Collaboration

Motivation

Evaluation

Resilience

Investigation

Creativity

Teamwork

Exceed Learning Partnership

• EVERY CHILD • EVERY CHANCE • EVERY DAY •

'Innovative Education - Transforming Lives'

Complaints Policy and Procedure Trust Level

Status	Statutory
Responsible Directors' Committee	Directors Board
LGB	Local Governing Board
Responsible Persons	Mrs. B Nixon
Date Policy Agreed	September 2018
Last Review Date	September 2020
Next Review Date	September 2021

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Version Control

Version	*Revision Date*	*Revised by*	*Section Revised*
V2	May 2018	D Ashmore	None
V2	September 2019	B Nixon	None
V2	September 2020	D Ashmore	None

1. Scope

1.1. Any complaint of any nature that relates to one of the Trust's academies must follow the Exceed Learning Partnership Complaints Policy and Procedure: Academies. This policy and procedure only applies to complaints about any aspect of the Trust that does not relate to a specific academy. Where there is any doubt as to whether the 'Academies' or the 'Trust' version of the complaints policy should apply the Exceed Learning Partnership Trust Chief Operations Officer will make a final determination.

1.2. This Complaints Policy is based on the principle that concerns expressed by a pupil, parent or any other individual or organisation should be resolved as quickly as possible without the need to escalate to the formal stages of the procedure. However, where resolution has not been achieved and the person raising the concern is unhappy and wishes to take the matter further, the formal procedure for dealing with complaints will be followed. The four stages are:

- Stage 1 - Informal investigation of a concern.
- Stage 2 - Formal complaint investigated by a member of staff.
- Stage 3 - Formal complaint investigated by a senior manager.
- Stage 4 - Complaint heard before a Complaint Panel.

1.3. Complaints made by members of staff should be dealt with under separate grievance procedures applicable to employees. Complaints made by employees will not be dealt with under this Complaints Policy.

1.4. Complaints made by a Director or Governor should be referred to the Chair of the Trust Board as appropriate to be dealt with informally as an item for consideration initially and, if necessary, through the formal procedure set out in the Trust's Articles of Association. Complaints made by a Director or Local Governor will not be dealt with under this Complaints Policy.

1.5. Complaints made by contractors should be dealt with informally, but may be escalated where dispute resolution or a formal complaints process is included in the contractual agreement. Complaints made by contractors will not be dealt with under this Complaints Policy.

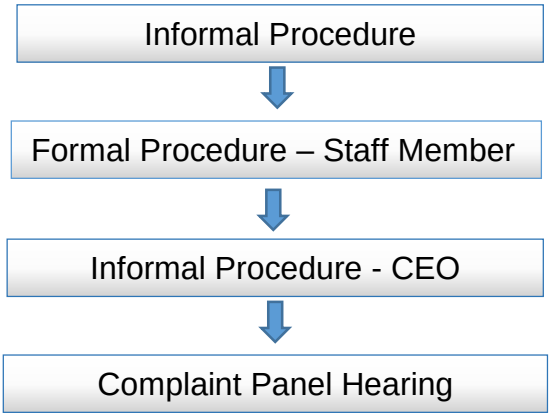
1.6. Complaints about or relating to a pupil should be directed to the relevant Academy.

1.7. This Complaints Policy is intended to be compliant with Schedule 1, Part 7 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 (as amended) ("the Regulations"). In the event of any variance between this Complaints Policy and the Regulations, the Regulations will apply.

2. Policy

2.1. Concerns or complaints should be raised within three months of the incident or event to which the complaint relates (or, where the complaint relates to a series of incidents or events, within three months of the latest incident or event).

2.2. The Trust has four stages to its complaints procedure. The aim is to try to deal with the complaint, to the satisfaction of the Complainant, at the earliest possible stage.



2.3. Only if the complaint cannot be resolved at the informal stage would it be escalated to the formal stages. Only if the complaint cannot be subsequently resolved at the formal stages would it be escalated to a Complaint Panel Hearing.

