

<b>Complaints &amp; Compliments Procedure</b>			
<b>Current Status:</b>	Operational	<b>Last Review:</b>	
<b>Procedure Owner:</b>	Group Vice Principal Quality	<b>Next Review:</b>	February 2027
<b>Roles Responsible for Review:</b>		<b>Originated:</b>	February 2025
<b>Approved by:</b>	Resources SET	<b>Committee:</b>	Trust Board Corporation
<b>Type of Procedure:</b>	Staff / Students / Governance members / External	<b>Quality Assured by:</b>	

## 1. Summary

1.1. This policy applies to all staff and any other personnel associated with Eastern Education Group (EEG), which includes:

- Abbeygate Sixth Form College
- Chalk Hill
- Duke of Lancaster School
- Exning Primary School
- One Sixth Form College
- Priory School
- Stone Lodge Academy
- Sunrise Academy
- West Suffolk College (including all PPL centres)

## 2. Scope

2.1 This procedure will not discriminate either directly or indirectly against any individual on the grounds of gender, race, ethnicity or nationality, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, disability, socio-economic status or any other personal characteristic. This procedure covers all students (including adults) and children at our schools and colleges.

## 3. Complaints and Compliments

3.1 We recognise that Complaints and Compliments are important as they assist with the continuous improvement of EEG services.

## 4. Compliments Process

4.1 The following provides a step-by-step guide as to the process of submitting a

compliment for students and children at Eastern Education Group.

- 4.2 We anticipate most compliments will be received informally from a student or child to the teacher or manager. To ensure compliments are recorded centrally the staff member is required to email the compliment to the PA to the Principal/Head Teacher or Chief Executive Officer. Refer to **section 7** for contact information.
- 4.3 A student, child or parent can submit a compliment formally to Eastern Education Group in writing. This may take the form of a letter, email or using the template found within [Appendix 1](#).

## **5. Who can make a complaint?**

- 5.1 This Complaints Procedure is not limited to parents or carers of students that are registered at our schools and colleges. Any person who has a legitimate interest in our provision may make a complaint to EEG about any provisions of facilities or services that it provides. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this Complaints Procedure. EEG will take seriously any complaint but must prioritise provision for existing students and/or children.
- 5.2 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. Please contact the principal if you would like to request reasonable adjustments.
- 5.3 **Anonymous concerns:** we will not formally investigate anonymous complaints or concerns. However, the principle will determine whether the concern warrants an investigation.

## **6. The difference between a concern and a complaint**

- 6.1. A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.
- 6.2. A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.
- 6.3. It is in everyone's interest that concerns, and complaints are resolved at the earliest opportunity. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the Complaints Procedure. EEG take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.
- 6.4. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, EEG will refer you to an appropriate staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, EEG will refer you another staff member who can look

at your concern objectively and impartially.

- 6.5. We understand, however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns more formally. In this case, EEG will attempt to resolve the issue internally through the stages outlined within this Complaint Procedure.

**7. How to raise a concern or complaint**

- 7.1. A concern should be made through **Stage 1**, in writing (including by email), where possible, but can be made verbally, such as at a meeting or via 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.
- 7.2. At this stage, there is no requirement to complete a form. If a concern cannot be resolved informally, complainants can make a **Stage 2** Complaint as set out below.
- 7.3. Where a concern remains unresolved, a complaint should be made within **Stage 2**, in writing. 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.
- 7.4. Complaints against EEG staff (except the Principal/Head Teacher) should be made, in the first instance, to the Principal/Head Teacher either directly or via the appropriate HR Manager, marked as "PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL".

**Email:** [ER@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk](mailto:ER@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk)

**Postal Address:** West Suffolk College, Out Risbygate, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3RL

- 7.7. Complaints that involve or are about Principal or Head Teacher should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and sent via the CEO's Executive Assistant [Rebekah.milnthorpe@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk](mailto:Rebekah.milnthorpe@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk) or posted to the addresses above marked for the CEO. Please mark them as "Private and Confidential". The Group Vice Principal Quality will initiate proceedings on behalf of the CEO.
- 7.8. Complaints about the CEO should be addressed to the Chair and sent via the Governance Professional - [Suzannah.gales@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk](mailto:Suzannah.gales@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk) or posted to:

FAO Governance Professional Eastern Education Group Out Risbygate Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP33 3RL	FAO Governance Professional Eastern Education Group Trust Out Risbygate Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP33 3RL
---	---

Please mark as "PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL".

