

*In the Light of Jesus  
we Learn to Shine*

## **St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School**

### **Complaints Policy**

**Ratified by Governors**

Date: 13 March 2019

<b>Document Status</b>	
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This policy must be reviewed every 3 years

We have carefully considered the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.



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## COMPLAINTS POLICY

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School our Mission Statement underpins all that we do. We strive to live out the Catholic ethos and mission of our school, fostering the important partnership between home, school and parish. Working and growing together we aim to provide the best education for all our pupils in all areas of the curriculum. We believe our relationships with parents, parishes and community are strong and we also recognise the value of working and engaging with other partners.

Where concerns are raised the school intends for these to be dealt with:

- Fairly
- Openly
- Promptly
- Without Prejudice

In order to do so, the governing board of **St Joseph's Catholic Primary School** has approved the following procedure which explains what you should do if you have any concerns about the school. All members of staff will be familiar with the procedure and will be able to assist you.

### Which procedure do I need?

Sometimes, when concerns are more specific, there are alternative and more appropriate policies for dealing with them. The following list details specific topics of complaints, and the correct policy to refer to. You can access these policies on the school website or ask for a copy from the main school reception.

- Pupil admissions; please see the school's admissions policy.
- Pupil exclusions; please see the school's *behaviour policy*.
- Where the complaint concerns a third party used by the school; please complain directly to the third party themselves.
- Anonymous complaints – please refer to the whistleblowing policy.
- Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information Requests – please see the school's Data Protection and Freedom of Information policy.

### Raising concerns

The majority of concerns can be dealt with without resorting to the procedure. Where you have a concern about any aspect of the school or your child's education or wellbeing, raise this with your child's class teacher or year leader via the phone or in person. Ideally, they will be able to address your concerns straight away, or can arrange a meeting with you to discuss the issue.

All concerns will be dealt with confidentially, although the staff member may need to take notes if they feel that the matter may need to be taken further or it may arise again in the future. Any such notes will be kept in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018. However, such notes would be able to be used to as evidence if further investigation was required, or if the concern became a formal complaint.

## Safeguarding

Wherever a complaint indicates that a child's wellbeing or safety is at risk, the school is under a duty to report this immediately to the local authority. Any action taken will be in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy, details can be found on the school website.

## Social Media

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School requests the complainants do not discuss complaints publically, via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved, and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

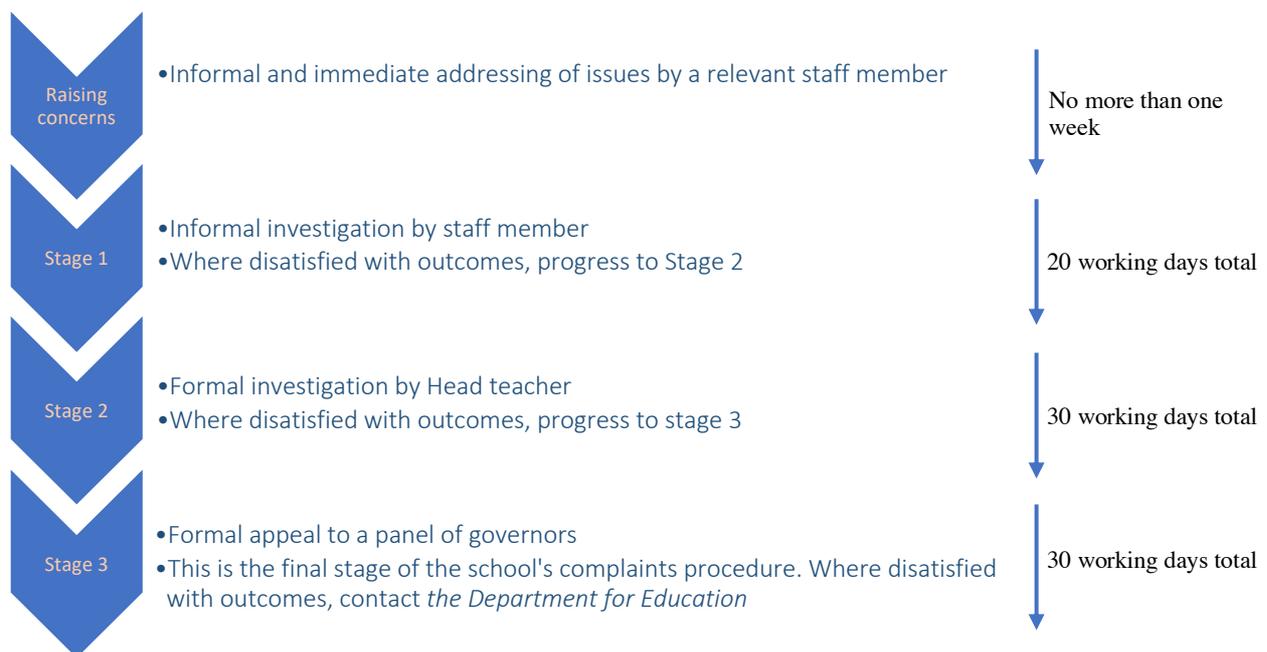
## Complaints that result in staff capability or disciplinary