2.4. The principles that will form the basis for all investigations of concerns and complaints will be that the person investigating the complaint:

- Has read this Complaints Policy to familiarise his or her self with the procedure;
- Is aware of the time limits that apply to the relevant stage and ensures that he or she complies with them;
- Establishes the nature of the complaint and what issues remain unresolved;
- Establishes what the Complainant says has happened, who has been involved, and what the Complainant feels would put things right;
- If necessary, interviews those involved in the matter, for example the Complainant, pupils and members of staff, including those complained about;
- Allows those complained about to be accompanied during interviews, if they wish;
- Keeps a written record of the interview, and asks the interviewee to sign and date it;
- Establishes relevant facts, on a balance of probabilities, based on evidence not speculation, and keeps a written record of these;

- Provides an effective response to the complaint, addressing all issues raised (including, where relevant, complaints about the way in which the complaint has been dealt with in the earlier stages);

- Ensures that the response to the complaint includes the appropriate redress, where necessary;

- Reports the complaint and the outcome of the complaint to the Executive Team so that services can be improved;

- Deals with investigation in an impartial, objective, fair and timely manner, keeping in mind the privacy of the parties involved.

Principles of Resolving a Concern or Complaint

2.5. It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The way in which the concern or complaint is dealt with after the Complainant first raises the matter can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate. To that end, members of staff will be periodically made aware of the procedure in this Complaints Policy, so that they will know what to do when a concern is raised with them.

2.6. At each stage of the complaints procedure, the investigator will consider how the complaint may be resolved. In considering how a complaint may be resolved, the investigator will give due regard to the seriousness of the complaint. It may be appropriate in order to bring the complaint to a resolution for the investigator to offer:

- An explanation;

- An apology;

- Reassurance that steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence of events which led to the complaint;

- Reassurance that the Trust will undertake a review of its policies and procedures in light of the complaint.

None of the above will constitute an admission of negligence or an acceptance of liability on behalf of the Academy or the Trust.

Principles of Notifying the Outcome of a Concern or Complaint

2.7. Once all of the facts have been established, the investigator will write to the Complainant setting out all of the issues in dispute, the results of the investigation, the decision made, the reasons for the decision, and details of any action to be taken to resolve matters or prevent a reoccurrence. Alternatively, the investigator may wish to meet with the Complainant to discuss the outcome of the investigation, the decision made, the reasons for the decision and any action to be taken directly, in which case a full written record will be made of the meeting, which the Complainant will be asked to sign and date. Strictly confidential procedures such as staff disciplinary investigations or sanctions must not be referred to.

2.8. The outcome of all concerns and complaints, whether dealt with formally or informally, will be recorded centrally by the Trust. Examples of outcomes include:

- There was insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld;
- The evidence did not substantiate the concern, so the complaint cannot be upheld;
- The complaint was substantiated in part or full. A brief description should be given of the remedial action being taken by the Trust as a consequence of the complaint. Details of the investigation of or any disciplinary sanctions to be taken against a member of staff cannot be disclosed.
- The matter has been fully investigated and, as a consequence, further confidential procedures are being pursued. Strictly confidential procedures such as staff disciplinary investigations and sanctions must not be referred to.

Time Limits

2.9. This Complaints Policy sets out the time limits for each stage of the complaints procedure. Those dealing with complaints will keep to these time limits. However, where a complaint is of a particularly complex nature, or further investigations are required to ascertain the facts, new time limits can be set. The Complainant will, within the time limit specified in this Complaints Policy, be sent the details of any changes to the time limits with an explanation for the delay and confirmation of the revised date.

Late Complaints

2.10. Where a concern or complaint is raised more than three months after the incident or event (or where the complaint relates to a series of incidents or events, more than three months from the date of the latest incident or event), the Trust reserves the right to refuse to investigate the concern or complaint under the procedure in this Complaints Policy if it appears reasonable and fair to do so, having regard to the circumstances surrounding the complaint.

