



# Weald of Kent Grammar School

## Complaints Policy – May 2018

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### 1. General Principles

At Weald of Kent establishing positive partnerships within our school and wider community is central to our ethos. We welcome and encourage feedback and recognise its valuable contribution to our internal routine, rigorous and robust self evaluation processes. We strive to resolve any conflict without recourse to formal procedures but recognize that parents/carers and other stakeholders have the right to make a formal complaint and to have these complaints taken seriously.

### 2. Purposes

We aim to:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible.
- Have a clearly understood complaints procedure which is available on the school web-site or on request from the school office.
- Examine complaints in a sensitive, impartial and non-adversarial manner.
- Deal with complaints swiftly with clearly communicated updates and time-lines for actions.
- Investigate complaints fully and fairly by an independent person or agency where necessary.
- Address all the issues raised and provide feedback and appropriate redress where required.
- Review practice where findings suggest an improvement is required.

### 3. Dealing with Concerns and Complaints

#### (a) Stage 1 – Informal

We consider that taking concerns seriously at the earliest possible stage may reduce the need to move to the formal complaints process. The requirement to have a complaints procedure should not be seen to undermine efforts to resolve concerns informally. In most cases the teacher or person delivering the service is best placed to resolve the issue which may include apologising where necessary or appropriate.

In some cases it may be considered by the complainant/teacher or service provider that the issue should be referred to another member of staff. In most cases this may be someone more senior, however the most important factor is that the nominated person deals with the complaint objectively and impartially.

Where initial attempts to resolve a concern are unsuccessful and the person raising the issue remains dissatisfied and indicates their wish to take the matter further the formal procedure will be invoked.

In cases of serious complaint e.g. cases of personal injury, the matter will be examined by the Headteacher who may delegate some of the information collation but not the decision of the action to be taken. If the complaint is against the Headteacher then the matter should be passed to the Chair of Governors.

