

COMPLAINTS POLICY



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Document Control

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06.04.2021	4	Policy amended	Policy amended to take account of updated guidance on complaints against the Trust Central Services Team or the Trust, Local Review Board Members, Prohibition of electronic records, Anonymous complaints, complaint campaigns
22.11.21	5	Policy amended	Policy amended to refer to complaints about SEND provision
03.08.22	6	Policy amended	New Para 2 – Making clear non-parents may not pursue the complaint to an LRB panel. Para 3 and Appendix 1 – Make reference to suspensions instead of exclusions following change in statutory guidance. Para 95 – Clarify that and LRB member from another Academy may sit on a complaint panel with hyperlink to govt guidance. Insert Para 153,154 to clarify the role of the ESFA.

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Introduction

1. The Rodillian Multi Academy Trust (“the Trust”) recognises that on occasions parents/carers, students or members of the public may need to raise a concern or complaint about the Trust or one of its Academies. The Trust takes all concerns and complaints seriously and is committed to seek to resolve any matter raised in a positive way and make any identified improvements.
2. Where a concern or complaint is made by a member of the public as opposed to a parent they will not be able to pursue their complaint to an LRB panel but the matter may be reviewed by the Chief Executive or someone on their behalf and responded to.

Scope and Purpose of this Policy and who it applies to

3. This policy applies to all concerns and complaints made about or against the Trust and its Academies or Southway about any provision of its facilities or services provided with the following exceptions for which there are separate procedures:
 - Admissions to Academies with the exception of Southway.
 - Admission to Rodillian Academy Sixth Form
 - Suspensions/Permanent Exclusions from Academies
 - Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs (“SEN”)
 - Academy re-organisation proposals
 - Matters likely to require a child protections investigation
 - Employee grievances
 - Whistleblowing matters
 - External examination results
 - Staff conduct matters
 - Complaints about services provided by external bodies using an Academy’s premises or facilities
 - Certain complaints following a student being withdrawn from an aspect of Religious Education.

More information about these exceptions and who to contact can be found at Appendix 1.

4. A “concern” is as an “expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.” Parents should feel free to raise their concerns with a class teacher, form tutor or other appropriate member of staff by telephone or in writing or by an appointment in person agreed through the Academy office.
5. A “complaint” is an “expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or lack of action.”
6. To enable a proper investigation, complaints should be brought to the attention of the Academy Principal or in the event it is about the Principal, the Trust as soon as possible. In general, this should be no later than one month after the event (or latest event, in the case of a series of incidents) to which the complaint relates.
7. Complaints should not be raised with the Local Review Board who may be required to have a formal role if a complaint reaches a hearing.

8. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated under this policy unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any anonymous complaint received will be referred to the Head of Governance and Compliance who will decide what action, if any, will be taken.

Publication of this Policy

9. This policy will be brought to the attention of all Trustees, Local Review Boards, and the Principal of each Academy. The policy will be available on the Trust and Academy websites and be available to all parents and carers, students, members of the public and staff. It will also be available to Trustees, Local Review Boards and Staff in the compliance library. Following any further review of the policy resulting in an updated version being adopted by the Trust, staff and stakeholders will be advised by email where they may access it and advised whether they are required to provide confirmation that they have read the document.
10. Guidance on any aspect of this policy can be obtained from the Head of Governance and Compliance whose email address is amarham@rodillianacademytrust.co.uk.

Responsibility for this Policy

11. The Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory or Trust framework. The Trust has delegated day to day responsibility for operating the policy to the Trust Executive, the Local Review Boards, and the Principal at each Academy.
12. The Local Review Board, Principal and any Investigating Officer appointed by the Principal at each Academy has a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

Aims of this Policy

13. To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to raise a concern or make a complaint.
14. To encourage the resolution of concerns by informal means, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints policy.
15. To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to raise a concern or make a complaint.
16. To ensure all concerns and complaints are managed in an impartial and non-adversarial manner.
17. To ensure all complaints are thoroughly investigated, as quickly as possible at an appropriate level.
18. To ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are maintained and enhanced.
19. To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.
20. To support the mission, vision and values of the Trust and its Academies.

Concerns and Complaint resolution through this Policy

21. An overview of the stages within our Complaints Policy can be found within the flowchart at Appendix 2.
22. There are four stages to this Policy:
 - Stage 1: Informal resolution of concerns.
 - Stage 2: Formal Complaint.
 - Stage 3: Trust Review¹
 - Stage 4: Independent Panel Hearing or Chief Executive Officer (“CHIEF EXECUTIVE”) Review.
23. The aim of each stage is to ensure the concern or complaint is fully considered and a clear finding is communicated to the person who has raised the concern or complaint. The finding should either resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the Complainant or explain why this is not possible.
24. Complainants will be given the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in line with policy, unless there is clear evidence that the complaint meets the unreasonably persistent or vexatious criteria defined within this Policy.
25. Every effort will be made to comply with the timescales within each stage of this policy. This may not be possible due to the complexity of the investigation required or the unavailability of a participant needed to attend a meeting. Where a timescale cannot be complied with, the Complainant will be written to by email or post to inform them of the reasons for the delay and the new timescale that will apply.
26. Timescales in this Policy are given in “school days”. I.e. During Term time excluding school holidays and training days.
27. Contact with the Head of Governance and Compliance, for when required within this Policy, can be made via amarham@rodillianacademytrust.co.uk. Any complaint incorrectly directed to the Head of Governance and Compliance when it is not appropriate will be redirected to the Principal of the appropriate Academy.

Stage 1: Informal resolution of Concerns

28. The Trust recognises from time to time there may be normal and legitimate concerns about decisions within their Academies. For example, concerns from parents or carers regarding the progress, achievement, behaviour, or welfare of their child. They are encouraged to make their concerns known at the earliest opportunity so they can be addressed.
29. The desire of the Trust is for concerns to be resolved quickly and informally through discussion, clarification, explanation, or provision of further information or by acknowledgement of an issue and an apology.

¹ If a complaint is against the Head of an Academy, the Stage 2 investigation is undertaken by the Trust therefore there will be no Local Review Board Stage.

