The meeting will be conducted to ensure that each party has the opportunity to address the Complaints Committee. The procedure to be followed during the hearing will be explained to the parties by letter in advance of the hearing.

Unless otherwise stated, the procedure for the **Stage 3** hearing is as described in Appendix 4 of this document.

If the complainant has not arrived by the start of the complaints committee, the Governance Professional will attempt to contact the complainant via telephone to ascertain if they are delayed, have chosen not to attend, or wish to withdraw their complaint. If the Governance Professional is unable to speak with the complainant, or if the complainant confirms they have chosen not to attend, the hearing will proceed in the complainant's absence 30 minutes after the scheduled start time. Findings and recommendations will be based on the written submissions previously provided by both parties.

A Complaints Committee may be adjourned if the Complaints Committee require further evidence or in exceptional circumstances (for example, if clarification sought by the Complaints Committee is essential to the proceedings). The adjourned date must be as soon as possible.

After the hearing, the Complaints Committee will consider their decision and inform the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about of their decision in writing within **10 academy days**. The letter will set out the decision of the Complaints Committee together with the reasons underpinning that decision.

The Complaints Committee can (by a majority if necessary):

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

Next steps

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Complaints Committee, they are entitled to refer the complaint to the Department for Education (DfE). The DfE will only investigate the complaint in limited circumstances.

For more information on the DfE's remit in relation to academy complaints, visit: [How DfE handles complaints about academies](#)

15. Part Two: Complaints procedure for parents – complaints escalated to / about the Trust, CEO, Governance Professional or Trustee

Stage 2 – Formal complaints (Trust level)

If a complaint is escalated to the Trust because it related directly to the academy executive leader or if a complainant wishes to make a formal complaint directly about the Trust, then the complaint should be sent to the CEO (via the Governance Professional) to be investigated.

The Governance Professional, on behalf of the CEO will write to the complainant acknowledging the complaint **within 5 academy days** of the date that the written request was received. The acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint will be investigated under **Stage 2 Formal Complaints (Trust Level)** of this Complaints Procedure and will confirm the date for providing a response to the complainant. The Governance Professional, or other delegated officer, may contact the complainant if more clarity is required about the nature of the complaint. This could be by email, telephone or an in person meeting.

The CEO will determine and appoint a suitable investigation officer who may be external to the Trust depending on the nature of the complaint. Following the investigation, the CEO will write to the complainant confirming the outcome normally **within 15 academy days** of the date that the letter was received. If this time limit cannot be met, the CEO (via the Governance Professional) will write to the complainant with an update and revised response date.

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

The designated investigation officer will:

- review the complaint and if necessary arrange to interview the complainant to clarify details of the complaint and to identify a desired outcome
- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter or event, and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- as appropriate they may interview potential witnesses and advise witnesses that witness statements could be disclosed to other relevant parties who should be permitted to challenge those statements as part of the investigation
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the designated investigation officer will provide a summary investigation report with any relevant recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer in order for

the Chief Executive Officer to provide a formal written response to the complainant within **15 academy days** of the date of receipt of the complaint.

The Chief Executive Officer will consider whether to uphold the complaint in whole or in part or dismiss the complaint, and in the response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide an explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions that will be taken to resolve the complaint.

The Chief Executive Officer will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of this **Stage 2**.

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.

Stage 3 – Committee hearing (Trust level)

This is the final stage of the complaint procedure.

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 complaints committee 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 PET academy. (The independent member could be a trustee from another local academy trust / school / college or an educational professional with no link to the Potteries Educational Trust.)

A request to escalate to **Stage 3** must be made to the PET Governance Professional, via the Trust Central Office /o City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College, Leek Road, Stoke on Trent ST4 2RU or by email to info@potteries.ac.uk, within **15 academy days** of receipt of the Stage 2 response. Requests received outside of this timeframe will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Governance Professional will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **10 academy days**.

The Governance Professional will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within **20 academy days** of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Governance Professional will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

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

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, PET does not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the Stage 3 committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

For instance, if a PET employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair of Trustees

- the entire Trust Board or
- the majority of the Trust Board

Stage 3 will be heard by a completely independent Committee.

The Governance Professional shall appoint one of the committee members to be the Chair of the Complaints Committee.

The complaints committee process will follow the same procedure as described at Part One – Stage 3.

Next steps

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Complaints Committee, they are entitled to refer the complaint to the Department for Education (DfE). The DfE will only investigate the complaint in limited circumstances.