If at any formal stage of the complaint it is determined that staff disciplinary or capability proceedings are necessary in order to resolve the issue, the details of this action will remain confidential to the headteacher and/or the individual's line manager. The complainant is not entitled to participate in the proceedings or receive any detail about them.

## Procedure

If you need to raise an issue in the first instance, please do so with the relevant member of staff who will be happy to talk to you and seek to establish a solution. If you are not satisfied with this response and believe the issue has not been resolved, please use the following procedure as detailed below.

## Timeline



## Timeframes

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School** will endeavour to abide by timeframes stated under each stage but acknowledges that in some circumstances, this is not always possible due to the complexity of information needed to review a complaint or difficulties regarding individual's availability to deal with the complaint. For example, if it becomes apparent that it is not possible to complete any stage of the complaints procedure within a given timeframe, the individual responsible for handling the complaint will contact the complainant as soon as possible and come to an agreed timeframe that works for all parties involved.

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School** reserves the right *not to investigate* complaints that have been made *three months* after the subject of the complaint took place, except in exceptional circumstances. What is meant by exceptional circumstances is where new evidence has come to light, where the complaint is of an especially serious matter or where there is reasonable justification for why the complainant has been unable to raise the complaint before this time. The Head teacher will review the situation and decide whether or not to enact the complaints procedure, informing the chair of governors of the decision.

### **Complaints about the headteacher or the governors**

Where a complaint regards the Head teacher, the complainant should first directly approach the Head teacher in an attempt to resolve the issue informally. If the complainant is not satisfied with this outcome they should notify the clerk to the governors (see contact details at the end of the document). The Stage 2 process will then commence, but with the Chair of Governors as the individual responsible for the investigation rather than the Head teacher.

Where a complaint regards a governor, the same process applies as for the Head teacher. Where a complaint concerns the Chair of Governors, the individual should contact the clerk to the governors. Informal resolution will be sought, but where this fails, the complaints procedure at Stage 3 will take immediate effect. The vice chair or an independent investigator will mediate any proceedings.

### **Stages of the Complaint**

#### **STAGE 1: Dealing with concerns and complaints informally**

1. The vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight away through the class teacher, year leader school secretary, other member of staff or Head teacher, depending on whom the parent first approached, without the need to resort to a formal complaints procedure, and this is preferable for all concerned.
2. Although this stage involves dealing with the issue informally it may prove helpful later, although not essential at this stage, for the person responding to make a basic record of the issue or complaint raised, which may include brief notes of conversations (face to face or over the telephone), and the responses made.
3. The person who raised the issue should be informed of the action to be taken to resolve the issue. It may be helpful to confirm undertakings given about future action or monitoring in writing.
4. If the person is dissatisfied with the response they have been given, they should be provided with a copy of the school's complaints procedure and informed about how to take their complaint to Stage 2, by referring it to the Head teacher, usually in writing.
5. The staff member will make a record of the concern and the outcomes of the discussion which will be held centrally for twelve months, in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018.