30. Concerns should be raised in the first instance with the relevant Teacher (Class Teacher, Form Tutor, Subject Teacher or Head of Year) or an appropriate member of staff according to the matter concerned. This may be by letter, email, telephone or requesting a meeting via the Academy office. If the member of staff is unable to deal with the concern immediately, a note will be taken of the details and the Complainant will be contacted as soon as the matter has been investigated. If a concern is raised with a member of staff who feels they are not the best person to deal with it, the matter will be referred to the Principal for them to determine the best person to deal with the matter. This does not escalate the stage of this policy the matter is being dealt with. Concerns should be raised within 3 calendar months of the issue causing concern. The Academy will not normally investigate concerns raised after 3 months but may do so in exceptional circumstances such as a lack of knowledge of the matter on behalf of the Complainant.
31. Concerns will wherever possible be acknowledged within 2 school days and will receive a response to their concern within 5 school days. If it is not possible to meet this deadline the person who has raised the concern will be informed of when a response will be made.
32. Complainants will be asked in any acknowledgement of the complaint, what they think might resolve the issue.
33. Where a concern is raised about a Principal, the concern should be put in writing for the attention of the Chief Executive Officer (“Chief Executive”) of the Rodillian Multi Academy Trust. The Chief Executive will review the concern. If it is decided that the concern requires a formal investigation the concern will be referred to the Chair of the Local Review Board of the Academy and it will be dealt with as a referral to the Local Review Board at stage 4 of the process.
34. Any concern about the Chief Executive should be made in writing to the Chair of Trustees of the Rodillian Multi Academy Trust (“the Chair”). The Chair will review the concern. If it is decided the concern requires a formal investigation, it will be dealt with as a Formal Complaint.
34. When responding to a stage 1 concern, the person responding on behalf of the Trust will inform the Complainant what they can do if they are not satisfied with the response and what the Trust will do in respect of the concern.

Stage 1: Informal resolution of Concerns regarding Special Educational Needs and Disability (“SEND”) provision

35. We know that all parents want the best for their child and we will always seek to resolve any concerns quickly. Where parents have a concern about the SEND provision being made, they should initially contact their child’s head of year who will try to resolve the issue.
36. If this does not resolve the issue, then a formal complaint should be raised following the procedure outlined below relating to the support provided for student(s) with SEND.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

37. If a Parent/Carer/student or member of the public feels that their concern has not been resolved or it is of sufficient magnitude that an informal resolution is unlikely they may raise a Formal Complaint under this policy.

38. The Complainant must put the complaint in writing to the Principal using the Trust's Complaint Reporting Form which can be found on the Trust and Academy's websites. (Copy at Appendix 3), unless the Complainant has a disability, learning difficulty or difficulties with the English language in which case the Complainant may contact the Academy for assistance. A formal complaint should be raised within 3 months of the event causing the complaint. If it is not made within this time, the Academy does not need to investigate the same unless there are exceptional circumstances such as the matter did not come to the attention of the Complainant until after 3 months.
39. When completing the Complaint Reporting Form, the Complainant should provide as much detail as possible about the matter including dates and times of events, potential witnesses, copies of any relevant documents, and a clear indication of the action(s) they seek to resolve the complaint.
40. Once received, the Principal should immediately forward a copy of the Complaint Reporting Form to the Head of Governance and Compliance who will oversee the progress of the complaint and provide advice and guidance as needed.
41. The Principal will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 school days and pass the complaint to a nominated senior member of staff ("the investigating officer"), as appropriate for investigation. The acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will identify the investigating officer.
42. The investigating officer will be a senior member of staff who has had no prior involvement with the complaint. This is to enable detachment and independence from the complaint
43. The investigating officer will investigate the complaint and report to the Principal. The investigation will include:
 - Seeking any clarification from the Complainant if required to support an effective and thorough investigation.
 - Gathering all relevant information to establish the facts of the matter. This may include interviewing and taking statements from any student or member of staff who is the subject of the complaint and from any witnesses or others involved in the matter.
44. Any student who is the subject of a complaint and is interviewed should usually be interviewed with a parent/carer present. If this is not possible, the interview should be attended by a member of staff who the student feels comfortable with such as a learning mentor.
45. The investigating officer should keep written records of all meetings and telephone conversations undertaken as part of the investigation together with any other relevant documentation.
46. The Principal² supported by the investigating officer will discuss the findings of the investigation with the Complainant where the Complainant agrees to this. This may be during a meeting or over the telephone. Where reasonably possible, such discussion will take place within 15 school days of the complaint being received. The purpose of the discussion is to provide an opportunity to ensure clarity of the issues discussed and to avoid misunderstandings which can occur through written communication.

² If the Complainant has a disability, learning difficulty or difficulties with English, the Academy will provide appropriate assistance

47. The Principal will then put their findings in writing and indicate what steps, will be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 5 school days of the discussion of the findings of the investigation with the Complainant. The Principal will refer to the next stage of the complaints process if the Complainant is not satisfied with the Principal's findings.
48. The written response may include the following: -
- That in the view of the Principal the complaint requires no further action and the reasons why.
 - That in the view of the Principal there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion such that the complaint cannot be upheld.
 - That the situation could have been handled differently or better.
 - An apology.
 - An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it will not happen again.
 - That the Academy or Trust will review procedures following consideration of the complaint
49. The written response **must** include that if the Complainant is dissatisfied, they may refer the matter for Trust Review within 5 school days of the written response. The Complainant should contact the Head of Governance and Compliance in writing clearly stating their reasons for requesting a review. It **must** also include that if the Complainant wishes, they may request that the complaint be considered either by an independent panel hearing or Chief Executive Review dependent on the status of the Complainant The request must set out clearly the reasons why the Complainant is dissatisfied with the response and may include any evidence to support their reasons.
50. A copy of the written response should be provided to the Head of Governance and Compliance to support the monitoring of any actions.

Stage 2: Formal complaint against a Principal, a member of the Trust Central Services Team or the Trust

51. If the subject of the formal complaint is the Principal, a member of the Trust Central Service Team or the Trust then the complaint should be put in writing to the Head of Governance and Compliance. The Trust will appoint an investigating officer to review the matter. A Principal will not be considered under this policy to be directly involved in a complaint through undertaking their management overview role.
52. The Head of Governance and Compliance will oversee the progress of the complaint and provide advice and guidance as needed.
53. The Trust will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 school days and pass the complaint to a nominated senior member of staff ("the investigating officer"), as appropriate for investigation. The acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will identify the investigating officer.
54. The investigating officer will be a senior member of staff who has had no prior involvement with the complaint. This is to enable detachment and independence from the complaint