For more information on the DfE's remit in relation to academy complaints, visit: [How DfE handles complaints about academies](#)

16. Part Three: concerns or complaints from other persons

Part One and Two of this complaints procedure applies only to complaints made by parents or carers of current registered pupils of the Trust. However, the Trust wishes to work closely with other members of the local community and will deal with their concerns and complaints as follows:

Stage 1 - a concern regarding an academy or its operations may be made to any member of staff. That member of staff will attempt to resolve the matter immediately or may, if appropriate, refer the matter to their line manager or member of the senior leadership team (SLT) who is best placed to deal with the concern. It is expected that most concerns will be responded to verbally or in writing within **five academy days**. If a longer period is required, you will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

Stage 2 - where a concern is not resolved at Stage 1, or the complainant wishes their concerns to be dealt with immediately as a formal complaint, they should put the complaint in writing and send this to the Headteacher / Principal / Head of Academy of the relevant Academy to investigate. The Headteacher / Principal / Head of Academy may delegate the task of investigation and/or responding to the complaint to a member of SLT or may escalate the complaint straight to Stage 3. A formal response to the complaint will usually be provided within **15 academy days** of receipt of the letter of complaint although if a longer period is required to respond, the complainant will be kept updated.

Stage 3 - if the complainant is not satisfied with the response at Stage 2, they may request a review by writing to the Trust Governance Professional, via the Trust office, within **15 academy days** of receipt of the letter at Stage 2. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. The Trust Governance Professional will usually arrange for a member of the Local Governing Body to consider the complaint alone or convene a Complaints Committee on the same terms as set out in Part 1 of this complaints procedure. This will depend on the nature of the complaint and the reasons for dissatisfaction. The decision at this stage will usually be sent to the complainant within **15 academy days** of receipt of the request for a review or within **10 academy days** of the Complaints Committee hearing (as applicable).

Next steps

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision at Stage 3, they are entitled to refer the complaint to the Department for Education as outlined in Part 1 of this complaints policy. Concerns or complaints from other persons regarding the Headteacher, Principal or Head of Academy or the Trust should be referred direct to the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust c/o PET Registered Office, City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College, Leek Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2RU marked Strictly Private and Confidential / Complaint, or by email to info@potteries.ac.uk, FAO the Governance Professional who will arrange for the stages above to be considered by an appropriate person.

17. Part Four: repetitious and vexatious complaints and complaints pursued in an otherwise unreasonable manner

There are rare circumstances where we will deviate from the Complaints Procedure set out in Parts 1 and 2. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:

Repetitious, including serial and/or persistent, complaints

Where the complainant's complaint is the same, similar to or based on the same facts of a complaint which has already been considered in full and we have:

- taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns; and
- given the complainant a clear statement of our position and their options,

we will write to the complainant to advise that the complaints procedure has been exhausted and that we will not be responding to any further correspondence in relation to these matters. The complainant will be referred to the Department for Education.

Vexatious complaints

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint as:

- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific or repetitious;
- insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner;
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- refusal to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes;
- sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refusal to co-operate with the complaints investigation process;
- refusal to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure;
- insistence on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints policy and process or with good practice;
- introducing trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks

- to have them replaced;
- changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- seeking an unrealistic outcome, such as the inappropriate dismissal of staff;
- making excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with;
- knowingly providing falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complaints pursued in an otherwise unreasonable manner

Where the complainant's behaviour or language towards staff, governors, Trustees or members is aggressive, abusive, offensive, discriminatory or threatening or insulting personal comments are made about, or threats are made towards, staff.

In the circumstances outlined in (2) and (3) above, we may:

- inform the complainant that we consider their complaint to be vexatious or the manner in which they are pursuing their complaint to be unreasonable and why, and ask them to desist;
- conduct the Complaints Committee on the papers only i.e. not hold a hearing;
- refuse to consider the complaint any further and refer the complainant directly to the Department for Education

We may also restrict the complainant's access to the Academy, e.g. requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only), requiring contact to take place with a named person only, restricting telephone calls to specified days and times or number of contacts or banning the complainant from the academy's premises in line with the SBMAT Parent Code of Conduct.

Where the complainant's behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, governors, trustees or members we will consider other options - for example, reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.

18. Complaints campaigns

For the purposes of this policy, a complaints campaign is defined as a complaint from three or more separate individuals (whether or not connected with the Academy/ Trust) which are all based on the same subject.