- 7.9. Complaints about any individual Governance member, Committee or of the

governing boards (the Corporation of West Suffolk College or the Trust Board of Eastern Education Group Trust) should be addressed to the Governance Professional (as above). Please mark as "Private and Confidential".

- 7.10 A template complaint form is appended at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the college or a third-party organisation, for example the Citizens Advice.
- 7.11 In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints policy. For instance: providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.
- 7.12 We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, in exceptional circumstances and the nature of the complaint contains serious safeguarding allegations the CEO or Chair, as appropriate, may determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

## **8. Time scales**

- 8.1 You must raise a complaint ideally within **10 working days** of the incident and certainly **within 3 months**; 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 only if exceptional circumstances apply.

## **9. Complaints received outside of term time**

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

## **10. Scope of this procedure**

- 10.1 This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services provided by EEG.
- 10.2 If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example, 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.
- 10.3 If a complaint commences legal action against EEG in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the Complaints Procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

## **11. Out of Scope of this complaint's procedure**

- 11.1 Complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures are outside the scope of this complaints procedure and are listed below:

Exceptions	Who to contact
<p>Admissions to EEG including Primary transfer or to Post 16</p> <p>Statutory assessment of Special Educational Needs</p> <p>EEG re-organisation proposals for consultation</p>	<p>Concerns about admissions to EEG on Primary transfer, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or EEG re-organisation proposals for consultation should be raised with the Principal, Head Teacher or Local Authority where situated.</p>
<p>Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</p>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under the relevant Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>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).</p>
<p>Exclusion of students/children from Eastern Education Group</p>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusions can be found at: <a href="#">Behaviour in schools: sanctions and exclusions: Exclusions - GOV.UK</a>.</p> <p>Appeals and/or concerns about the application of the Behaviour policy can be made through the EEG Complaints Procedure.</p>
<p>Staff conduct</p>	<p>Complaints about staff conduct are handled in accordance with staff disciplinary procedures, as appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will <u>not</u> 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.</p>
<p>Staff grievances</p>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the EEG internal grievance procedures.</p>
<p>Whistleblowing</p>	<p>EEG 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</p>

	<p>direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about EEG should complain through the EEG complaints procedure.</p>
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum – content	Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://Department for Education - GOV.UK">Department for Education - GOV.UK</a>

- 11.2 Data Protection – Rights of Access. Right of Access requests such as Subject Access Requests (SARs) are handled via a specific process and will be dealt with separately if included in a complaint. To raise a SAR please contact [DataProtectionLead@EasternEducationGroup.ac.uk](mailto:DataProtectionLead@EasternEducationGroup.ac.uk). The timeframe for the completion of such requests is subject to Data Protection legislation and may vary to the timeline for more general EEG complaints.
- 11.3 EEG maintains Internal Data Protection policies which govern this process. EEG also maintains public facing Privacy Notices which will inform you of this process and these can be found on the EEG website here [Policies, Reports & Key Information - Eastern Education Group](#).
- 11.4 If a right of access request is made as part of a complaint you will be informed of this and referred to the EEG Compliance team who will coordinate the resolution of it.
- 11.5 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Requests which fall under the definition of Information Request are handled via a specific process and will be dealt with separately if included in a complaint. To raise an FOI request please contact [DataProtectionLead@EasternEducationGroup.ac.uk](mailto:DataProtectionLead@EasternEducationGroup.ac.uk) The timeframe for completion of such requests is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Information Regulations and may vary to the timeline for more general EEG complaints.
- 11.6 If a FOI request is made as part of a complaint, you will be informed of this and referred to the Compliance team who will coordinate the resolution of it.

## **12. Resolving complaints**

- 12.1 At each stage of the procedure, EEG seek to resolve complaints. 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 when which any changes will be made.
- An undertaking to review EEG policies in light of complaint.
- An apology.