55. The investigating officer will investigate the complaint who will report to the Trust. The investigation will include:
- Seeking any clarification from the Complainant if required to support an effective and thorough investigation.
 - Gathering all relevant information to establish the facts of the matter. This may include interviewing and taking statements from any student or member of staff who is involved in the matter.
56. Any student who is interviewed should usually be interviewed with a parent/carer present. If this is not possible, the interview should be attended by a member of staff who the student feels comfortable with such as a learning mentor.
57. The investigating officer should keep written records of all meetings and telephone conversations undertaken as part of the investigation together with any other relevant documentation.
58. The Trust³ supported by the investigating officer will discuss the findings of the investigation with the Complainant where the Complainant agrees to this. This may be during a meeting or over the telephone. Where reasonably possible, such discussion will take place within 15 school days of the complaint being received. The purpose of the discussion is to provide an opportunity to ensure clarity of the issues discussed and to avoid misunderstandings which can occur through written communication. The Trust will then put their findings in writing and indicate what steps, will be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 5 school days of the discussion of the findings of the investigation with the Complainant. The Trust will refer to what the Complainant can do if they are not satisfied with the Trust's findings.
59. The written response may include the following: -
- That in the view of the Trust the complaint requires no further action and the reasons why.
 - That in the view of the Trust there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion such that the complaint cannot be upheld.
 - That the situation could have been handled differently or better.
 - An apology.
 - An explanation of the steps that will be taken to ensure it will not happen again
 - That the Academy or Trust will review procedures following consideration of the complaint
60. The written response **must** include that if the Complainant wishes, they may request that the complaint be considered either by an independent panel hearing or Chief Executive Review dependent on the status of the Complainant and that such request must be in writing and addressed to the Head of Governance and Compliance at the Trust within 10 school days. The request must set out clearly the reasons why the Complainant is dissatisfied with the response and should include any evidence to support their reasons.
61. A copy of the written response should be provided to the Head of Governance and Compliance who will support the monitoring of any agreed actions.

³ If the Complainant has a disability, learning difficulty or difficulties with English, the Trust will provide appropriate assistance

Stage 2: Formal Complaint against an Individual Local Review Board Member

62. If the subject of the formal complaint is a Local Review Board Member. The complaint should be put in writing to the Head of Governance and Compliance.
63. The Head of Governance and Compliance will oversee the progress of the complaint and provide advice and guidance as needed.
64. The Trust will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 school days and pass the complaint to the Chair of the Local Review Board (“the Chair”) for investigation.
65. The Chair of the Local Review Board will investigate the complaint and will report to the Trust Board Chair. The investigation will include: -
 - What the Complainant believes can be done to resolve the complaint.
 - Seeking any clarification from the Complainant if required to support an effective and thorough investigation.
 - Gathering all relevant information to establish the facts of the matter. This may include interviewing and taking statements from any student, member of staff or Local Review Board member who is involved in the matter. Any student who is interviewed should usually be interviewed with a parent/carer present and the Academy Principal or their nominee. If this is not possible, the interview should be attended by a member of staff who the student feels comfortable with such as a learning mentor.
66. The Chair of the LRB should keep written records of all meetings and telephone conversations undertaken as part of the investigation together with any other relevant documentation.
67. The Trust⁴ supported by the Chair of the LRB will discuss the findings of the investigation with the Complainant where the Complainant agrees to this. This may be during a meeting or over the telephone. Where reasonably possible, such discussion will take place within 15 school days of the complaint being received. The purpose of the discussion is to provide an opportunity to ensure clarity of the issues discussed and to avoid misunderstandings which can occur through written communication. The Trust will then put their findings in writing and indicate what steps, will be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 5 school days of the discussion of the findings of the investigation with the Complainant. The Trust will refer to what the Complainant can do if they are not satisfied with the Trust’s findings.
68. The written response may include the following: -
 - That in the view of the Trust the complaint requires no further action and the reasons why.
 - That in the view of the Trust there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion such that the complaint cannot be upheld.
 - That the situation could have been handled differently or better.
 - An apology.
 - An explanation of the steps that will be taken to ensure it will not happen again

⁴ If the Complainant has a disability, learning difficulty or difficulties with English, the Trust will provide appropriate assistance

- That the Academy or Trust will review procedures following consideration of the complaint
69. The written response **must** include that if the Complainant wishes, they may request that the complaint be considered either by an independent panel hearing or Chief Executive Review dependent on the status of the Complainant and that such request must be in writing and addressed to the Head of Governance and Compliance at the Trust within 10 school days. The request must set out clearly the reasons why the Complainant is dissatisfied with the response and should include any evidence to support their reasons.
70. A copy of the written response should be provided to the Head of Governance and Compliance who will support the monitoring of any agreed actions.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint against the Chief Executive or a Local Review Board of an Academy

71. If the subject of the formal complaint is the Chief Executive or a Local Review Board, the complaint should be put in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Rodillian Multi Academy Trust (“the Chair”). The Chair of the Trust will appoint an investigating officer to review the matter. The Chair will also nominate a Director of the Trust to make a recommendation or decision based on that report. The Chair may fulfil this role. The Chief Executive will not be considered as being directly involved in a complaint through undertaking their management overview role.
72. Once received, the Chair should immediately forward a copy of the Complaint Reporting Form to the Head of Governance and Compliance who will oversee the progress of the complaint and provide advice and guidance as needed.
73. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 school days and pass the complaint to a nominated senior member of staff (“the investigating officer”), as appropriate for investigation. The acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will identify the investigating officer.
74. The investigating officer will be a senior member of staff who has had no prior involvement with the complaint. This is to enable detachment and independence from the complaint.
75. The investigating officer will investigate the complaint who will report to the Chair or their nominated director. The investigation will include:
- Seeking any clarification from the Complainant if required to support an effective and thorough investigation.
 - Gathering all relevant information to establish the facts of the matter. This may include interviewing and taking statements from any student or member of staff who is involved in the matter.
 - Asking the Complainant what they believe will resolve the matter.
76. Any student who is interviewed should usually be interviewed with a parent/carer present and the Principal or their nominee. If this is not possible, the interview should be attended by a member of staff who the student feels comfortable with such as a learning mentor.
77. The investigating officer should keep written records of all meetings and telephone conversations undertaken as part of the investigation together with any other relevant documentation.

78. The Chair or their nominated Trustee⁵ supported by the investigating officer will discuss the findings of the investigation with the Complainant where the Complainant agrees to this. This may be during a meeting or over the telephone. Where reasonably possible, such discussion will take place within 15 school days of the complaint being received. The purpose of the discussion is to provide an opportunity to ensure clarity of the issues discussed and to avoid misunderstandings which can occur through written communication. The Chair or their nominated director will then put their findings in writing and indicate what steps, if any, should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 5 school days of the discussion of the findings of the investigation with the Complainant. The Chair or their nominated director will refer to what the Complainant can do if they are not satisfied with the Chair or their nominated director's findings.
79. The written response may include the following: -
- That in the view of the Chair or their nominated Trustee the complaint requires no further action and the reasons why.
 - That in the view of the Chair or their nominated director there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion such that the complaint cannot be upheld.
 - That the situation could have been handled differently or better.
 - An apology.
 - An explanation of the steps that will be taken to ensure it will not happen again.
 - That the Trust will review procedures following consideration of the complaint
80. The written response **must** include that if the complainant is dissatisfied, they may refer the matter for Trust Review within 5 school days of the written response. The complainant should contact the Head of Governance and Compliance in writing clearly stating their reasons for requesting a review. It **must** also include that if the Complainant wishes, they may request that the complaint be considered by an independent panel hearing. The request must set out clearly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response and may include any evidence to support their reasons.
81. A copy of the written response by the Chair's nominee should be submitted to the Chair and the Head of Governance and Compliance who will support the monitoring of any agreed actions.

