COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

TutorWorld recognises that occasionally parents may have concern about their child's education. Any concern is dealt with as soon as possible in order that it may not become a complaint. The staff at the school will always be willing to hear parents' concerns and in the majority of cases, an informal meeting between a parent and the child's teacher is all that is needed to reassure parents and their children.

However, occasionally a parent or child may be dissatisfied with the way in which the centre responds to a concern and wishes to take the matter further as a complaint. A formal procedure will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful.

Exceptions: the following issues are not covered by this policy, but are covered in separate procedures/policies

- Matters relating to the curriculum
- Issues with exclusions
- Complaints relating to admissions

General Principles

It is our intention that our complaints procedure will:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- be easily accessible and publicised;
- be simple to understand and use;
- be impartial;
- be non-adversarial;
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

The following will **not** be investigated unless there are exceptional circumstances:

- An anonymous complaint
- An issue which occurred **more than three months ago**

<u>Procedure</u>

Stage One: Concern Heard by Staff Member

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. A complainant should first speak to a member of staff in order for the staff member to have the opportunity to resolve the issue. If the concern is about a particular member of staff, it may be necessary for the complainant to approach the Headteacher. Where the concern concerns the Headteacher, the complainant should write to the Chair of Trustees.

If the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with a concern, they may consider referring the complainant to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is crucial.

Where the first approach is made to a trustee, the next step would be to refer the complainant to the appropriate person and advise them about the procedure. Trustees will not act unilaterally on an individual concern outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure.

Stage Two: Complaint Heard by Headteacher

At this point, the complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at stage one as well as pursuing their initial complaint. The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken.

The Headteacher will contact and/or meet with the complainant. If the matter is still not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, then they may consider writing to the Chair of Trustees *within 15 schools days* of being informed by the Headteacher of his/her decision.

Stage Three: Complaint Heard by Chair of Trustee or nominated Trustee

The complaint must be notified to the trustee *within 15 school days* of being informed by the Headteacher of his/her decision in Stage 2.

At this stage, the Chair of Trustees may invite the complainant to an informal meeting with him/her or nominated trustee and the Headteacher to see if the issue can be resolved without the need to convene a Trustees complaints panel. This will be arranged *within 10 schools days* or as soon as is practicable.

The Chair or nominated trustee will investigate the complaint and inform the complainant of their decision *within 15 school days* of the meeting. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome then they may write to the Chair of Trustees, *within 10 schools days of the date of the letter,* asking for a Trustee's Appeal Panel to be convened.

Stage Four: Complaint Heard by the Trustees Complaints Appeal Panel

The Chair, or a nominated Trustee, will convene a Trustees Appeals Panel *within 10 school days or as soon as is practicable*.

The trustees' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process, and is not convened to merely rubber-stamp previous decisions.
Individual complaints will **not** be heard by the whole Board of Trustees at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

The board of trustees may nominate a number of members with delegated powers to hear complaints at that stage, and set out its terms of reference. These can include:

- drawing up its procedures;
- hearing individual appeals;
- making recommendations on policy as a result of complaints.

The panel will be drawn from the nominated **trustees** and may **consist of at least** two people, **of which 1 is independent of the management and running of the school**. **The parent may be accompanied at the panel meeting if they wish.** The panel will have a nominated Chairperson.

The Remit of the Complaints Appeal Panel

The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Chair of the Board of Trustees or the nominated trustee:

The Chair of the Board of Trustees or the nominated trustee role:

- check that the correct procedure has been followed;
- if a hearing is appropriate, to arrange the panel;

The Role of the Chair of the Complaints Appeal Panel

The Chair of the Panel has a key role, ensuring that:

- Draw up the procedure for the Appeal Panel taking into account the circumstances of the complaint.
- the remit of the panel is explained to all parties;
- the issues are addressed;
- key findings of fact are made;
- the panel is open minded and acting independently;
- no member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- any written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

Notification of the Appeal Panel's Decision

The Chair of the panel will ensure that the complainant is notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response *usually within 5 school days* of the panel meeting. The letter will explain if there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed.

Disciplinary Procedures

Any information relating to the application of disciplinary procedures is strictly confidential.

Vexatious Complaints

If a complainant persists with a complaint when the full Complaints Procedure has been exhausted when seeking to address the complaint, then the complaint may be deemed vexatious.