#### **STAGE 2: Referral to the Head teacher**

1. The issue is referred to the Head teacher for investigation, usually by the complainant writing to the Head teacher. The complainant may submit a formal complaint form to the Head teacher. See the end of the procedure for a copy of this form.
2. The **Head teacher** will respond in writing within 10 working days (excluding those that fall in the school holidays) of the date of receipt of the complaint to acknowledge receipt of the complaint and explain what action will be taken, giving clear timeframes.

3. The Head teacher will consider all relevant evidence; this may include but is not limited to:
  - a statement from the complainant,
  - where relevant a statement from an individual who is the subject of the complaint
  - any previous correspondence regarding the complaint
  - any supporting documents in either case
  - interview with anyone related to the complaint.
4. The Head teacher may decide to have a meeting with the complainant (and where relevant, the subject of the complaint) if they feel that it would be appropriate for the investigation.
5. After considering the available evidence, the Head teacher can:
  - Uphold the complaint and direct that certain action be taken to resolve it
  - Reject the complaint and provide the complainant with details of the stage three appeals process
  - Uphold the complaint in part: in other words, the Head teacher may find one aspect of the complaint to be valid, but not another aspect. They may direct for certain action to be taken to resolve the aspect that they find in favour of the complainant.
6. The Head teacher must inform the complainant of their decision in writing within 20 working days (excluding those that fall in the school holidays) of having issued written acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint. They must explain clearly why they have come to the decision they have made. They must detail any agreed actions as a result of the complaint. Finally, they must provide the complainant with details of how to progress the complaint to stage three if they are not satisfied, providing them with the contact details of the clerk to the governors.
7. A log of all correspondence in relation to the complaint will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Principles.

### **STAGE 3: Review by the Chair of Governors**

If the complainant wishes to appeal a decision by the Head teacher at stage 2 of the procedure, or they are not satisfied with the action that the Head teacher took in relation to the complaint, the complainant is able to appeal this decision.

They must write to the clerk (see the contact details at the end of the procedure) as soon as possible after receiving notice of the Head teacher's decision, briefly outlining the content of the complaint and requesting that a complaints appeal panel is convened.

The clerk will fulfil the role of organising the time and date of the appeal hearing, inviting all the attendees, collating all the relevant documentation and distributing this 5 days in advance of the meeting, recording the proceedings in the form of minutes, and circulating these and the outcome of the meeting.

The complainant must request an appeal panel within 4 weeks of receiving the Head teacher's decision or it will not be considered, except for in exceptional circumstances. On receipt of this written notification, the following steps will be followed:

1. The clerk will write to the complainant within five working days (not including the school holidays) to confirm receipt of the appeal request and detail further action to be taken.
2. The clerk will convene a panel of three governors. All three panel members will have no prior knowledge of the content of the complaint.
3. The appeal hearing will take place within 20 working days (excluding those which fall in the school holidays) of receipt of the date of the confirmation letter from the clerk to the complainant, confirming the appeal.

4. In addition to the panel, the following parties will be invited, where applicable:
  - the complainant
  - the Head teacher who dealt with the complaint at Stage 2
  - where the complaint regards a member of staff, the staff member who is the subject of the complaint.

The complainant is also able to bring a companion with them to the hearing if they wish. Where the subject of the complaint is a member of staff, that staff member is also able to bring a companion with them.

The companion will be a friend or a colleague. Neither party is able to bring legal representation with them. If after the hearing any party feels that legal action is necessary, please see the contact details at the end of the procedure.

The complainant evidence will be heard separately and independently by the panel. The complainant then leaves the hearing. The evidence of the SLT Member (and the staff member if appropriate) is then heard.

5. If the attendance of any pupils is required at the hearing, parental permission will be sought if they are under the age of 18. Extra care will be taken to consider the vulnerability of children where they are present at a complaints hearing.
6. Where the complaint is about a governor, the complainant may request that the appeal is heard by an entirely independent panel. It is at the discretion of the governing body who will notify the clerk of their decision. Where an entirely independent panel is required, timescales may be affected while the school source appropriate individuals for the review.
7. The panel can make the following decisions:
  - 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 school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
8. All parties who attended the meeting will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal within 5 working days (excluding those which fall in the school holidays).