Stage 3: Trust Review

82. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of a formal complaint other than one against a Principal, the Chief Executive, a member of the Trust Central Team or the Trust itself, the Complainant should contact the Head of Governance and Compliance in writing clearly stating their reasons for requesting a review of their complaint within 5 school days of the date of the written response from Stage 2.
83. The Trust will carry out an independent review of the complaint. They may contact the Complainant if they need any clarification of further information to assist with their review. The Trust may instruct the person who provided the Stage 2 written response to carry out further investigation into areas of the complaint and will make recommendations regarding suitable

⁵ If the Complainant has a disability, learning difficulty or difficulties with English, the Trust will provide appropriate assistance

resolution of they find that issues have been overlooked or not appropriately addressed at Stage 2.

84. The Trust will appoint a review officer who will be a senior member of staff who has not previously been involved with the complaint. This is to maintain detachment and independence from the complaint.
85. The review officer will contact the Complainant and the person who provided the Stage 2 written response. The review officer will confirm the methodology to be used to conduct the review and to seek any clarification or further information from either party to assist with the review. The Complainant must agree to verbally discuss the matter with the review officer including their findings. The Complainant must also be asked what they think can resolve the matter.⁶
86. Any student who is interviewed by the review officer should usually be interviewed with a parent/carer present. If this is not possible, the interview should be attended by a member of staff who the student feels comfortable with such as a learning mentor.
87. The review officer should keep written records of all meetings and telephone conversations undertaken as part of the review together with any other relevant documentation.
88. The review Officer will provide a written decision to the Complainant and the person who provided the Stage 2 written response. This may include:
 - That in the view of the review officer the matter has been thoroughly investigated and the Review Officer sees no need for the investigating officer or Principal to reconsider the matter.
 - That in the view of the review officer there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion such that the complaint cannot be upheld.
 - A direction to the person who provided the stage 2 written response to carry out further investigation into the formal complaint.
 - A recommendation regarding suitable resolution if they find that issues have been overlooked or not appropriately addressed at stage 2 and what actions will be taken.
89. The review Officer must include in their written decision that the Complainant's complaint can be considered either at a Local Review Board Hearing or Chief Executive Officer ("CHIEF EXECUTIVE") Review dependent on the status of the Complainant.
90. The Review will aim to be concluded within 20 school days of receipt of the Complainant's request for a Trust review. This timeframe will include confirming the outcome of the review to the Complainant and the person who provided the stage 2 written response.
91. A copy of the Review Officer decision letter will be provided to the Principal of the Academy, the Complainant and the Head of Governance and Compliance who will monitor any agreed actions.

⁶ If the Complainant has a disability, learning difficulty or difficulties with English, the Trust will provide appropriate assistance.

Stage 4: Local Review Board Panel or Chief Executive Review

92. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the previous applicable stages, the Complainant may request that the complaint be considered at Stage Four.
93. A request to use this stage must be in writing and addressed to the Head of Governance and Compliance within 10 school days of the previous stage 2 or 3 response being sent to the Complainant. The request must set out clearly the reasons why the Complainant is dissatisfied with the response and may include any evidence to support their reasons.
94. Complaints from Parents/Legal Guardians of students within one of the Trust's Academy's will have a Local Review Board panel hearing of the Academy which will comprise of 2 members of the Academy's Local Review Board who have no prior knowledge of the complaint and one person independent of the management and running of the Academy. The selection of the independent member will be supported by the Head of Governance and Compliance.
95. The Independent member will not be a Member of the Trust, a Trustee, an employee of the Trust or anyone who has a clear connection with the Trust such as its Solicitor. The Trust will endeavour to ensure that the independent member does not have a clear connection with the Trust or the Academy. A Local Review Board member from a different Academy in the Trust is considered to have no conflict of interest or prior knowledge of the complaint as they have no involvement in the management and running of the Academy where the complaint has been made.⁷
96. Complaints from Non-parents/Legal Guardians of students within one of the Trust's Academy's may request a Chief Executive review. The Chief Executive will review the procedural fairness of the investigation undertaken at Stage 2 and the determinations made. The Chief Executive will not consider additional or new complaints. The Chief Executive may delegate their Review to a senior member of Trust staff who has not previously been involved in the complaint. The review will be undertaken within 15 school days of receipt of the review request.
97. New allegations that have not been raised at Stage 2 **may not** be raised at this point. New evidence which was not provided before the completion of the Stage 2 investigation **will not** normally be considered. The chair of the independent panel or the Chief Executive shall have discretion to permit further evidence if it is relevant to the matters to be considered as part of the appeal.

Stage 4 Local Review Board Panel

98. The role of the Panel **is not** to conduct a further investigation of the complaint. The Panel's role is to consider the procedural fairness of the investigation undertaken at Stage 2 and the determination made. To attempt to reconcile the parties where possible and to put right things that may have gone wrong.
99. The Clerk to the Local Review Board or the Head of Governance and Compliance will convene the Independent Panel Hearing. The hearing will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the Complainant, the Academy, and the members of

⁷ See Government guidance on this: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-an-academies-complaints-procedure/best-practice-guidance-for-academies-complaints-procedures#complaints>

the Panel. Whenever possible the Panel will be held within 30 school days of receipt of the hearing request.

100. The Complainant must engage with the Clerk in providing details of convenient school days for attendance. In the absence of engagement, the Clerk in discussion with the Head of Governance and Compliance and the Panel chair may list the hearing.
101. All parties will be provided with a minimum of 14 school days' notice of the date of the hearing. Where a Complainant refuses or is unable to attend a meeting and reasonable attempts have been made to accommodate them, the meeting may proceed in their absence and reach a conclusion in the interests of drawing the complaint to a close.
102. The following are entitled to attend the Panel Hearing, submit written representations and relevant documents, and address the panel:
 - The Complainant(s) accompanied if they so wish by a friend, relative or other third party.
 - The Principal of the Academy accompanied if they so wish by a colleague. The colleague may include any investigating or review officer.
 - The Trust's Head of Governance and Compliance to address any procedural questions which may arise. If the Head of Governance and Compliance is not in attendance, they may be contacted by the Chair of the Panel or the Clerk to the Local Review Board during the hearing to address any procedural questions.
 - Any other interested person who the Panel considers having a reasonable and just interest in the hearing and whose contribution would assist the Panel in their decision making.
103. Any written representations/relevant documentation for consideration by the Panel and the names of any representatives attending the hearing, should be sent to the Head of Governance and Compliance at least 8 school days prior to the hearing. Any submissions or documents not submitted in accordance with this timescale will not be considered unless the panel in their absolute discretion, believes it is just to accept them.
104. If the Complainant believes that a proposed member of the panel is biased they should raise the same with the Head of Governance and Compliance as soon as possible. They should submit evidence of the bias in support of the suggestion. Local Review Board members with no prior exposure to the complaint will usually be considered not to be bias unless evidence is shown to the contrary.
105. All parties will be issued with papers 7 school days prior to the hearing.
106. The Panel may request to speak to witnesses and this decision will be at the discretion of the Panel.