2.11. Where the Trust decides that a concern or complaint which was raised late will not be investigated, the Trust will write to the Complainant notifying them of the decision within 5 working days of the concern or complaint being raised.

2.12. If the Complainant is unhappy with the decision not to investigate a concern or complaint that was raised late, the Complainant may write to the Chief Executive Officer at the Trust asking for the decision to be reviewed. The Chief Executive Officer, will be provided with all documentation relating to the concern or complaint, together with the letter from the Trust to the Complainant, and will review the decision made. The Chief Executive Officer will write to the Complainant with the outcome of the review within 10 working days of the date that the letter from the Complainant seeking the review was received, and provide the Academy with a copy of the letter.

2.13. If the Chief Executive Officer quashes the decision not to investigate the concern or complaint, it will be referred to a Senior Leader of the Trust to be dealt with under the procedure in this Complaints Policy in the usual way.

2.14. If the Chief Executive Officer upholds the decision not to investigate the concern or complaint, the Complainant may refer the concern or complaint to the Education Funding Agency using the procedure stated towards the end of this Complaints Policy.

2.15. In exceptional circumstances, the Chief Executive Officer can delegate the responsibility for the review to another member of the Executive Team that has no link to the subject of the complaint or if appropriate refer the matter to the Trust Chair.

Vexatious and/or Repeated Complaints

2.16. There may be occasions when, despite exhausting the procedure in this Complaints Policy, the Complainant persists in making the same complaint to the Trust. There may also be occasions when a complainant raises unreasonable persistent complaints or raises complaints about matters, which do not affect them. In addition, there may be occasions when a complaint is made about a matter which is clearly so trivial that it would be a waste of the Trust's resources to deal with it under the formal stages of the procedure. In all of these cases, the Trust reserves the right to regard the complaint as vexatious and/or repeated and to refuse to investigate it under the procedure in this Complaints Policy if it appears reasonable and fair to do so, having regard to the circumstances surrounding the complaint.

2.17. Where the Trust decides that a complaint is vexatious and/or repeated and will not be investigated, the Trust/Academy will write to the Complainant within five working days of the complaint being raised to notify them of the decision.

2.18. If the Complainant is unhappy with the decision not to investigate a vexatious and/or repeated complaint, they may write to the Chair of the Trust Board to ask for the decision to be reviewed. The Chair of the Trust Board will be provided with all documentation relating to the current complaint and any previous complaints, which were relevant to the decision, together with the letter from the Academy to the Complainant, and will review the decision made. The Chair of Trust Board will write to the Complainant with the outcome of the review within 10 working days of the date that the letter from the Complainant seeking the review was received.

2.19. If the Chair of Trust Board quashes the decision not to investigate the concern or complaint, it will be referred to the Trust to be dealt with under the procedure in this Complaints Policy in the usual way.

2.20. If the Chair of the Trust Board upholds the decision not to investigate the concern or complaint, the Complainant may refer the concern or complaint to the Education Funding Agency using the procedure stated towards the end of this Complaints Policy.

2.21. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the Trust Board can delegate the responsibility for the review to the Vice-Chair.

Anonymous Complaints

2.22. The Trust will not investigate anonymous complaints under the procedure in this Complaints Policy. Anonymous complaints will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer who will decide what, if any, action should be taken.

3. Stage 1 - Informal Procedure

3.1. Members of staff can deal with many concerns to the satisfaction of the Complainant, without needing to deal with it formally. The Trust values informal meetings and telephone discussions as a way of improving its procedures and relations with parents.

3.2. There is no rigid time-scale for resolving concerns and complaints at this stage, given the importance of dialogue through informal discussions, however it is expected that most concerns will be resolved within 10 working days. Should the nature or complexity of the concern mean that more time is required, the Trust will write to the Complainant within 10 working days informing them of the reason for the delay and confirming a revised date for resolution.