This is the final stage at which the school will consider the complaint. If the complainant remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the complaint further, please see the contact details at the end of the document. The school will not consider the complaint beyond this.

### **Unreasonable complaints**

Where a complainant raises an issue that has already been dealt with via the school's complaints procedure, and that procedure has been exhausted, the school will not reinvestigate the complaint except in exceptional circumstances, for example where new evidence has come to light.

If a complainant persists in raising the same issue, the Head teacher will write to them explaining that the matter has been dealt with fully in line with the school complaints procedure, and therefore the case is now closed. The complainant will be provided with the contact details of the Department for Education (see the end of this document) if they wish to take the matter further.

Unreasonable complaints include the following scenarios:

- The complainant refuses to co-operate with the school's relevant procedures.
- The complainant changes the basis of the complaint as the complaint progresses.
- The complainant seeks an unrealistic outcome

- Excessive demands are made on the time of staff and school governors and it is clearly intended to aggravate.
- The complainant acts in a way that is abusive or offensive.

The Head teacher will use their discretion to choose not to investigate these complaints.

Where they decide to take this course of action, they must inform the chair of governors that they have done so, explaining the nature of the complaint and why they have chosen not to investigate. If the chair deems it appropriate to, they can redirect the Head teacher to investigate the complaint. The full complaints procedure will commence from stage one on this direction.

If the chair upholds the Head teacher's decision not to look into the complaint and the complainant deems this decision to be so unreasonable that no other rational body in the same position would have made that decision, then the complainant may write to the Department for Education (see the contact details at the end of the document).

Contact details for external organisations if not satisfied with the outcomes of the complaints procedure in full.

- If you have any queries regarding any aspect of the complaints procedure, please direct these to the clerk to the governors [gbean@stjosephs.primaryluton.co.uk](mailto:gbean@stjosephs.primaryluton.co.uk).

#### **STAGE 4: Review by Governing Body Complaints Committee**

1. Complaints only rarely reach this formal level, but it is important that governing bodies are prepared to deal with them when necessary. Where the clerk to the governors receives a complaint under these procedures, he or she would arrange for a complaints committee to meet within 10 school days from receipt of the letter. (The governing body should have nominated three members to serve on the committee and reserves to ensure that sufficient governors are available to hold a meeting within the specified time period. The chair of governors should not be a member of the committee as they will have been involved at the previous stage).
2. The Head teacher should also be informed immediately that a complaint has been received and consulted about the proposed date of the hearing. At this stage the Council's governor support team should be informed that a hearing was taking place.
3. On issuing notification of the date and time of the hearing, the clerk will need to advise the complainant and the Head teacher that any written documentation they wish the committee to consider will need to be submitted in time to be circulated to committee members 5 days prior to the hearing. The complainant should be advised that they may be accompanied by a relative or friend.
4. Notification of the hearing should also include details of the way in which the hearing will be conducted. (A specimen of such procedures is included in this guidance). The hearing should be minuted and the clerk should keep copies of all relevant correspondence and notes on file.
5. The findings of the committee should be notified to the complainant and the Head teacher in writing within 5 school days of the hearing.
6. When considering the membership of the complaints committee, the governing body should have regard to whether it would be advisable to include governors who are employed at the school. If this were the case, it may be perceived by the complainant that those governors would be unlikely to amend or overturn a decision taken by the Head teacher. In those circumstances, the complainant might regard this as grounds to complain to the Council or the Secretary of State.

## **FURTHER RECOURSE**

If the complainant feels that the governing board acted ‘unreasonably’ in the handling of the complaint, they can complain to the Department for Education after the complaints procedure has been exhausted. Please note that unreasonable is used in a legal sense and means acting in a way that no reasonable school or authority would act in the same circumstances <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>.