Stage 4 Complaints against a member of an LRB, an LRB, a member of the Trust Central Services Team or the Trust or Chief Executive Review

107. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the previous applicable stages, the Complainant may request that the complaint be considered at Stage Four.
108. A request to use this stage must be in writing and addressed to the Head of Governance and Compliance within 10 school days of the previous stage 2 or 3 response being sent to the Complainant. The request must set out clearly the reasons why the Complainant is dissatisfied with the response and may include any evidence to support their reasons.
109. Complaints from Parents/Legal Guardians of students within one of the Trust's Academy's will have a Trust Board panel hearing of the which will comprise of 2 Trustees who have no prior knowledge of the complaint and one person independent of the management and running of the Academy. The selection of the independent member will be supported by the Head of Governance and Compliance.
110. The Independent member will not be a Member of the Trust, a Trustee, an employee of the Trust or anyone who has a clear connection with the Trust such as its Solicitor. The Trust will endeavour to ensure that the independent member does not have a clear connection with the Trust or the Academy.
111. Complaints from non-parents/Legal Guardians of students within one of the Trust's Academy's may request a Chief Executive review. The Chief Executive will review the procedural fairness of the investigation undertaken at Stage 2 and the determinations made. The Chief Executive will not consider additional or new complaints. The Chief Executive may delegate their Review to a senior member of Trust staff who has not previously been involved in the complaint. The review will be undertaken within 15 school days of receipt of the review request.
112. New allegations that have not been raised at Stage 2 **may not** be raised at this point. New evidence which was not provided before the completion of the Stage 2 investigation **will not** normally be considered. The chair of the independent panel or the Chief Executive shall have discretion to permit further evidence if it is relevant to the matters to be considered as part of the appeal.

Stage 4 Trust Board Panel

113. The role of the Panel **is not** to conduct a further investigation of the complaint. The Panel's role is to consider the procedural fairness of the investigation undertaken at Stage 2 and the determination made. To attempt to reconcile the parties where possible and to put right things that may have gone wrong.
114. The Head of Governance and Compliance will convene the Independent Panel Hearing. The hearing will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the Complainant, the Academy, and the members of the Panel. Whenever possible the Panel will be held within 30 school days of receipt of the hearing request.
115. The Complainant must engage with the Head of Governance and Compliance in providing details of convenient school days for attendance. In the absence of engagement, the Head of Governance and Compliance and the Panel chair may list the hearing.

116. All parties will be provided with a minimum of 14 school days' notice of the date of the hearing. Where a Complainant refuses or is unable to attend a meeting and reasonable attempts have been made to accommodate them, the meeting may proceed in their absence and reach a conclusion in the interests of drawing the complaint to a close.
117. The following are entitled to attend the Panel Hearing, submit written representations and relevant documents, and address the panel:
- The Complainant(s) accompanied if they so wish by a friend, relative or other third party.
 - The Chief Executive accompanied if they so wish by a colleague. The colleague may include any investigating or review officer.
 - The Trust's Head of Governance and Compliance to address any procedural questions which may arise. If the Head of Governance and Compliance is not in attendance, they may be contacted by the Chair of the Panel or the Clerk to the Local Review Board during the hearing to address any procedural questions.
 - Any other interested person who the Panel considers having a reasonable and just interest in the hearing and whose contribution would assist the Panel in their decision making.
118. Any written representations/relevant documentation for consideration by the Panel and the names of any representatives attending the hearing, should be sent to the Head of Governance and Compliance at least 8 school days prior to the hearing. Any submissions or documents not submitted in accordance with this timescale will not be considered unless the panel in their absolute discretion, believes it is just to accept them.
119. If the Complainant believes that a proposed member of the panel is biased they should raise the same with the Head of Governance and Compliance as soon as possible. They should submit evidence of the bias in support of the suggestion. Local Review Board members with no prior exposure to the complaint will usually be considered not to be bias unless evidence is shown to the contrary.
120. All parties will be issued with papers 7 school days prior to the hearing.
121. The Panel may request to speak to witnesses and this decision will be at the discretion of the Panel.

Conclusion of Stage 4 and retention of written records

122. The Local Review Board Panel/Trust Board panel meeting or Chief Executive findings and recommendations will be sent in writing to the Complainant and the Academy. The letter may include:
- That in the view of the panel/ Chief Executive the matter has been thoroughly investigated and the panel/ Chief Executive sees no need for the Principal to reconsider the matter.
 - That in the view of the panel/Chief Executive there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion such that the complaint cannot be upheld.
 - A direction to the Principal who provided the stage 2 written response to carry out further investigation into the formal complaint.
 - A recommendation regarding suitable resolution if they find that issues have been overlooked or not appropriately addressed at stage 2 as a means to reconcile the parties and/or put things right.

123. The letter will include:

- What the Complainant should do if not satisfied with the outcome.
- Redacted minutes of the meeting⁸

124. A copy of the findings and recommendations and accompanying letter will be sent in writing to:

- The Complainant
- The Principal of the Academy
- Where relevant the person complained about
- The Head of Governance and Compliance.

125. A written record will be kept of all Stage 2 and above complaints by the Academy and by the Head of Governance and Compliance. The Head of Governance and Compliance will record at what stage they have been resolved or progressed to. All recommended actions arising from the complaint investigations will be monitored by the Head of Governance and Compliance.

Right to be accompanied

126. The Complainant(s) have a right to be accompanied by a friend, relative or other third party to any meetings or hearings held under stages 2, 3 and 4 of the Complaints Policy. These meetings **are not** legal proceedings so legal representation is not necessary. If a Complainant does wish to be accompanied by someone who is legally qualified, they must notify the Principal at least 7 school days prior to the meeting.

127. Any member of staff interviewed as part of the investigation process into a complaint has a right to be accompanied to the meeting by another colleague or trade union representative.

128. Any student interviewed as part of the investigation process or the subject of a complaint must be accompanied to the meeting/hearing by a parent/carer or teacher who they are comfortable with.

Confidentiality, data protection and records management

129. All complaints will be handled in the strictest confidence by the Trust and its Academies. Data protection principles will be applied in line with the Trust's data protection policy.

130. Correspondence, statement and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State for Education or a body conducting an inspection under section 162 A of the Education Act 2002 requests access to them or where the Trust is otherwise required by law to disclose them.

131. It is expected that Complainants will also keep their complaint private and confidential. Complainants are not expected to discuss complaints publicly via any form or social media or with third parties.