Depending on the subject in question, we may deviate from the procedure set out in this procedure and

instead:

- send a template response to all complainants; and/or
- publish a single response on the Academy/Trust website (as applicable).

If complainants remain dissatisfied with the Trust or academy's response, they will be directed to the DfE.

19. Availability

A copy of this policy and procedure will be made available on request. It will also be published on the Trust and each academy's website.

20. Monitoring and review

The complaints policy and procedure will be reviewed regularly taking into account any legislative changes and the latest guidance issued by the Department for Education.

Contact details for the Potteries Educational Trust Governance Professional:

Potteries Educational Trust
c/o City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College
Leek Road
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 2RU

Email info@potteries.ac.uk

Contact details for the Department for Education:

If the complainant believes PET or the PET academy did not handle their complaint in accordance with this policy or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can after completing Stage 3 of this policy contact the Department for Education.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the PET or a PET academy. They will consider whether the PET or the PET academy 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 Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD.

Appendix 1 – Exclusions to Scope of Policy

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools	Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process – either through the appeals process or via the local authority.
Child Protection Matters	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).
Data Protection Matters	Complaints about data protection matters are handled under our data protection policy and in accordance with relevant guidance from the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the ICO directly, but the ICO will usually expect you to have raised your concerns with the Trust Data Protection Officer in the first instance.
Exclusion of children from school* (i.e. Statutory Education)	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: DfE School Exclusion . <i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the academy’s complaints procedure.</i>
Freedom of Information Matters	Complaints about our compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 are handled under our Freedom of Information Policy and in accordance with the relevant guidance from the ICO. If you have serious concerns you may wish to contact the ICO directly, but the ICO will usually expect you to have raised your concerns with the Trust in the first instance.
Governor or Trustee Grievances	Complaints from governors and trustees will be dealt with by the Chair of Trustees. This does not preclude governors or trustees from raising complaints in their capacity as a parent.
National Curriculum content	Please contact the Department for Education at: Contact the DfE
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Trust / Academy internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Potteries Educational Trust and its academies internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. 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.
Statutory assessments for Special Educational Needs	Concerns about statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs should be raised with the relevant Local Authority.

Whistleblowing	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>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: Contact the DfE.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our Trust or any of its academies should complain through the Trust complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use academy premises or facilities	<p>Providers should have their own complaints policy and procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact the provider directly.</p>

Appendix 2 – Formal Complaint Form

Your Name			
Your relationship to the learner			
Learner's Name		Learner's Date of Birth	
Learners Year Group or Class			
Your address and postcode			
Contact telephone number			
Email address			

Full details of complaint (including the names of all persons involved and the dates of incidents referred to):			
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint (for example, 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	

<i>For Official Use</i>		Date Received	
Date acknowledgement sent		Complaint referred to:	
Signature		Date	

Appendix 3 – Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the academy 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.

Complaints Co-ordinator

(This should be the Executive Leader of the academy, or CEO / Governance Professional however it may be appropriate to delegate some tasks to a staff member providing administrative support)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- ensure that the correct procedure has been followed
- liaise with staff members, academy executive leader, CEO, Chair of Governors, Chair of PET Board or the Governance Professional and to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- meet with the complainant if appropriate if clarification is required
- appoint an investigation officer
- ensure an impartial investigation is carried out and a report compiled
- be aware of issues regarding:
 - 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
- receive and consider the investigation report to make a decision on whether the complaint should be upheld or dismissed either in full or in part
- keep records- using the Trust Complaints Record form
- provide an outcome letter to the complainant and explain the next step of the process
- If a complainant requests escalation to Stage 3 of the complaints process notify the Governance Professional so that appropriate arrangements can be made for a Stage 3 Committee to be convened

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by providing impartial, comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:

- sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved

- sensitive interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
- consideration of records and other relevant information
- analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- 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 to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the academy executive leader or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

Governance Professional

The Governance Professional oversees the smooth running of the complaints process on behalf of the Trust and provides advice, support and guidance to complainants, executive leaders, investigation officer and complaints committees as appropriate.