3.3. Should informal meetings and telephone discussions appear unlikely to resolve the concern, either party may initiate a move to the Stage 2 for the complaint to be investigated formally. A copy of the formal complaint form in Annex 3 will be forwarded to the Complainant for completion and return, together with a copy of this Complaints Policy.

4. Stage 2 – Formal Complaint Investigated by a Member of Staff

4.1. If the Complainant is unhappy with the way in which the concern was dealt with informally, the Complainant should complete the formal complaint form found in Annex 3 and return it to the Trust.

4.2. Upon receipt of a completed formal complaint form, the Chief Executive Officer will identify the appropriate member of staff to investigate the complaint under Stage 2. If the complaint is about a member of staff, a manager senior to that member of staff will normally investigate the complaint. If the complaint is very serious, the Chief Executive Officer may, at their discretion, escalate the complaint directly to Stage 3.

4.3. The Trust will try to respect the views of a Complainant who indicates that he or she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In these cases, the matter will be referred back to the Chief Executive Officer who may, if they feel it necessary, refer the complaint to another staff member for investigation.

4.4. Where the complaint concerns the CEO or a member of the Trust Board the complaint will be referred to the Chair of the Trust Board. The Chair will investigate the complaint under Stage 3 of this Complaints Policy. Where the complaint concerns the Chair, the Vice Chair of the Trust Board will investigate the complaint under Stage 3 of this Complaints Policy.

4.5. Where the first approach is made to any member of the Trust Board must refer the complaint to the CEO, who will allocate it to an appropriate member of staff for investigation under Stage 2 of this Complaints Policy. The Director/member should not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a Complaint Panel at a later stage of the procedure.

4.6. The member of staff considering the complaint will write to the Complainant acknowledging the complaint within 5 working days of receiving the formal complaint form. The acknowledgement will confirm which stage of the Complaints Policy the complaint is being investigated under, and will confirm the date for providing a response to the complaint. Following investigation of the complaint, the member of staff will write to the Complainant confirming the outcome within 10 working days of the formal complaint form being received. If this time limit cannot be met, the member of staff will write to the Complainant within 10 working days of the formal complaint form being received, explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised date.

4.7. The letter to the Complainant should notify them that if he or she is unhappy with the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation of the complaint, they should write to the CEO within 10 working days of receiving the letter asking for the complaint to be investigated under Stage 3 of this Complaints Policy. If no further communication is received from the Complainant within 10 working days, the complaint will be deemed to have been resolved.

5. Stage 3 – Formal Complaint Investigated by the Chief Executive Officer

5.1. If the Complainant is unhappy with the outcome of the complaint under Stage 2, the Complainant should write to the CEO at the Trust asking for the complaint to be investigated under Stage 3 of this Complaints Policy.

5.2. The CEO will write to the Complainant acknowledging the complaint within 5 working days of the date that the letter was received from the Complainant. The acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint will now be investigated under Stage 3 of this Complaints Policy, and will confirm the date for providing a response to the complaint. Following investigation of the complaint, the CEO will write to the Complainant confirming the outcome within 10 working days of the date that the letter was received from the Complainant. If this time limit cannot be met, the CEO will write to the Complainant within 10 working days of the date that the letter was received from the Complainant, explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised date.

5.3. The letter to the Complainant should notify them that if he or she is unhappy the outcome of the Stage 3 investigation of the complaint, they should write to the Chair of the Trust Board within 10 working days of receiving the letter asking for the complaint to be heard before a Complaint Panel under Stage 4 of this Complaints Policy. If no further communication is received from the Complainant within 10 working days, the complaint will be deemed to have been resolved.

5.4. The CEO may delegate responsibility for investigating the complaint under Stage 3 of this Complaints Policy to a member of the Senior Executive Team. In those circumstances, the CEO will monitor the progress of the investigation, and it will be the CEO who will write the letter of outcome to the Complainant.