132. Electronic recordings of meetings must not be made by either the Trust, Academy, or the Complainant. A meeting to discuss a complaint may not go ahead if the Complainant is insistent

⁸ Minutes of the meeting will only be redacted to take account of the Trust's obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and associated General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

on recording the meeting. The Trust or Academy will take notes of any meetings to discuss a complaint, which may be shared afterwards, and Complainants may do likewise. The Trust will only consider an exception to this where the Complainant suffers from communication difficulties which would make it easier for them to access and review the meeting at a later date. The Trust will balance this reasonable adjustment against how it will affect any witnesses and the potential impact and consequences of those complained about in the event recordings are lost or leaked. Ultimately the Trust may conclude that a recording and redacted transcription of the meeting be provided in such circumstances.

133. Due to privacy rights under data protection legislation, information disclosed relating to an outcome if it relates to a third-party individual, i.e. disciplinary action against a member of staff or another student, may sometimes be limited.
134. Audio or Video evidence from Complainants will not be accepted unless informed written consent from all parties has been given.
135. Records of Complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) will be confidentially retained by the Trust for a period of 3 academic years from the end of the academic year in which they were concluded. These will include:
 - Progress of the complaint and the final outcome.
 - Whether the case progressed to a panel hearing or the stage at which the complaint was resolved.
 - The action taken by the Academy or Trust, regardless of the outcome.
136. The Head of Governance and Compliance will be responsible for maintaining the records of complaints.

Dealing with unreasonably persistent or vexatious complaints and behaviour

137. We define unreasonably persistent and vexatious complaints as those which, because of the frequency or nature of the Complainants' contacts, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints. The description "unreasonably persistent" and "vexatious" may apply separately or jointly to a complaint.
138. Features of an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complaint include those detailed within Appendix 4. Please note that this list is not exhaustive, nor does one single feature on its own necessarily imply that the complaint will be so defined.
139. The Academy/ Chief Executive or Chair will ensure that the complaint is being, or has been, investigated in accordance with this complaints policy. If there are concerns that a complaint may fall within the category of being unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious the Principal/ Chief Executive or Chair will seek guidance and advice from the Head of Governance and Compliance.
140. If a Complainant is found to be unreasonable persistent and/or vexatious the Head of Governance and Compliance will write to the Complainant advising them of the decision and the reasons for this. The letter will state that all future correspondence from them should be directed to the Head of Governance and Compliance who will consider whether it raises any substantive new issue(s).

141. The Complainant will also be advised that if no substantive new issue is raised, any future complaints will not receive a response. They will also be advised of their right to complain about the decision to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (“ESFA”).
142. There is no route of appeal against a decision that a complaint is persistent and/or vexatious.
143. If future complaints do raise substantive new issues, these will be investigated in accordance with the Complaints policy.
144. The Trust and its employees will investigate complaints professionally and with respect towards all individuals involved. The Trust expects anyone raising a complaint to be respectful and avoid aggression or intimidating behaviour.

Anonymous Complaints

145. Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated as the Trust will be unable to respond to the Complainant. The exception to this is if there are serious concerns around child protection where the Trust is required to involve appropriate external agencies or where the Trust may investigate the same to find any corroborative evidence which might trigger a formal investigation.
146. Anonymous Complaints suggesting a criminal offence has taken place including fraud will be conducted either under the Trust’s Anti-Fraud Bribery and Corruption Policy or the Trust’s Whistleblowing Policy. Anonymous Complaints surrounding Health and Safety, Other criminal offences, damage to the Environment, breach of the Law by the Trust or the covering up of wrongdoing will all be investigated under the Trust’s Whistleblowing policy.

Complaints regarding conflict between parents concerning Parental Responsibility

147. When parents fall out with each other, complaints can be made to the Trust about information provided to the other parents. Potential complainants should be aware that the Trust will follow the Department for Education guidance on [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to Parental Responsibility](#) both with the principles it will adopt in dealing with such parents, sharing information, obtaining consent, safeguarding, changing a surname and how it deals with any complaints arising from the same.

Complaint Campaigns

148. Where the Trust receives 2 or more complaints on the same topic or about the same member of Trust staff or member of Trust Governance, or from complainants unconnected with the Academy or Trust the following amended procedure will be implemented.
149. Investigating Officers or Review Officers will not acknowledge individual complaints. A letter will be sent to all parents in the Academy or Trust acknowledging the complaint.
150. Following investigation of the complaint, a template response will be sent to all complainants who have provided contact details, sent to parents and published on the Academy website. This will include how such complaints can be escalated.

Complaints to the ESFA

151. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled, they may escalate their complaint to the ESFA. The ESFA **will expect** the Complainant to have exhausted the Trust's complaints policy before complaining to them.
152. The ESFA **will not** overturn a Trust's decision about a complaint. If they find that a Trust did not comply with its own complaints policy when considering a complaint, they will request that the complaint is looked at again.
153. The role of the ESFA is to consider: -
- Whether the Trust has a complaints policy such as this one;
 - Whether the Trust provided a copy of the complaints policy when requested to;
 - Whether the Trust's complaints policy complies with statutory regulations;
 - Whether the Trust has followed this policy;
 - Whether the Trust has allowed the procedure in this policy to be completed or not.
154. The ESFA **cannot**: -
- Overturn a decision of a Trust panel;
 - Reinvestigate the original complaint;
 - Review the accuracy of minutes taken or documents provided;
 - Order that compensation is paid;
 - Direct the Trust or an Academy in the Trust to discipline students;
 - Force the Trust to discipline or dismiss staff; or
 - Instruct the Academy to apologise.

Accountability

155. The Academy Principal holds delegated responsibility for discharging the sound application of all Academy and Trust policies.
156. The Academy Principal should inform the Trust Head of Governance and Compliance and their Local Review Board of all matters relating to serious breaches of this policy including any major incident to be addressed under this policy promptly, preferably prior to action being taken insofar as is reasonably practicable.

Other Documents

157. This policy should be read in conjunction with other Trust documents and policies which are detailed in Appendix 6. Other documents which have informed this policy are also detailed in Appendix 6.

Monitoring

158. The Head of Governance and Compliance will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the policy by monitoring complaints referred and resolutions reached. The Head of Governance and Compliance will also deal with any queries raised by anybody who is involved in the implementation of this policy including Complainants, Investigating Officers, Review Officers,

Academy Principals, the Chief Executive Officer, Clerks to Local Review Boards, members of Local Review Boards and the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

159. The Head of Governance and Compliance will monitor the relevant legislation, guidelines, and information forthcoming from the relevant statutory bodies for any recommendation or changes. Where a gap, potential inequality or shortfall in performance is identified within the policy, the Head of Governance and Compliance will advise the Board of Trustees of any changes that are needed and a proposal will be submitted to the Trust Board within an appropriate timescale. There will be a full review of the policy by the Head of Governance and Compliance prior to the stated review date where recommendations will be made for consideration by the Trust Board.

