

THE ITALIA CONTI ACADEMY OF THEATRE ARTS

**COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE
FOR
STUDENTS / PUPILS / PARENTS OF PUPILS**

OVERVIEW

The Academy is committed to providing a high quality education and training experience for all our Students/Pupils/Parents. It is recognised that from time to time problems do arise and Students/Pupils/Parents may wish to express concern or dissatisfaction with aspects or the quality of services provided. The Academy sees the handling and monitoring of complaints as an important aspect of our quality assurance procedures. Many complaints can be resolved at an informal and/or local level. The Academy strongly encourages resolution of this kind and a student wishing to make representation under this procedure will be expected to have pursued informal resolution prior to bringing a formal complaint.

The Academy provides education at secondary, further and higher educational levels. It is expected that the working practices and processes of the policy will fulfil the specific needs and statutory requirements appropriate to each level.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the complaints procedure is to provide a clear step by step process through which a student may, without adversely affecting his/her position on the course, pursue legitimate complaints.

Students/Pupils/Parents are reminded that only by following the procedure outlined below can they expect a full and satisfactory outcome to any complaint process.

CORE PRINCIPLES

In consideration of a reasonable complaint the academy will adhere to the following principles:

- All complaints will be treated fairly, impartially and effectively.
- All complaints will be treated seriously and constructively, and can be made without fear of victimisation.

In consideration of a reasonable complaint the Academy will adopt the following practices:

- The Complaints Procedure focuses on resolving complaints rather than apportioning blame. Confidentiality owed to staff and Students/Pupils/Parents will be protected. Details of a complaint may, however, need to be shared with relevant parties in order for a full investigation to take place, and individuals named in a complaint will be made aware of the allegations and have the opportunity to give their version of events.
- Wherever possible and agreeable to the parties concerned, complaints will be resolved at a local level and/or without recourse to the formal Complaints Procedure.
- Repeated or vexatious complaints will not be considered.
- All parties involved in a complaint will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint at regular and appropriate intervals during the process.

Complaints Procedure: SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) – Parents/Pupils,
FUTHER EDUCATION (FE) – Students, HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) – Students/Staff

- Keep confidential all records relating to individual complaints. A record of formal complaints and their outcomes is kept by the Head Teacher/Course Director/Programmes Director in both electronic and hard copy in their office.
- Records will be kept, for at least three years, of all formal stage or panel hearings, the action taken and at what stage they were resolved. (Note: This information may be provided to relevant external bodies at their request).

RESPONSIBILITIES AND MANAGEMENT

The Academy provides education at secondary, further and higher educational levels. It is expected that the working practices of the policy will fulfil the specific needs and statutory requirements appropriate to each level.

The Academy has established core principles in this policy in respect of key values and requirements, which are central and universal in application. Each educational level within the Academy provides guidance for the management and interpretation of the policy specific to each level.

The Academy devolves day to day responsibility for managing the appropriate dissemination of this policy as follows:

Secondary / Theatre Arts School:	Head Teacher
Further Education / Performing Arts Programmes:	Course Director
Higher Education / Acting Programmes:	Programmes Director

The Academy Quality Board is responsible for monitoring the cyclical review and updating of all policies, both at Academy and Programme level according to statutory and regulatory timeframes.

Please see relevant education specific guidance for:

- **SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) provision - PARENT COMPLAINT**
- **SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) provision - PUPIL COMPLAINT**
(ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE for PUPILS of the THEATRE ARTS SCHOOL)
- **FUTHER EDUCATION (FE) provision 16+ - STUDENT COMPLAINT**
- **HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) provision 18+ - STAFF or STUDENT COMPLAINT**

Complaints Procedure: SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) – Parents/Pupils,
FUTHER EDUCATION (FE) – Students, HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) – Students/Staff

The following guidance applies to:

SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) provision - PARENT COMPLAINT

This policy applies to all concerns and complaints other than

- **Child Protection** issues and
- **Exclusions** where separate procedures apply

This policy complies with Schedule 1, Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010.

Timescales:

We aim to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage of the Complaints Procedure are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. For the purposes of this policy, a "working day" is defined as a weekday during term time, when the academy is open. The definition of "working day" excludes weekends and Bank Holidays.

Policy Aim and Statement

Aim:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a concern or complaint by a parent / carer is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practise, it is fair to those concerned and it helps to promote parents' and Students/Pupils/Parents' confidence in our ability to safeguard and promote welfare. We will try to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way with the aim of resolving the issue in a transparent manner.

The academy expects that most concerns can be resolved informally and guarantees to treat seriously and confidentially all concerns whether raised informally or formally.

Statement:

We need to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. We recognise that a difficulty that is not resolved quickly and fairly can soon become a cause of resentment, which could be damaging to relationships and also to our academy culture. We intend that parents and Students/Pupils/Parents should never feel – or be made to feel – that a complaint will be taken amiss or will adversely affect a student or his/her opportunities at the academy. The policy, however, distinguishes between a concern or difficulty which can be resolved informally and a formal complaint which will require further investigation.