### **To the Council**

1. If, having been given the governing body’s decision, a complainant believes that a complaint was not handled fairly according to the school’s complaints procedure, they can write to the Lifelong Learning Department’s Performance Review Manager.
2. The complainant should explain their complaint, and give evidence that shows that the school did not follow its complaints procedure. The department’s Performance Review Manager will acknowledge the complainant’s letter within 3 working days and inform the appropriate School Improvement Adviser that a complaint has been received. The SIA will investigate whether the school had dealt with the complaint properly according to its procedure and respond to the complainant within 10 working days.
3. The Council is not able to re-investigate the original complaint nor can it seek to substitute the Council’s judgement for that of the governing body if the governors have followed a proper procedure and considered the complaint reasonably. If the results of an investigation show that there had been a breach of procedure the matter will be referred back to the governing body, with a copy to the Headteacher and the complainant will be informed of the outcome of the investigation. The governing body should then re-investigate the original complaint.

### **To the Secretary of State for Education**

1. Complainants have a right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under sections 496 or 497 of the 1996 Education Act if they believe that the Council has acted unreasonably. If the Secretary of State agrees that a complaint is justified, the DfES has the power to require the Council to take certain actions including the issuing of instructions to school governing bodies in appropriate circumstances, although in practice this would be very rarely exercised.
2. The Secretary of State would not take action until the school and Council procedures have been completed.

### **The Local Government Ombudsman**

1. If a complainant feels that there has been maladministration in the manner in which a complaint has been dealt with, they can take this to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Ombudsman can investigate complaints about how something has been done but he cannot question what has been done simply because someone does not agree with it. The Ombudsman cannot investigate the internal management of schools and colleges.
2. The Ombudsman would not take action until the school and Council procedures have been exhausted.

### [Ofsted will also consider complaints about schools.](#)

Relevant legislation and guidance

The Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

The Data Protection Act 2018 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents>

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents/made>

Education Act 2002 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>

The Department for Education *Best Practice advice for school complaints procedures*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures>

## SUMMARY OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### Concern or complaint received

#### Stage

**Stage 1:** Informal discussion with the class teacher or other relevant member of staff (possibly the Headteacher) usually resulting in resolution of the issue.

#### Action required

The person is informed of the action to be taken to resolve the issue. If they are not satisfied they should be provided with a copy of the school's complaints procedures and information on how to proceed to stage 2 with their complaint.

### If the complaint is not resolved

**Stage 2:** The complaint is submitted, either verbally or in writing, to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher acknowledges receipt and arranges a meeting within 5 school days and provides a full written response within 15 school days. If necessary the complainant should be informed of how to contact the chair of governors.

### If the complaint is not resolved or if the complaint is about the Headteacher

**Stage 3:** A written complaint is submitted to the chair of governors.

The chair acknowledges receipt within 7 school days. Chair of governors provides a full written response within 20 school days. Information is provided to complainant if required on how to progress complaint to stage 4. School notifies Council governor support team.

### If the complaint is not resolved

**Stage 4:** Complainant writes to the clerk to the governors requesting that a complaints committee of governors hear the complaint.

Clerk arranges for complaints committee to meet within 10 school days from receipt of letter and informs complainant of findings within 5 school days of hearing. School notifies Council governor support team. School tells complainant how to contact Lifelong Learning Department if required.

### If the complainant is not satisfied that the complaint has been dealt with properly according to the school's procedure

Complainant writes to the Council Lifelong Learning Department's complaints officer with evidence that the school did not follow its complaints procedure.

Department's Performance Review Manager acknowledges letter within 3 working days and informs the complainant about what will be done, making it clear that the department can only investigate inappropriate procedure, not the complaint itself.

### If the complainant is not satisfied that the complaint has been dealt with properly and fairly

Complainant writes to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, or the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Secretary of State may intervene if a governing body or a Council has not carried out a statutory duty or has acted unreasonably. The Ombudsman only investigates issues of maladministration.