Diversity

160. The Rodillian Multi Academy Trust is committed to a policy of celebrating diversity, promoting equality of opportunity, providing an inclusive workplace, and eliminating any unfair treatment or unlawful discrimination. This overriding objective applies to all policies and procedures relating to staff and students. The Trust will always comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and associated guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Contacts

In respect of complaints about BBG Academy, a **completed Complaint reporting form** should be addressed to The Principal, BBG Academy, Bradford Road, Birkenshaw, BD19 4BE, Tel: 01274 871225, E-mail: office@bbgacademy.com

In respect of complaints about Brayton Academy, a **completed Complaint reporting form** should be addressed to The Principal, Brayton Academy, Doncaster Road, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 8QS, Tel: 01757 707 731, E-mail: info@braytonacademy.org.uk

In respect of complaints about Featherstone Academy, a **completed Complaint reporting form** should be addressed to The Principal, Featherstone Academy, Pontefract Road, Featherstone, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF7 5AJ, Tel: 01977 698000, E-mail: info@featherstoneacademy.org.uk

In respect of complaints about Rodillian Academy, a **completed Complaint reporting form** should be addressed to The Principal, Rodillian Academy, Longthorp Lane, Lofthouse, Wakefield, WF3 3PS, Tel: 01924 825667, E-mail: contact@rodillianacademy.co.uk

In respect of complaints about Southway, a **completed Complaint reporting form** should be addressed to The Principal, Southway, South Leeds HUB, Middleton Road, Leeds, LS10 3JA, Tel: 0113 336 7772, E-mail: info@southway.org.uk

In respect of complaints about a Principal, a member of the Trust Central Services Team or a Local Review Board a **completed Complaint reporting form** should be addressed to The Head of Governance and Compliance, Rodillian Multi Academy Trust, Rodillian Academy, Longthorp Lane, Lofthouse, Wakefield, WF3 2PS, Tel: 01924 872 252, E-mail: amarham@rodillianacademytrust.co.uk

In respect of complaints about the Chief Executive Officer, a **completed Complaint reporting form** should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Rodillian Multi Academy Trust, Rodillian Academy, Longthorp Lane, Lofthouse, Wakefield, WF3 3PT, Tel: 01924 872 252, E-mail: contact@rodillianacademytrust.co.uk

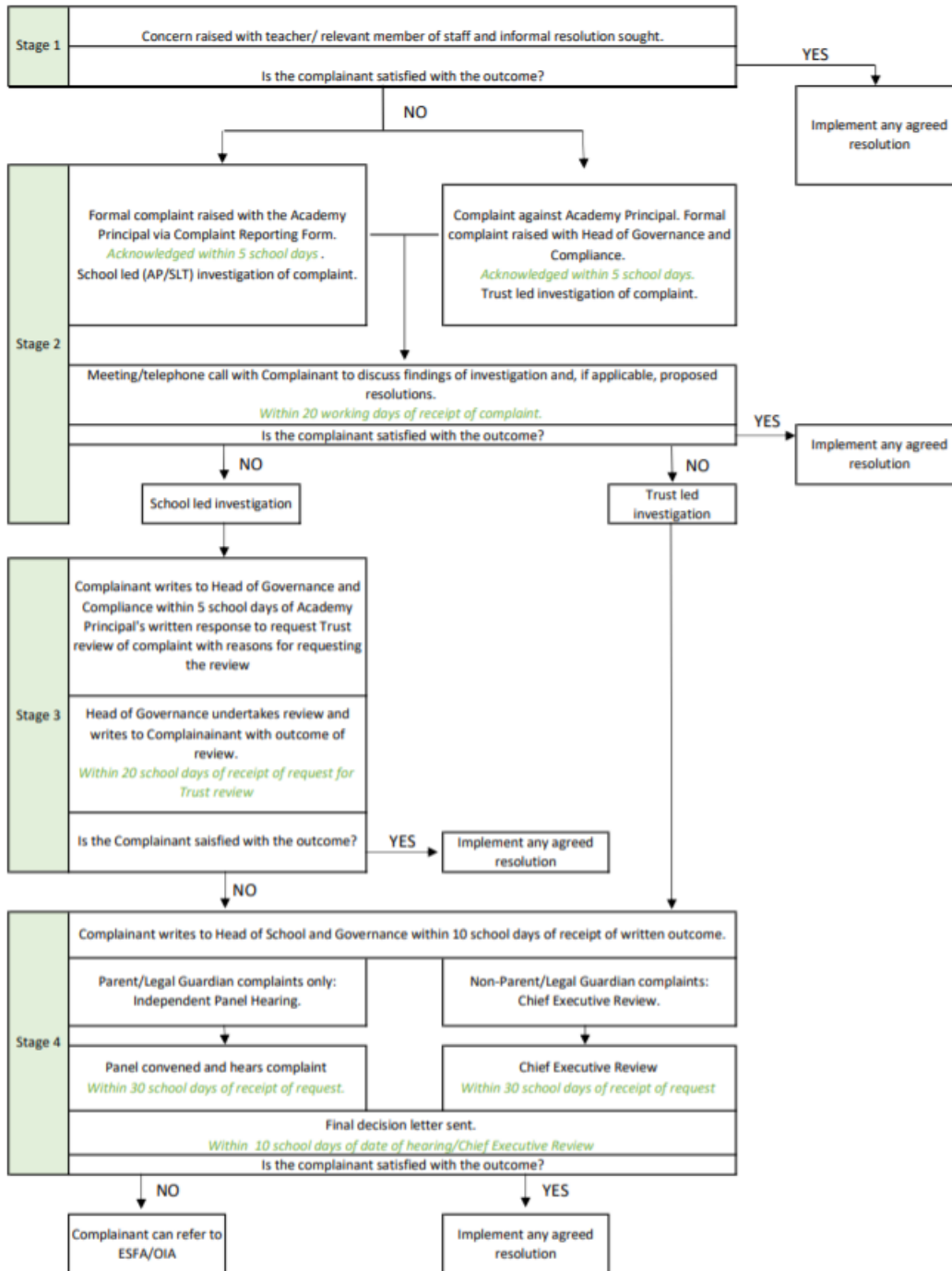
Any queries about this policy can be addressed to The Head of Governance and Compliance, Rodillian Multi Academy Trust, Rodillian Academy, Longthorp Lane, Lofthouse, Wakefield, WF3 3PT, Tel: 0192 872 252, E-mail: amarham@rodillianacademytrust.co.uk

Following exhaustion of this complaints policy, the ESFA can be contacted via the Department for Education's online schools complaint form: www.gov.uk/complain-about-school or in writing to Ministerial and Public Communications Division, Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Appendix 1: Exceptions to the Complaints Policy