Stage 1: Informal Complaints

- 1. Concerns:** Most concerns, where a parent/carers seeks intervention, reconsideration or some other action to be taken, can be resolved informally. Examples might include dissatisfaction about some aspect of teaching, disciplinary matters or issues outside the classroom. Parents/carers should raise the concern initially with the welfare assistant, class teacher or the Headteacher of the Academy concerned as appropriate. The academy will ensure that informal complaints are resolved within 10 working days of being raised.

Complaints Procedure: SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) – Parents/Pupils,
FUTHER EDUCATION (FE) – Students, HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) – Students/Staff

2. **Unresolved concerns:** A concern which has not been resolved by informal means within ten working days from the receipt of the complaint can be notified as a formal complaint in accordance with Stage 2 below.
3. **Record of concerns:** In the case of concerns raised under Stage 1 of this procedure, the only record of the concern and its resolution will be file notes by the person dealing with the complaint and/or file correspondence between the person raising the concern and the respondent.

Stage 2: Formal Complaints

4. **Notification:** An unresolved concern under Stage 1, or a complaint which needs investigation, or a more serious dissatisfaction with some aspect of the Academy's policies, procedures, management or administration should be set out in writing with full details and sent with all relevant documents and full contact details for the attention of the Headteacher, Vice-Principal or the Principal, as appropriate (complaints regarding the Headteacher should go to the Vice-Principal or Principal). Should a formal written complaint be received by another member of the academy's staff, this should be immediately passed to the Headteacher, the appropriate Senior Leadership Team or Principal.
5. **Acknowledgement:** The complaint will be acknowledged in writing normally within 3 working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays. The acknowledgement will indicate the action that is being taken and the likely timescale for resolution.
6. **Investigation and resolution:** The Headteacher may deal with the matter personally or delegate a senior member of staff to act as "investigating officer." The "investigating officer" may request additional information from the complainant and will fully investigate the issue. In most cases the Headteacher or investigating officer will meet or speak with the parent/carer to discuss the matter.
7. **Outcome:** The aim is to inform any complainant of the outcome of an investigation and the resolution to the complaint within 15 working days from the receipt of the complaint. Please note that any complaint received during a School holiday or within 15 working days of the end of term or half term may take longer to resolve.
8. **Record of complaints:** Written records will be kept of any meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
9. **Unresolved Complaints:** Where the complainant is not satisfied with the school's response to their complaint they may have their complaint considered by an independent Complaints Panel.

Stage 3 – Complaint Heard by the Complaints Panel

10. **Request:** A request for a complaint to be heard by a Complaints Panel (an appeal) must be made in writing and within ten (10) working days of the date of the academy decision made at Stage 2.
11. **Acknowledgement:** Where an appeal is received, the academy will within (three) 3 working days refer the matter to the PA of the Principal who will act as Clerk to the Complaints Panel. The Clerk will acknowledge, in writing, receipt of the appeal within (three) 3 working days and inform the complainant of the steps involved in the process. The Clerk will be the contact point for the complainant.
12. **Panel Hearing:** The Clerk will aim to convene an Appeal Panel hearing as soon as possible, normally no later than 20 working days after receipt of the Stage 3 request.

13. Panel Membership: The Panel will consist of two members of the Senior Leadership Team who have not previously been involved in the complaint, and one person independent of the management and running of the academy (the process used for selecting the independent person will conform to relevant guidance). In deciding the make-up of the Panel, the academy will endeavour to ensure that it is a cross-section of the academy and sensitive to the issues of race, gender and religious affiliation. The Panel will select its own Chair.

14. 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 academy's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

The aim of the hearing, which will be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the academy and the complainant. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as informal as possible.

15. Attendance: The following are entitled to attend a hearing, submit written evidence and address the Panel;

- the parents/carers and/or one representative
- the Headteacher and/or one representative
- any other person who the Complaints Panel considers to have a reasonable and just interest in the appeal and whose contribution would assist the Panel in their decision making

16. Evidence: All parties will be given the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Panel in support of their position including;

- documents
- chronology and key dates
- written statements setting out further detail

The evidence will be considered by the Panel along with the initial submission.

All written evidence must be received by the Clerk no later than (five) 5 working days in advance of the Panel Hearing. The Clerk will distribute the evidence to all parties no later than (three) 3 working days in advance of the Panel Hearing.

17. Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Clerk: All panels considering complaints must be clerked. The clerk would be the contact point for the complainant and be required to:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing
- record the proceedings
- notify all parties of the panel's decisions

The Role of the Chair of Governors:

Complaints Procedure: SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) – Parents/Pupils,
FUTHER EDUCATION (FE) – Students, HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) – Students/Staff

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

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

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

18. Decision: The Panel will reach a decision, and make any recommendations within ten (10) working days of the hearing. The decision reached is final.