## **OUTLINE PROCEDURES FOR COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE HEARINGS**

### **Before the hearing**

1. The complainant and the Headteacher should be provided with details of the way in which the hearing will be conducted.
2. If necessary support for the complainant should be arranged, for example, translation of any of the papers provided by the school or the Council, provision of an interpreter or any arrangements necessary to give the complainant full access to the proceedings, for example if the complainant has a disability.
3. The members of the committee should elect one of their number to act as Chair of the committee for the hearing.

### **The hearing**

4. The complainant and the Headteacher should simultaneously be invited into the room where the hearing is being held. At this point the Chair may wish to reiterate the scope of the governing body's powers and clarify the aims of the hearing, i.e. to resolve the complaint, reconcile differences between the complainant and the school and to help identify the way forward.
5. The Chair should introduce all those present and ensure that all parties have been advised of the way in which the hearing will be conducted.
6. The complainant to begin by explaining the basis of their complaint and the Headteacher to respond by stating the reasons for the school's response.
7. The Headteacher to ask the complainant any questions regarding their complaint and the complainant to raise questions with the Headteacher about the school's response.
8. Members of the committee to have the opportunity to ask questions of either the complainant or the Headteacher.
9. The complainant and the Headteacher to be given the opportunity to make any final statement.
10. The Chair to confirm that a decision will be issued within 5 school days.
11. The complainant and the Headteacher should then leave the hearing.

### **The decision making process**

12. The committee should then consider a decision based on the information and evidence presented to them. It should decide whether or not to uphold the complaint, suggest any actions, which may be taken to resolve the complaint and consider whether it would be appropriate to suggest a review of any school policies in the light of issues raised in the course of the complaint. The committee should reach a unanimous or majority decision on the complaint.

### **Communicating the decision**

13. The findings of the committee should be notified to the complainant and the Headteacher in writing within 5 school days of the hearing.

## **A MODEL GUIDE FOR PARENTS ON THE SCHOOL BASED COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **What to do if you have a concern or complaint about a School?**

At St Joseph's Primary, we like to be told about how we are doing, whether well or badly. If you have a concern or complaint we always try to deal with it helpfully and reasonably. If we need to, we try to put things right as quickly as possible. If you have a concern or complaint you need to take it up with the school itself. The Council would not usually get involved in a complaint about a school unless the school had completed its own procedures first.

This complaints procedure is for general complaints. The school must follow other procedures for complaints or appeals about the curriculum; special educational needs provision, exclusions and admissions. Staff disciplinary action, child protection issues or criminal investigation will also need to be handled differently.

We shall tell you which is the right process when you discuss your concern with us. The complaints procedure has four stages. You will be told what to do at each stage if you wish to take your complaint further.

Stage 1 of the process is informal:

#### **STAGE 1**

If you have a concern about the school, try to talk to someone at the school, preferably the person who is most closely involved. If you get in touch with one of the governors first of all they can only give you general advice. They may need to ask you to take up your concerns with the member of staff best able to help you, or with the Head teacher.

Your concern can usually be settled quickly and without fuss by contacting the right person in the school. This could be your child's teacher, another member of staff or the Head teacher.

If your concern cannot be sorted out in this way or you are not happy with the way it has been dealt with you should take it to stage 2:

#### **STAGE 2**

You should complain to the Head teacher who will investigate your complaint. You would normally do this in writing. If your complaint is about the Head teacher you can complain directly to the chair of governors (see Stage 3).

The school will let you know that it has received your complaint and a meeting held within 5 school days. You will be given the results of the Headteacher's investigation in writing within 15 school days.

If your complaint has still not been resolved to your satisfaction you may take it to stage 3:

#### **STAGE 3**

You can complain in writing to the chair of governors care of the school. You should make it clear why you are complaining, who you have already spoken to and what you want to happen as a result of your complaint.

The chair of governors will let you know that he or she has received your complaint within 7 school days and will then investigate it. You will be told about the outcome of the chair of governors' investigation in writing within 20 school days.

If you are still not satisfied after receiving the chair of governor's report, you can ask to have your complaint referred to a complaints committee of the governing body at stage 4.