The Governance Professional is the contact point for the complainant for formal complaints to the Trust and the complaints committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to academy 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)
- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- ensure correct procedures have been followed
- ensure all parties are aware of timescales for responses to complaints
- ensure the Stage 3 complaints committee has access to legal advice where appropriate
- 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 (for example: Stage 1 / Stage 2 paperwork, academy and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- provide clerking support to Stage 3 committee proceedings and take notes of the meeting
- circulate the notes of the meeting to the committee and make the notes available to the complainant on request
- on behalf of the Stage 3 committee Chair, notify all parties of the complaints committee's decision

- assist the academy or Trust in providing a summary letter to the complainant

Complaints Committee Chair

The complaints committee chair to ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Governance Professional / Clerk to the complaints committee) 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, if all parties are invited to attend, 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 complaints 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.
- key findings of fact are made, and that any issues not previously mentioned in writing should not be raised at the committee hearing and, if they are mentioned at the hearing, these should not be noted or considered by the complaints committee
- both the complainant and the academy/Trust 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 committee to reviews that due process has been completed through the other stages of the process and that the complainant's reasons for dissatisfaction are addressed ensuring key findings of fact are made
- the committee remains and acts independently with no conflict of interests
- 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 Governance Professional / Clerk who can provide advice, support and guidance to the chair and the committee

Complaints Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so
- no governor / trustee may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it
- establish the facts and ensure that due process has been completed through the previous stages of the process
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the academy and the complainant however PET and PET academies 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 and may 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 complainant, child/young person, witnesses or presenting officer does not feel intimidated
- the complaints committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults
- 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. It would be unusual for a child/young person to be present without the support and agreement of their parent/carer unless they are of an appropriate age.
- where the parent/carer is the complainant, the committee should give the parent / carer the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child / young person needs to attend, however, the parent / carer should be advised that agreement might not always be possible to allow the child / young person to attend a part of the meeting that the complaints committee considers is not in the child / young person's best interests. The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

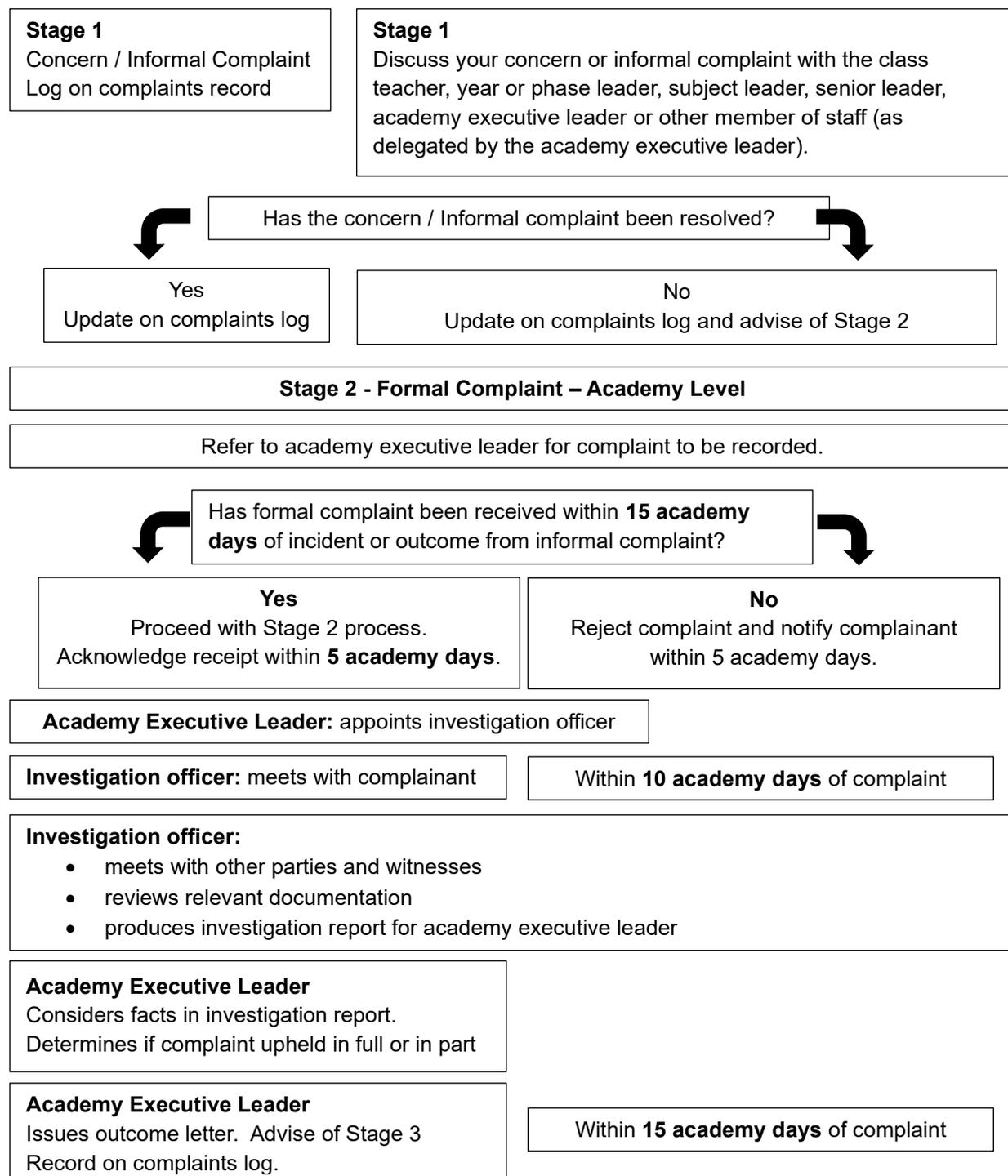
Appendix 4 – Stage 3 Complaints Committee Meeting process