### **13. Withdrawal of a complaint**

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

### **14. Stage 1 – Informal complaint**

- 14.1 It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis.
- 14.2 Concerns should be raised with an appropriate member of staff; this may be the Class Teacher or Personal Progress Tutor/Course Director or, if appropriate, the Head of Department/School, Assistant Principal. If the issue remains unresolved, after having conducted meetings and/or phone calls to try and resolve the situation, the next step is to begin a formal process.
- 14.3 Complainants should not approach individual Governance members or EEG Senior Executive Team members to raise concerns; they have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 4 of the procedure.
- 14.4 At the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the concern will provide an informal written response within **15 working days** of the date of receipt of the concern, unless agreed extended timescales have been communicated with the complainant for a final response.
- 14.5 If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

### **15. Stage 2 - Formal Complaint**

- 15.1 Formal complaints must be made in accordance with the process outlined in [section 7](#) above. This should be done in writing (preferably on the EEG Complaint Form in [Appendix 1](#)) and should be sent directly to the EA to the Principal or Head Teacher. Contact details are published to our website via the 'Contact Us' page.
- 15.2 The EA to the Principal or Head Teacher will record the date the complaint was received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **2 working days**.
- 15.3 Within this response, the investigator will seek to clarify the nature of the

complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The investigator can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

**Note:** The Principal or Head Teacher may delegate the investigation to another member of EEG Senior Executive Team but not the decision to be taken.

15.4 During the investigation, the investigator will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in making the complaint.
- if necessary, interview those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- if necessary, interview any person who may have information useful to the investigation.

15.5 At the conclusion of their investigation, a report will be written, and the investigator will provide a formal written response within **15 working days** of the date of the complaint.

15.6 If the investigator is unable to meet this deadline, the complainant will be provided with an update and revised response plan.

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 Principal or Head Teacher will take to resolve the complaint.

15.7 If the complaint concerns the Principal or Head Teacher, the CEO will appoint an appropriate EEG Senior Executive Team member to act as investigator.

15.8 If the complaints concerns a governance member, the Chair will appoint an appropriate EEG Senior Executive Team member to act as investigator.

15.9 If the complaint concerns more than one governance member or a governance member with significant responsibility, such as:

- The Chair and/or Vice Chair,
- The entire governing body, or
- The majority of the governing body

Stage 2 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body's Audit and Risk Management Committee. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

## **16. Stage 3 - Appeal**

16.1 EEG would hope to resolve the complaint. However, if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2, they have the option of requesting an appeal. If the complainant wishes to appeal, they have **10 working days** from receiving a full response from the investigator to the complaint to submit a written appeal to [ComplaintsandCompliments@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk](mailto:ComplaintsandCompliments@easterneducationgroup.ac.uk)



- 16.2 The Group Vice Principal - Quality will acknowledge your letter within **10 working days** and will, if appropriate, pass any information to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Group Vice Principal Quality will investigate your appeal and the decision made by the investigator at Stage 2 on your behalf, this may involve a discussion with you. No new evidence can be submitted at the time of the appeal.

Where appeals take longer than 10 working days to investigate, you will be kept informed on the progress of the appeal and a new deadline for the response will be given. The response will state whether the appeal has been upheld, rejected, or partially upheld.

## **17. Stage 4 – Review Panel**

- 17.2 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and 3, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 4, a panel review by three impartial governance members. This is the final stage of the Complaints Procedure.
- A request to escalate to Stage 4 must be made to the Governance Professional, via information provided in [section 7](#), within **10 working days** of receipt of the Stage 3 response.
- 17.3 The Group Vice Principal - Quality will record the date the post-appeal complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **10 working days**.
- 17.4 Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.
- 17.5 The Group Vice Principal - Quality will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 10 working days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Group Vice Principal - Quality will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.
- 17.6 If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Group Vice Principal - Quality will decide when to convene the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.
- 17.7 The panel review will consist of governance members with no prior involvement in the complaint. Prior to the meeting, the governance members will elect a Chair.
- 17.8 The panel review will decide whether to invite parties to present their case at the meeting or to review written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs. If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the panel review however, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

For instance, if an EEG 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.

17.10 At least 5 working days before the meeting, the Group Vice Principal - Quality will:

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

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

The panel review will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 2 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.