5.5. As stated above, where a formal complaint form is received making a complaint about the CEO or any member of the Trust Board the complaint will be referred to the Chair of the Trust Board for investigation under Stage 3 of this Complaints Policy, rather than Stage 2. If a formal complaint form is received making a complaint about the Chair, the complaint will be referred to the Vice Chair for investigation under Stage 3 of this Complaints Policy, rather than Stage 2.

6. Stage 4 – Complaint Heard at a Complaint Panel Hearing

6.1. If the Complainant is unhappy with the outcome of the complaint under Stage 3, the Complainant should write to the Chair of the Trust Board asking for the complaint to be heard before a Complaint Panel.

6.2. The Chair of the Trust Board will write to the Complainant acknowledging the request for the complaint to be heard before a Complaint Panel within 5 working days. The letter will inform the Complainant that the Complaint Panel Hearing will take place within 25 working days of the date that the letter was received from the Complainant and that arrangements to appoint the Complaint Panel and convene the Complaint Panel Hearing will be made by the Chair of the Trust Board, who will be the Complainant's point of contact.

Appointment of the Complaint Panel

6.3. The Complaint Panel will consist of three members. None of the three members of the Complaint Panel will have been involved in the incidents or events which led to the complaint, or have been involved in dealing with the complaint in the previous stages, of have any detailed prior knowledge of the complaint.

6.4. One of the Complaint Panel members will be independent of the management and running of the Academy. This means that the independent Complaint Panel member will not be a Director or an employee of the Trust.

For the avoidance of doubt, a Local Governor from another academy within Exceed Learning Partnership may be the independent Complaint Panel member, as long as they are not an employee of the Trust, and they are sufficiently removed from the management and running of the Trust to be considered truly independent.

6.5. One or both of the other two Complaint Panel members can be a Director/member of the trust, as long as they fulfil the requirements of paragraph 6.3 above and are not an employee of the Academy.

The Trust's Representative

6.6. The Trust will be represented at the Complaint Panel Hearing by the person who investigated the complaint under the most recent stage of the procedure. This will usually be the CEO or a member of the Executive team, however it may on occasions be the Chair of the Trust, or the Vice-Chair. If the Complainant has complained about the way in which the complaint was investigated by that person (rather than simply disagreeing with the outcome of the complaint) then the Trust will not be represented by that person at the Complaint Panel Hearing, and the Trust will nominate another person to represent the Trust.

Convening the Complaint Panel Hearing

6.7. The Chair of the Board will convene the Complaint Panel Hearing on a date and at a time which is convenient to the Complainant, the Trust's representative and the three Complaint Panel members. The Clerk will write to the Complainant, the Trust's representative and the Complaint Panel members at least 5 working days before the Complaint Panel Hearing is due to take place confirming the date and time.

Witnesses

6.8. The Complainant may seek to rely on the accounts of witnesses, which are relevant to the complaint. The Complainant should ask each witness to write down their account in a signed and dated statement and send it to the Academy at least three working days before the Complaint Panel Hearing is due to take place.

6.9. The Trust may seek to rely on the accounts of witnesses, which are relevant to the complaint. Such witnesses may also include those persons who dealt with the complaint in the previous stages, if the Complainant has complained about the way in which the complaint was investigation (rather than simply disagreeing with the outcome of the complaint). Such witnesses should, if they have not already done so, provide a signed and dated statement of their account and provide it to the Chair at least three working days before the Complaint Panel Hearing is due to take place.

6.10. The Complaint Panel will have the absolute discretion to decide whether a witness account is relevant to the complaint or whether a witness account is undisputed by the Complainant or the Academy respectively. Where a witness account is irrelevant or undisputed, their attendance at the Complaint Panel will not be required.

6.11. All witnesses, whether they are for the Complainant or the Trust, will not be allowed to sit in on any part of the Complaint Panel Hearing except when they are giving their own verbal account or answering questions, upon conclusion of which they will be required to leave the room.