Unless otherwise stated the procedure for the Stage 3 committee meeting is as follows:

- The committee will meet in advance of the hearing to prepare
- Advice, support and guidance to the complaints committee will be provided by the Governance Professional
- The complaint and any agreed accompanying support, and the PET/ PET Academy representative will enter the hearing together
- the Chair of the Complaints Committee will introduce the committee members and Governance Professional and ask others present to introduce themselves
- the Chair of the Complaints Committee will outline the process and explain the role of the committee and the role of the Governance Profession
- the complainant will be asked to explain the complaint and why they are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome
- the PET / PET academy representative and committee members will have an opportunity to question the complainant
- the PET/ PET academy representative will explain the academy's actions
- the complainant and the committee members will have an opportunity to question the Academy representative
- the Chair will provide an opportunity for all present to request clarification of any matters or an opportunity to add any pertinent information that may have not already been covered
- the complainant will sum up their complaint
- the PET / PET academy representative will sum up the academy's actions
- the Chair will summarise proceedings if appropriate
- the Chair of the Complaints Committee will explain that both parties will hear from the Committee within **10 academy days** of the hearing
- both parties will leave together while the Complaints Committee decides
- the Governance Professional, and any legal advisor assisting the Complaints Committee (if applicable), will stay to assist the Complaints Committee with its deliberations and decision making.

The Governance Professional and/or Complaints Committee reserve the right to modify the above procedure at their sole discretion, for example requiring the complainant and the PET / PET Academy representative to present their complaint / actions separately to the Complaints Committee in the absence of the other party. A Complaints Committee may be adjourned if the Complaints Committee require further evidence or in exceptional circumstances (for example, if clarification sought by the Complaints Committee is essential to the proceedings). The adjourned date must be as soon as possible.

Appendix 5 – Summary Overview of Complaint Process and Timelines



Stage 3 – Committee Hearing – Academy Level

Complainant is dissatisfied with outcome from Stage 2.

Complainant notifies Governance Professional of request to escalate to Stage 3 and provides reasons for dissatisfaction.

Within **15 academy days** of notification of Stage 2 outcome

Governance Professional acknowledges receipt of Stage 3 request & notifies CEO and Academy Executive Leader

Within **5 academy days**

Governance Professional convenes Stage 3 Committee

- Agree date & venue with all parties
- Requests copies of any paper for submission

Meeting to be convened to take place within **20 academy days** of request

Governance Professional confirms Stage 3 Committee date

- Circulates meeting pack
- Prints copies for meeting pack for use at meeting
- Reminds that any additional papers must be submitted no later than 3 academy days before the meeting