17.11 The panel review will consider the complaint appeal, and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part, or
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

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

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school or college's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the review panel will provide the complainant and EEG with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within **10 working days**.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled.

17.12 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 EEG will take to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

## 18. Stage 5 – External Referral

18.1 If the complainant believes EEG 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 Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2 and 3.

18.2 The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by EEG. They will consider whether EEG has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://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.

## Revision History – Complaints Procedure

Revision date	Reason for revision	Section number	Changes made
New Policy	EEG Policy	All	New Eastern Education Group Procedure
14/01/2025	Post-16 Curriculum & Quality	14.4	Amendment to time scale for complainant concern response from 10 days to 15 days.
07/02/2025	Quality Assurance	Title Page	Procedure owner Group Vice Principal Quality
07/02/2025		2.1	Amendment to text. EEG to schools and colleges
07/02/2025		3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.2, 10.1	Amendment to text. Removal/reference of EEG.
07/02/2025		11.2, 11.3, 11.5	Amendment to text. Addition of contact information for DPL and policies links.
07/02/2025		15.1	Amendment to text. Removal of EEG references.

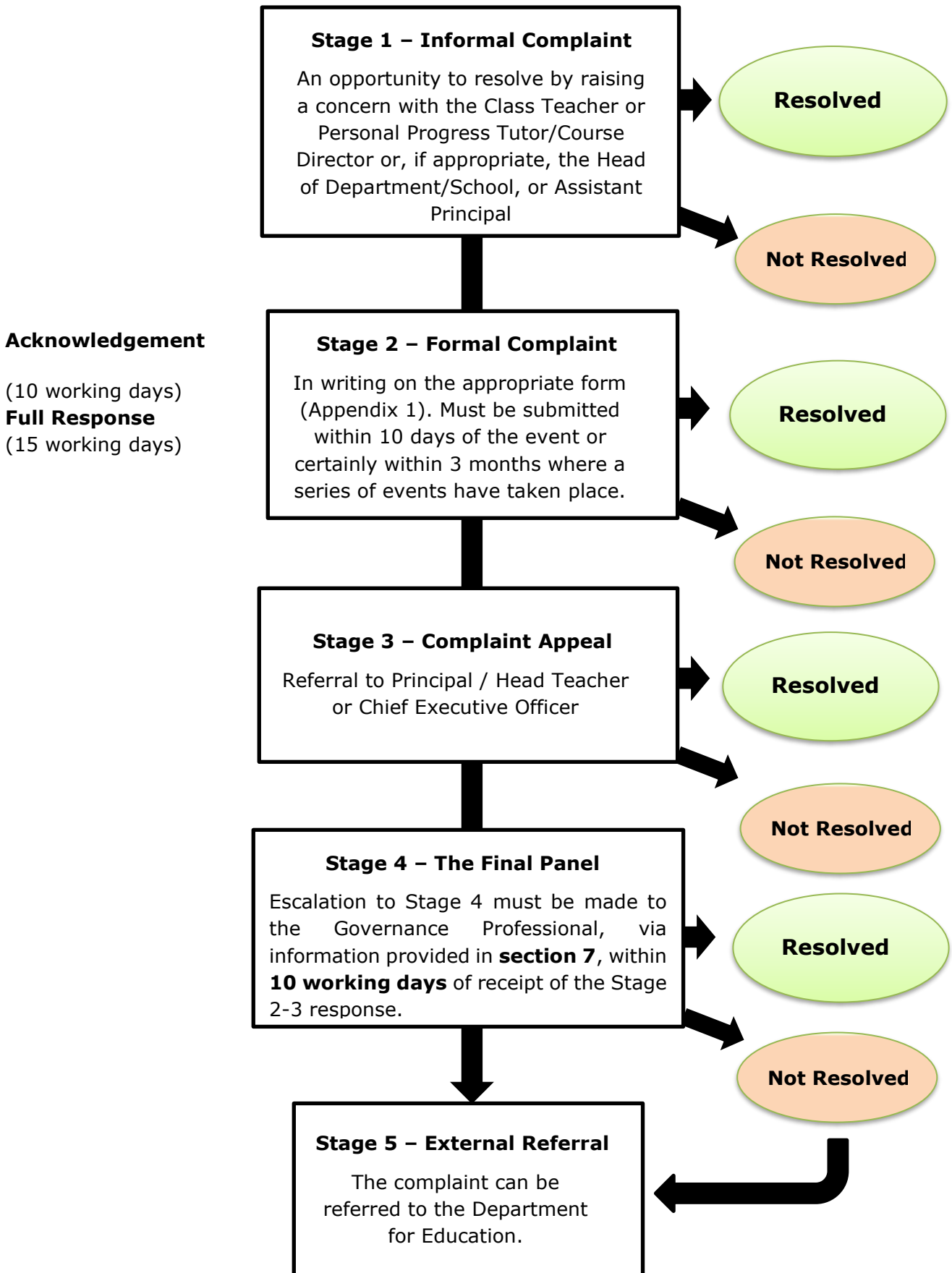
07/02/2025		15.9	Amendment to text. Aligned with Whistleblowing Policy.
07/02/2025		16.1	Amendment to text. Addition of compliments and complaints email.
07/02/2025		16.6	Removed.
07/02/2025		17.2	Amendment to text. Removal of Governing body/Trust board hearing committee.
07/02/2025		17.7, 17.10, 17.11	Amendment to text. Change of process, change of committee to panel review.