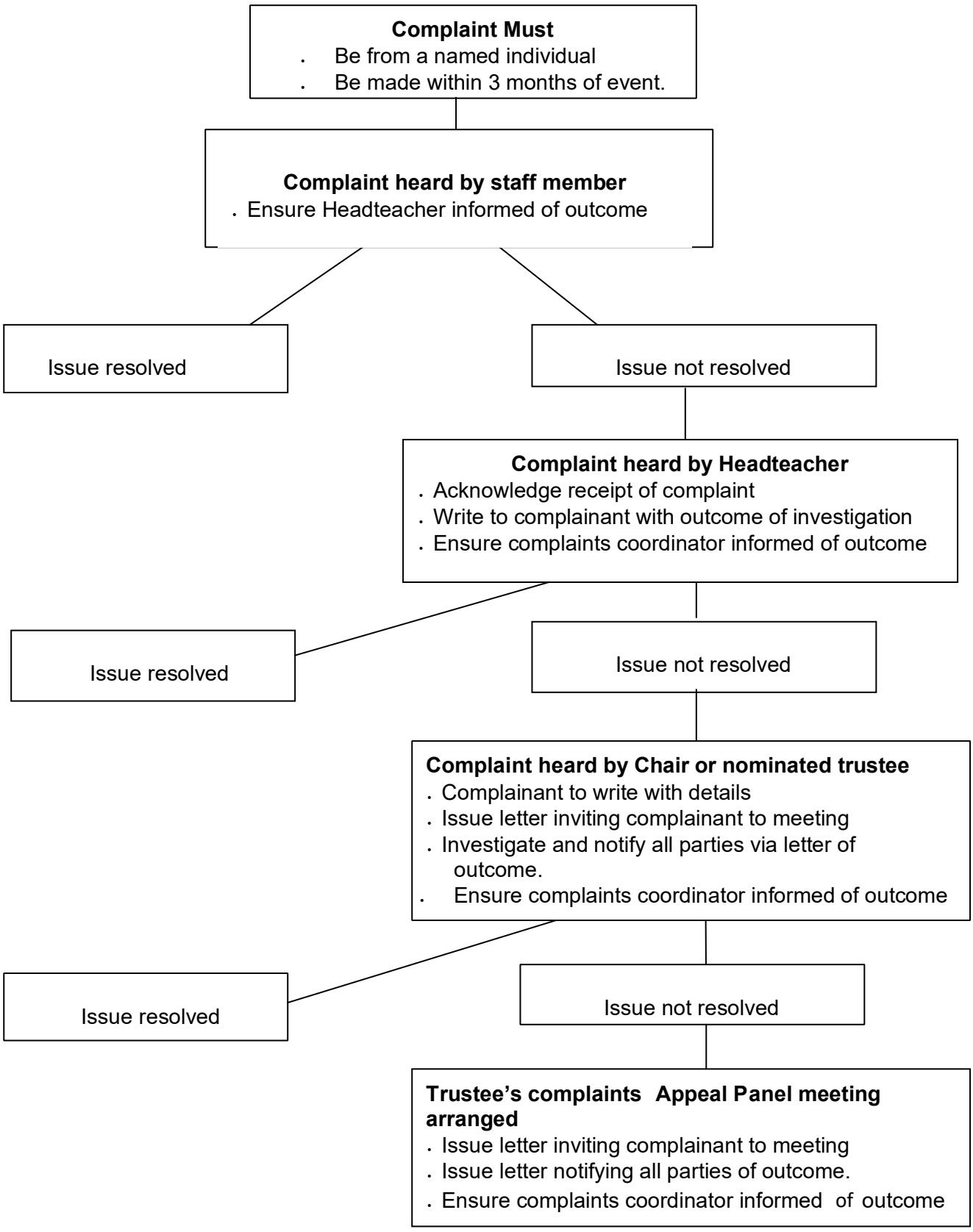
Related policies

Anti-Bullying Policy
Attendance Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Code of conduct policy
Equality and equal opportunities policy
SEN Policy

Policy Created October 2026
Next review October 2027

Complaints Procedure

Flowchart - Summary of Dealing with Complaints



Approval and document control
Policy owner: Head of Centre
Approval date: ____SR_____
Approved by: ____01/10/2026_____
Next scheduled review: _____01/10/2027_____