Documents

6.12. The Clerk will provide a copy of all correspondence, statements (including witness statements) and records relating to the complaint (including records made by those persons who investigated the complaint in the previous stages) to the Complainant, the Trust's representative and each Complaint Panel member at least two working days before the Complaint Panel Hearing is due to take place.

Attendance at the Hearing

6.13. The Complainant may be accompanied by an interpreter or signer, as well as friend or relative, at the Complaint Panel Hearing. The friend or relative will attend for moral support only and will not play any part in the Complaint Panel Hearing, unless invited to do so by the Complaint Panel if it appears to them that it will improve the quality of the Complainant's representations. The Complaint Panel Hearing is not a legal hearing and it is therefore not appropriate for either the Complainant or the Trust to be legally represented.

The Clerk to the Complaint Panel

6.14. The Chair to the Complaint Panel will ensure that a clerk has been appointed in order to keep a written record of the proceedings. The Chair to the Complaint Panel will usually be the Chair to the Trust Board, however another suitable person may be appointed to this role if the Clerk to the Board is not available.

6.15. The Complaint Panel Hearing will proceed as follows:

The Chair will greet the Complainant, the Complainant's supporter and the Trust's representative and welcome them into the room where the Complaint Panel has convened (witnesses will remain outside of the room until they are called in to give their account);

The Complainant will be invited by the Complaint Panel to give an account of their complaint;

The Trust's representative will be invited to ask the Complainant questions, if any;

The Complaint Panel will ask the Complainant questions, if any;

The Complainant's relevant first witness will be invited into the room to give an account of what they saw or know;

The Academy's representative will be invited to ask the Complainant's witness questions, if any;

The Complaint Panel will ask the Complainant's witness questions, if any;

The Complainant's witness will be asked to leave the room;

If the Complainant has any further relevant witnesses, they will be invited into the room individually to provide their accounts and be questioned as outlined above;

The Trust's representative will be invited by the Complaint Panel to respond to the complaint and make representations on behalf of the Academy;

The Complainant will be invited to ask the Trust's representative questions, if any;

The Complaint Panel will ask the Trust's representative questions, if any;

The Trust's relevant first witness will be invited into the room to give an account or what they saw or know;

The Complainant will be invited to ask the Trust's witness questions, if any;

The Complaint Panel will ask the Trust's witness questions, if any;

The Trust's witness will be asked to leave the room;

If the Trust has any further relevant witnesses, they will be invited into the room individually to provide their accounts and be questioned, as outlined above;

The Complainant will be invited by the Complaint Panel to summarise their complaint;

The Trust's representative will be invited by the Complaint Panel to summarise their response to the complaint and the Trust's stance;

The Complaint Panel Hearing will conclude and the Complainant and the Trust's representative will be asked to leave.

The Complaint Panel's Decision

6.16. The Complaint Panel will meet in private, either immediately after the Complaint Panel Hearing or on a subsequent date, and will consider all of the documentation and everything that they have heard at the Complainant Panel Hearing and make:

Findings of Fact

The Complaint Panel will decide which facts are established to be true, on a balance of probabilities (i.e. more likely than not). If a fact is not deemed relevant, the Complaint Panel will not consider it further. The Complaint Panel will make a written record of the facts that have been established, those which have not been established and those which are not relevant, with reasons.

Recommendations

The Complaint Panel will consider the facts, which they have established and will make recommendations based upon them. These recommendations may be aimed at achieving reconciliation between the parties (for example, a written apology), improving procedures or preventing a recurrence in the future. The Complaint Panel will keep a written record of their recommendations, with reasons.

Notification of the Complaint Panel's Decision

6.17. The Clerk to the Complaint Panel will write within 10 working days of the Complaint Panel Hearing to the:

- Complainant;
- The Trust's representative;
- Any person complained about;

The letter will identify the issues complained about, and will confirm the Complaint Panel's findings of fact and recommendations, if any, with reasons. The letter will also confirm that, if the Complainant believes that this Complaints Policy does not comply with the Regulations, or that the Trust has not followed the procedure outlined in this Complaints Policy, the Complainant may refer their complaint to the Education Funding Agency for consideration.