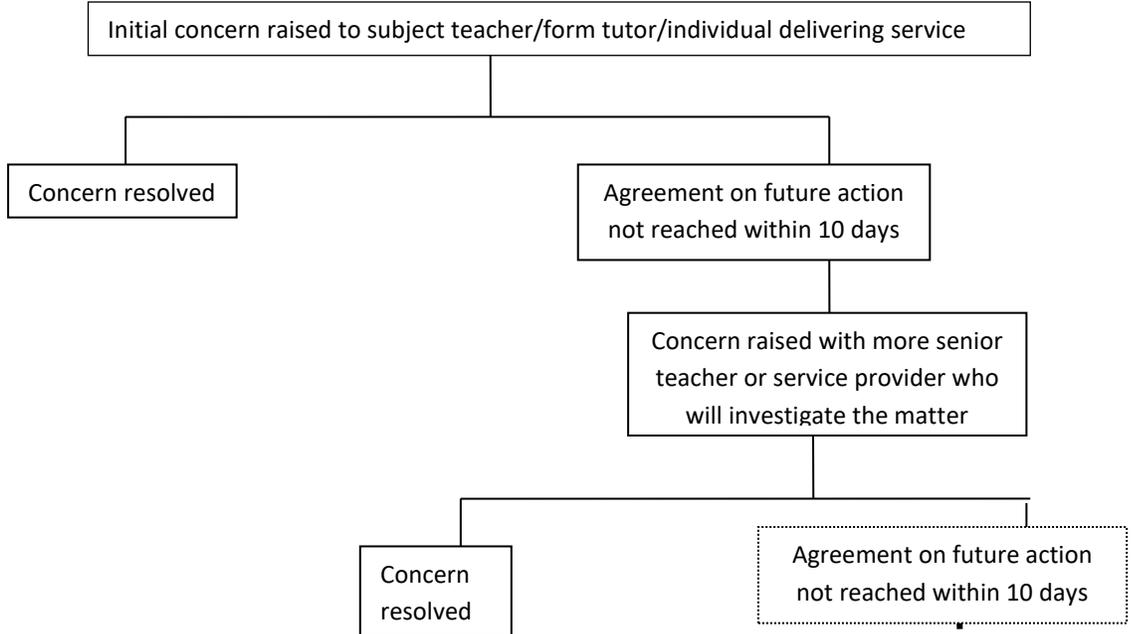
# FLOW DIAGRAM SUMMARISING FORMAL PROCEDURE

## DEALING WITH CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

### STAGE 1

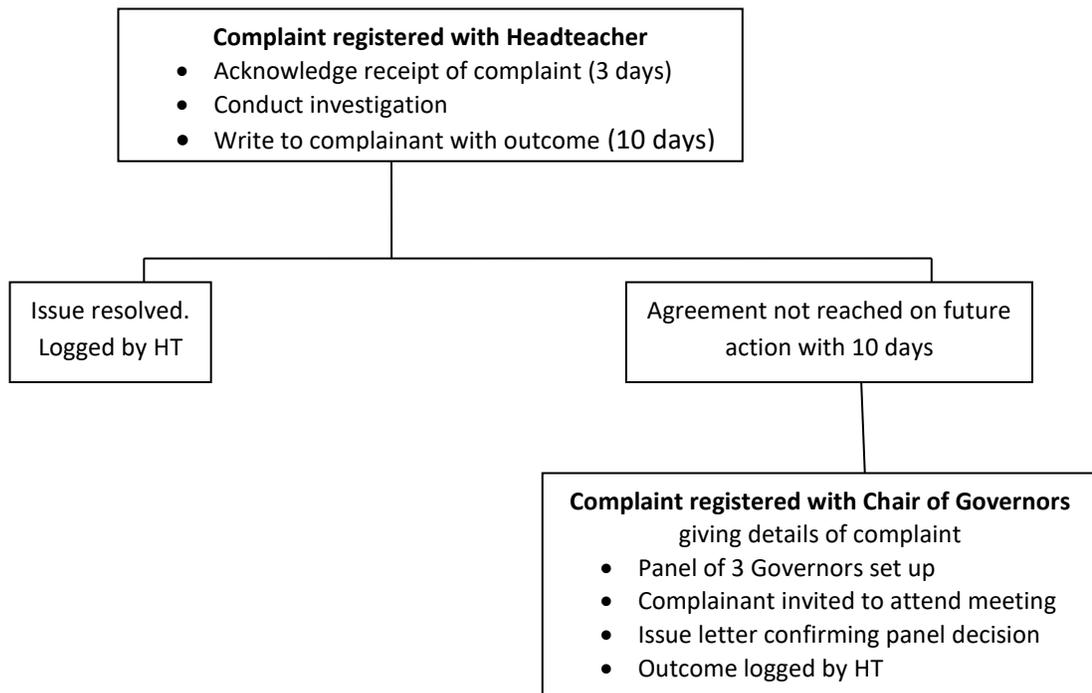
### INFORMAL PROCESS

It is expected and intended that the vast majority of concerns will be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.



### STAGE 2

### FORMAL PROCESS



### STAGE 3

## **(b) Stage 2 – Formal Procedure**

### **Investigation**

This is a key part of the procedure and the Headteacher will investigate the complaint and will ensure that they:

- Establish what has happened to date and who has been involved.
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.
- Contact the complainant to advise and update them and where necessary to gain further information or clarification.
- Interview those involved in the matter or those complained of advising them they may be accompanied.
- Carry out all stages of the procedure with an open mind.
- Keep notes of all the interviews conducted.
- Continue to seek ways to bring the matter to a resolution.

The result of the Headteacher's investigation will be communicated in writing to the complainant and it should be assumed that the complaint has been resolved and should be subsequently laid to rest.

## **(c) Stage 3**

Where the Headteacher has not been able to resolve the complaint and the complainant is still not satisfied or where the complaint is about the Headteacher then the complainant should write to the Chair of Governors outlining the complaint. The Chair of Governors or Vice Chair will convene a Governing Body Complaints panel that will ensure that:

- The complaint is acknowledged within 5 working days.
- The Governors panel of 3 members sit within 20 days to hear the complaint.
- The letter advising the complainant of the meeting contains information regarding their right to submit additional information which must be received at least 5 working days before the meeting.
- Witnesses may be called and all parties should be advised.

## **4. The Remit of the Complaints Appeal Panel**

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- Uphold the complaint whole or in part.
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the conflict.
- Recommend changes to systems or procedures to ensure a similar issue does not reoccur.

## **5. Role of Clerk**

The Clerk will be the central contact point for the Appeal Procedure and will oversee all the administration for the meeting. They are responsible for:

- Setting the date, time and venue for hearing.
- Collating any written material and circulating it to all parties in advance according to the timeline.
- Record the proceedings.
- Notify parties of decision.

## **6. The Role of the Chair of the Governing Body or the Nominated Governor**

The nominated governor role:

- Check that the correct procedure has been followed;
- If a hearing is appropriate, notify the clerk to arrange the panel.

**7. The Role of the Chair of the Panel**

The chair of the panel has a key role, ensuring that:

- The remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption;
- The issues are addressed;
- Key findings of fact are made;
- Parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease;
- The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy;
- The panel is open minded and acting independently;
- No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- Each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions;
- Written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

**8. Checklist for Panel Hearing**

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- The Headteacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Headteacher is then invited to explain the school’s actions and be followed by the school’s witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the Headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Headteacher is then invited to sum up the school’s actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.

**9. Notification of Outcome**

The Chair of the panel should notify the complainant of the panel’s decision in writing. The letter should advise if there are any further rights of appeal and to whom they should be addressed.

**10. Evaluation of Policy and Levels of Complaint**

The Governing Body will seek to monitor the level of complaints and review their outcomes on a regular basis to ensure that procedures are followed and revised an appropriate.

<b>Author:</b>	Maureen Johnson	<b>Reviewed:</b>	May 2018
<b>Link Governor/s:</b>	David Bower & Gerard Garcia	<b>Next Review Date:</b>	May 2021
<b>Ratified:</b> .....			

## COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to..... (Complaints Coordinator)  
who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your name:</b>	
<b>Student's name:</b>	
<b>Your relationship to the student:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Postcode:</b>	
<b>Daytime telephone no:</b>	<b>Evening telephone no:</b>
<b>Please give details of your complaint:</b>	
<b>What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?</b> (Who did you speak to and what was the response?)	
<b>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</b>	
<b>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<i>Official use</i>	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
By who:	
Complaint referred to:	
Date:	