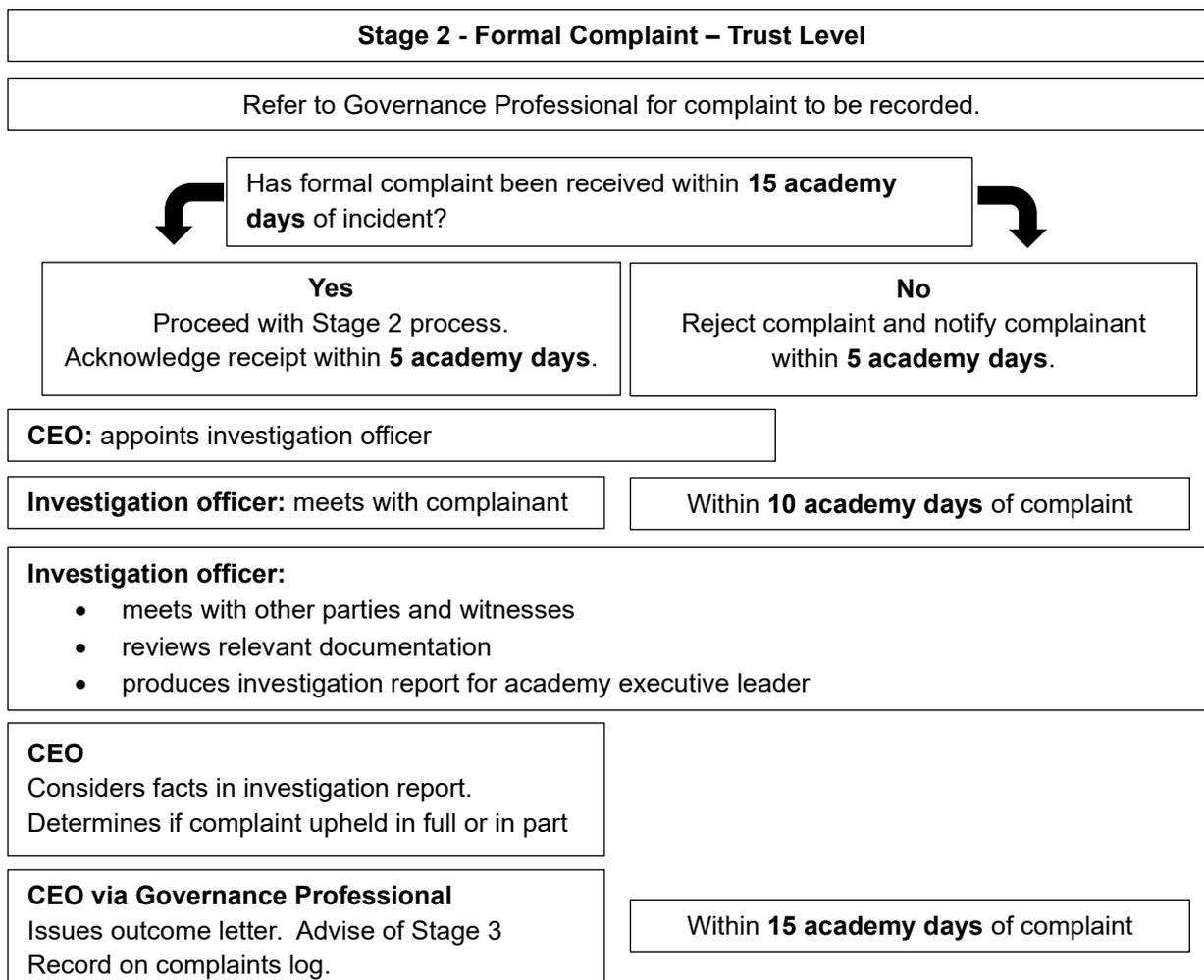
At least **5 academy days** before committee hearing

Stage 3 Committee Hearing takes place

NB: No new complaints are to be included at this stage nor papers accepted that have not been received within the policy timescales

Outcome letter issued from Chair of Committee by Governance Professional.
Advise how to refer to DfE if not satisfied.

Within **10 academy days** of committee hearing



Stage 3 – Committee Hearing – Trust Level

Complainant is dissatisfied with outcome from Stage 2.

Complainant notifies Governance Professional of request to escalate to Stage 3 and provides reasons for dissatisfaction.

Within **15 academy days** of notification of Stage 2 outcome

Governance Professional acknowledges receipt of Stage 3 request & notifies CEO or Chair of Trust Board as appropriate

Within **5 academy days**

Governance Professional convenes Stage 3 Committee

- Agree date & venue with all parties
- Requests copies of any paper for submission

Meeting to be convened to take place within **20 academy days** of request

Governance Professional confirms Stage 3 Committee date

- Circulates meeting pack
- Prints copies for meeting pack for use at meeting
- Reminds that any additional papers must be submitted no later than 3 academy days before the meeting

At least **5 academy days** before committee hearing

Stage 3 Committee Hearing takes place

NB: No new complaints are to be included at this stage nor papers accepted that have not been received within the policy timescales

Outcome letter issued from Chair of Committee by Governance Professional.
Advise how to refer to DfE if not satisfied.

Within **10 academy days** of committee hearing