#### **STAGE 4**

You can write to the clerk to the governors care of the school. You should say exactly why you are unhappy with the chair of governor's findings and ask that a complaints committee be set up to look at the complaint.

The committee will meet within 10 school days after the clerk to the governors receives your letter. You will be told in advance about the process and what will happen at the meeting of the committee. You can attend and bring a relative or friend to support you if you want to. You will be told in writing about the committee's findings within 5 school days from the date of the meeting.

## **What you can do if you are still not satisfied with the governing body's decision**

You may believe that your complaint was not handled fairly according to the school's own complaints procedure. In this case, you can ask the Council to investigate.

You can write to the Lifelong Learning Department's Performance Review Manager at this address.

Luton Borough Council,  
Children and Learning Department,  
2nd Floor Town Hall Extension  
Upper George Street  
Luton  
LU1 2BQ

You should explain your complaint and say why you think the school did not follow its complaints procedure properly. Wherever possible you should give evidence for why you think this.

The Performance Review Manager will acknowledge your letter within 3 working days and let you know the name of the Officer who will investigate the complaint. However, the Council cannot do anything until the school itself has finished considering your complaint.

The investigating officer will investigate whether the school had dealt with the complaint properly according to its own procedures but will not investigate your original complaint all over again. The Council cannot make the school come to a different judgement on your case if the governing body has considered your complaint in a reasonable way.

The investigating officer will tell you the outcome of the investigation in writing. If the conclusion is that the school did not follow its procedures properly, the matter will be referred back to the chair of the governing body. The governing body should then re-investigate the complaint.

If you believe that the Council has acted unreasonably you may appeal to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills:

Department for Education  
School Complaints Unit  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor,  
Picadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

The Secretary of State could step in if a governing body or a Council had not carried out its legal duty or had acted unreasonably. The Secretary of State would not do anything until the school and the Council had finished looking into the complaint.

If you feel that there has been a fault in the way your complaint has been dealt with, you can take this to the Local Government Ombudsman:

The Local Government Ombudsman  
PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH  
Tel: 0300 061 0614

The Ombudsman will only investigate where there has been a fault in the way the process was handled by the school or Council. He can investigate complaints about how something has been done. This could be giving the wrong information, not dealing with letters or taking too long to do something. He cannot question what has been done just because someone does not agree with the result. The Ombudsman cannot investigate how schools and colleges are run. The Ombudsman could not do anything until the school and the Council have finished looking into your complaint.

## SCHOOL BASED COMPLAINTS – PROCEDURAL FLOWCHART

### You have a concern or complaint

What you should do	What will happen
Stage 1: Discuss your concerns with the class teacher or other relevant member of staff (which may be the Headteacher). This will usually resolve the issue.	The member of staff concerned will deal with your issues or make sure you have the information you need if you feel you want to take the matter further.

### If you are not satisfied with the response

Stage 2: Complain to the Headteacher, either verbally or in writing.	Your complaint will be acknowledged and a meeting held within 5 school days with a full written response within 15 school days.
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### If you are not satisfied with the Head teacher's response or if the complaint is about the Head teacher

Stage 3: Complain to the chair of governors in writing.	Your complaint will be acknowledged within 7 school days with a full response within 20 school days
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### If the complaint is not resolved

Stage 4: Write to the clerk of the governing body requesting that your complaint be heard by a complaints committee of governors	The complaints committee will meet within 10 school days from receipt of your letter. The committee's decision is final and you will be told of its findings within 5 school days of the hearing.
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### If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been properly dealt with

Write to the Council Lifelong Learning Department's complaints officer, giving evidence that the school did not follow its complaints procedure	The complaints officer will acknowledge your letter within 3 working days and tell you what will be done. The department can only investigate inappropriate procedure, not re-visit the complaint itself. A response will be made within 10 working days.
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### If you are not satisfied with the response

Write to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, or the Local Government Ombudsman.	The Secretary of State may intervene if a governing body or a Council has not carried out a statutory duty or has acted unreasonably. The Ombudsman only investigates issues of maladministration.
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