### Appendix 1 – Complaints & Compliments Form

Your name:	
Student/Child's name (if relevant):	
Your relationship to the student (if relevant):	
Address:	Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Email address:	
Please give details of your compliment or complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the EEG/EEGT about it.	
If a complaint, what actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.	
Signature:	
Date:	
Official use	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
By who:	
Complaint referred to:	
Action taken:	
Date:	

**Appendix 2. Flow Chart - Formal Complaints**



## **Appendix 3. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Complainant**

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

- a) Explain the complaint in full as early as possible.
- b) Co-operate with the college in seeking a solution to the complaint.
- c) Respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint.
- d) Ask for assistance as needed.
- e) Treat all those involved in the complaint with respect.
- f) Refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

### **Investigator**

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- a) Providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
  - i. Sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved.
  - ii. Interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint.
  - iii. Consideration of records and other relevant information.
  - iv. Analysing information.
- b) Liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigating manager should:

- a) Conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
- b) Keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting.
- c) Ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal.
- d) Be mindful of the timescales to respond.
- e) Prepare a comprehensive report for the principal or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The Principal/Head Teacher 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.

### **Principal/Head Teacher**



The Principal/Head Teacher should:

- a) Ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure.
- b) Liaise with staff members, Chair of Governors/Trust and LA's (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the Complaints Procedure.
- c) Be aware of issues regarding:
  - i. Sharing third party information.
  - ii. 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.
- d) Keep records.

### **Group Vice Principal Quality**

The Group Vice Principal Quality is the contact point for the complainant and the Hearing Committee and should:

- a) 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).
- b) 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.
- c) Collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example: Stage 2 paperwork, college and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale.
- d) Record the proceedings.
- e) Circulate the minutes of the meeting.
- f) Notify all parties of the Panel's decision.

### **Committee Chair**

The committee chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- a) Both parties are asked (via the Group Vice Principal Quality) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting.
- b) 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.
- c) 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.
- d) The remit of the committee is explained to the complainant.

- e) Written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the Data Protection Act 2018 or General Data Protection Regulations.
- f) 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.
- g) Both the complainant and the college 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.
- h) The issues are addressed.
- i) Key findings of fact are made.
- j) The committee is open-minded and acts independently.
- k) 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.
- l) The meeting is minute.
- m) They liaise with the Group Director of Compliance and GDPR.

### **Committee Members**

Committee members should be aware that:

- a) the meeting must be independent and impartial and should be seen to be so.
- b) the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between EEG 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.

- c) many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting  
Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child:
  - i. extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a young person and present during all or part of the meeting.
  - ii. careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the young person does not feel intimidated.
  - iii. the views of the young person should be respected and given equal consideration to those of adults.
  - iv. If the young person is the complainant, the members should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the young person's parent is the complainant, the members should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the young person needs to attend.
  - v. However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the young person to attend a

part of the meeting that the member considers is not in the young person's best interests.

- d) The welfare of the young person is paramount.