6.18. The Clerk to the Complaint Panel will also ensure that a copy of the Complaint Panel's findings and recommendations are made available on the Trust's premises for inspection by the Trust, the Directors and the CEO.

7. Complaint Referred to Education Funding Agency

7.1. Once a complaint has been through all the stages of the Complaints Policy, if the Complainant believes that this Complaints Policy does not comply with the Regulations, or if the Complainant believes that the Trust has not followed the procedure in this Complaints Policy, the Complainant can refer the complaint to the Education Funding Agency for consideration.

7.2. The Complainant can find further information about referring a complaint to the Education Funding Agency by pasting this page into an Internet browser:

http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/b00212240/making-complaint-school/complaints-free-schools-academies

7.3. The Complainant can refer your complaint to the Education Funding Agency by completing an online form by pasting this page into an Internet browser:

https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/school-complaints-form

7.4. The Complainant should be aware that the Education Funding Agency will not usually investigate the complaint itself, or interfere with the findings of the Complaint Panel, unless the decision made was manifestly unreasonable.

8. Administrative Matters

Records

8.1. The Trust will keep a central record of all concerns and complaints received, whether they were dealt with informally or formally.

Confidentiality

8.2. The Trust will keep all correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body authorised to conduct a school inspection requests access to them.

Publication

8.3. This Complaints Policy will be reviewed annually and published on the Trust's web site, as well as being made available to pupils, parents and other individuals or organisations on request.

Policy Agreed: (reviewed Sept 2020 with no change)

Signed CEO: B.A. Nixon

Signed: Chair of Directors:

Policy to be reviewed in autumn 2021

Appendix 1 Glossary

The definitions used in this Complaints Policy are:

Academy: A school, which has academy status and is part of a multi academy trust group.

Clerk to the Complaint Panel: The person who will attend the Complaint Panel Hearing and keep a written record of the proceedings, and will write to the Complainant notifying them of the decision of the Complaint Panel.

Chair to the Board: The person responsible for making the arrangements to appoint the Complaint Panel and convene the Complaint Panel Hearing, and will appoint a clerk to the Complaint Panel.

Chair of Trust Board: The person elected by the Trust Board to be their chairperson.

Complainant: The person or organisation making the complaint.

Education Funding Agency: The government department (a sub-department of the Department for Education) responsible for funding and monitoring standards in academies.

Local Governing Body: A sub-committee of the Trust. The Trust delegates the day-to-day management and running of the Academy to the Local Governing Body.

Parent: The natural or adoptive mother or father of a pupil, prospective pupil or former pupil, irrespective of whether they are or ever have been married, together with persons with parental responsibility for the pupil, and persons with care of the pupil.

CEO: The Chief Executive Officer of the Academy Trust.

Working Day: Weekdays excluding weekends and bank holidays.

Trust: A multi academy trust company, which is a charitable company responsible for the management and running of all of the academies within the multi academy trust group.

Appendix 2 Complaint Panel Hearing Principles

Guiding Principles

It is essential that the Complaint Panel Hearing is independent and impartial. No person may sit on the Complaint Panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it, or any previous knowledge of the complaint's progress through the previous stages, or any previous knowledge of the Complainant.

The aim of the Complaint Panel Hearing, which must be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the Academy and the Complainant. However, it has to be recognised the Complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the Complaint Panel does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations, which may satisfy the Complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.

An effective Complaint Panel will acknowledge that many Complainants and witnesses, especially children, will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The Complaint Panel will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming and informal as possible, while keeping in mind that the proceedings must be fair and follow the rules of natural justice.

Appendix 3 Formal Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Exceed Learning Partnership who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your Name:

Pupil's Name (if applicable):

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint (for example, who have you spoken to and what was the response)?