Exception	Further Information
Admissions to Academies except Southway	The Academy website will provide any admissions policies which are in place for an individual academy. Parents/Carers should can also contact the Local Authority in which the Academy is situated.
Admission to Rodillian Academy Sixth Form	The Academy website provides details of the Rodillian Academy Sixth Form admissions policy
Suspensions/Permanent Exclusion from Academies	Details of the processes to follow will be provided by the Academy in documentation provided at the time of suspension/permanent exclusion
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs	The Trust website provides details of its SEND policy. The Local Authority in which the Academy is situated can also be contacted
Academy reorganisation proposals	Any Consultation will provide an ability for Parents/Carers to comment
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	The Trust website provides details of its Safeguarding Policy. Each Academy has a Designated Safeguarding Lead who can be contacted via the Academy. Further information is also available from the Local Authority Designated Officer in which Authority area, the Academy is situated
Employee Grievances	The Trust website provides details of the Trust's Grievance Policy which should be followed.
Staff Disciplinary matters	Complaints about staff conduct will be dealt with mostly under the Trust's disciplinary policy Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a Staff member.
Whistleblowing matters	The Trust website provides details of the Trust's Whistleblowing policy.
External examination results	Details of the appeals procedure can be obtained from the Academy at which the examination was sat.
Complaints about services provided by external bodies using an Academy's premises or facilities	Complaints should be made to the provider of the service, club or other activity who should have their own procedure for such eventualities.
Withdrawal from the curriculum	Where a Parent or Carer has withdrawn their student from Religious Education, the Trust will not usually investigate complaints where a religious matter has been spontaneously raised by students or has arisen in another subject such as history or citizenship.

Appendix 2: Stages within our Complaints Policy



Appendix 3: Complaint reporting form

Complaint Reporting Form



Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS and return to the Principal of the Academy, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:	
Student's name (if applicable):	
Your relationship to the student (if applicable):	
Name of Academy:	

Address, including Postcode:	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	
E-mail address	

Please give details of your complaint:

(Provide as much detail as possible about the matter, including dates and times of events, potential witnesses. You may also attach copies of any relevant documents)

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?
To whom did you speak to and what was the response?

--

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

--

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

--

Signature:		Date:	
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For official use only			
Date acknowledgement sent		Complaint referred to	
Acknowledgement sent by		Complaint referred on (date)	

Appendix 4: Examples of unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complaints

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, nor does one single feature on its own necessarily imply that the complaint will be defined as unreasonable, persistent, and/or vexatious.

- A. There are insufficient or no grounds for the complaint and it is made only to annoy (or for reasons that the Complainant does not admit or make obvious).
- B. There are no specified grounds for the complaint despite offers of assistance.
- C. The Complainant refused to co-operate with the complaints process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
- D. The complaint is about issues not within the power of the Academy to investigate, change or influence and where the Complainant refuses to accept this.
- E. The Complainant insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the Complaints Policy (e.g. There must not be any written record of the complaint or insisting the complaint is only dealt with by the Trust Chief Executive Officer.)
- F. There appears to be groundless complaints about the staff dealing with the complaint investigation, and an attempt to have them replaced.
- G. There is an unreasonable number of contacts with the Trust or an Academy, by any means, in relation to a specific complaint or complaints.
- H. There are persistent and unreasonable demands or expectations of staff and/or the complaints process after the unreasonableness has been explained to a Complainant (e.g. a Complainant who insists on immediate responses to numerous, frequent, and/or complex communication).
- I. Attempt to harass, verbally abuse or otherwise seek to intimidate staff dealing with their complaint by use of foul or inappropriate language or using offensive or discriminatory language.
- J. Subsidiary or new issues are raised whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the complaint at the start of the complaint(s) process.
- K. Trivial or irrelevant new information is introduced whilst the complaint is being investigated and an expectation that this to be considered and commented on.
- L. There is a change to the substance or basis of the complaint without reasonable justification whilst the complaint is being addressed.
- M. The Complainant denies statements he or she made at an earlier stage in the complaint process.
- N. The Complainant electronically records meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the Academy/Trust staff involved.
- O. The Complainant refuses to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion, repeatedly arguing the point, complaining about the outcome, and/or denying that an adequate response has been given.
- P. The same complaint is made repeatedly, perhaps with minor differences, after the complaints process has been concluded and where the Complainant insists that the minor differences make these “new” complaints which should be put through the full complaints process.
- Q. Documented evidence is not accepted as factual by the Complainant.
- R. The complaint relates to an issue based on historic and irreversible decision or incident.

Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion, and Integration Screening.

As a public authority, the Rodillian Multi Academy Trust needs to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service, and functions, both current and proposed have had proper consideration of equality, diversity, cohesion, and integration.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services, and functions. Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion, and integration.
- whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion, and integration is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

Organisation: The Rodillian Multi- Academy Trust	Department responsible for the Policy: Head of Governance and Compliance
Lead Person: Adam Marham	Contact Number:

1. Title: Complaints Policy

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

The Policy

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion, and integration		
Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?		x
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the Policy or proposal?		x
Could the proposal affect how services are organised, provided, located and by whom?		x
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?	x	
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on: -		
• Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation, and harassment		X
• Advancing equality of opportunity		X
• Fostering good relations	x	

4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion, and integration

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of the proposal: Students, parents, staff, the community. • Who is likely to be affected? Students, parents, staff, the community. • Consultation and engagement activities with those likely to be affected? Ongoing feedback from Students, parents, staff, the community. The Policy is available through the Trust and Academies websites and a written copy can be provided on request.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key findings <p>We have considered the potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics in relation to the Policy and do not believe that any groups will be adversely affected. The Trust is vigilant in adhering to the appropriate legislation in relation to protected characteristics and to preventing discrimination. Managers are supported and trained in relation to these areas. The Policy has considered religious, racial and gender-specific clothing requirements and those of staff with disabilities in line with the Equality Act.</p> <p>We have considered the perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another and we do not believe that the Policy could be perceived to be discriminatory with regards to its wording or format.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions <p>The Trust will continue to promote positive impact and remove/reduce negative impact through the application of this Policy within the organisation.</p>

5. Governance, ownership, and approval		
Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening		
Name	Job title	Date
Adam Marham	Head of Governance and Compliance	19.10.2021

6. Publishing	
This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.	
Date screening completed	19.10.2021
Date agreed at Trust Board	22.11.2021

Appendix 6 – Linked Documents to the Complaints Policy

Trust Policies and Documents

Academy Admissions Policies
The Rodillian Sixth Form Admission Policy
Anti-Fraud-Bribery and Corruption Policy
Conflicts of Interest Policy
Data Protection and Information Governance Policy
Disciplinary Policy
Grievance Policy
Safeguarding Policy
SEND Policy
Whistleblowing Policy.

Statutes and Secondary Legislation

[Data Protection Act 2018](#)

[Part 7 of the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)

Government Guidance

[Best practice guidance for academies complaints procedures](#)

[Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#)