19. Notification of the Panel's Decision: The Panel's findings will be sent, in writing, by the Clerk, to the parents/carers, SLT and the Headteacher and where relevant, to the person complained about. The letter will state the reasons for the decision reached and any recommendations made by the Panel.

20. Record Keeping: The Academy will keep a record of all appeals, decisions and recommendations of the Complaints Panel.

21. Vexatious Complaints: If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. Please see Appendix D and E for further details of how such complaints will be dealt with and examples of behaviour, which will not be tolerated.

Italia Conti will ensure that statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requires access to them.

SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) provision - PUPIL COMPLAINT

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE for PUPILS of the THEATRE ARTS SCHOOL

In accordance with the requirements of the Children Act (1989), the school has a "Complaints Procedure" which is given to all pupils which highlights the routes they can follow if they feel that they are fed up or unhappy, if they feel they are being treated unfairly, if they are being bullied, if there are problems at home, if they are being subject to improper physical advances etc.

In essence the complaints procedure incorporates the following elements:

1. Something is making you unhappy or worried. What can you do?

Is there a friend who can help?

Is there an older boy or girl you can talk to?

2. What about someone who is pastorally responsible for you?

Can you talk to your Form Tutor, subject or vocational teacher, Head Teacher or Safeguarding Lead? They are here to help you.

3. Is there any other member of staff you can trust?

What about the Welfare Officer, Vice Principal or the Admin team? You may always go directly to the Head Teacher.

4. There may be circumstances when you would find it easier to talk to someone who is not a member of staff.

This could be your parents or your friends.

In addition you might consider Childline (telephone: 0800 1111) or the NSPCC (telephone 0800 800 5000).

5. Suppose you are still worried. You may feel that the matter is so important you wish to take it further. What do you do?

Speak to any member of staff or adult whom you trust. You do not need to be on your own when you do this; you can have a friend with you, an older pupil or another member of staff.

6. If the matter is not dealt with to your satisfaction, you can make a formal statement.

Write to your Head Teacher, the Vice Principal or the Principal. Your "complaint" will be registered in the Record Book held by the Head. You will be invited to talk the problem through (you may have a friend or adult with you). You will be advised of the course of action to be taken.

Italia Conti will ensure that statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requires access to them.

The following guidance applies to:

FUTHER EDUCATION (FE) provision 16+ - STUDENT COMPLAINT

Students are encouraged to raise any complaints with an appropriate member of staff at the earliest opportunity, as complaints that are dealt with informally at an early stage have the best chance of being resolved effectively.

Where informal procedures have failed to resolve the problem, students may bring a complaint under the Student Complaints Procedure.

A legitimate complaint is defined as any aspect of the teaching and learning process or general treatment of students by members of staff which appears to fall below the standard which a student can reasonably expect while on the course.

Legitimate complaints fall into a wide range of categories, which cannot be outlined in full for the purposes of this document. However, they may include: victimisation or unreasonable differentiation in treatment, sexual harassment, physical assault or unreasonable physical or psychological demands.

Procedure

If a STUDENT has a legitimate complaint:

1. Informal Stage:

- 1.1 In the first instance the student should approach and discuss their concern with their Year Tutor or Head of Department / Co-ordinator or Course Administrator.
- 1.2 Should the student be dissatisfied with the level of action proposed at the Informal Stage, the student may decide to proceed with a formal complaint.

2. Formal Stage:

- 2.2 The student should submit a formal written outline of their complain and the circumstances surrounding it to the Course Director who will investigate the complain and work towards finding a reasonable resolution.
- 2.3 The formal grievance should be submitted in writing to the Course Director who will acknowledge the receipt of the grievance within 7 working days, inform the relevant member (s) of staff that a complaint has been lodged and consider the complaints based on the evidence provided and discussions deemed appropriate
- 2.4 The Course Director will work to establish whether or not there is good reason for the complaint or if the complaint does not fall within the grievance procedure and requires to be dealt with in another way.
- 2.5 Where it has been determined that there is a genuine reason for the grievance, the Course Director will arrange for the appropriate action to be taken and communicate this to the student within 21 days.

3. Final Stage

- 3.1 Where a student is not satisfied that their grievance has been dealt with appropriate, then they should contact the Principal and make a formal complain.

Complaints Procedure: SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) – Parents/Pupils,
FUTHER EDUCATION (FE) – Students, HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) – Students/Staff

3.2 Complaints should be submitted in writing to the Principal who will acknowledge the receipt of the complain within 7 working days, consider the complain, review the evidence and previous efforts made to resolve the complaint.

3.3 Any decision will be communicated to the student in writing within 21 days.

3.4 The Principals decision is final

The Academy reserves the right to alter these procedures where it is deemed appropriate.

Complaint procedures within the Academy will be independent of any formal legal proceedings which may develop from the matter in question.

The following guidance applies to:

HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) provision 18+ - STAFF or STUDENT COMPLAINT

The Staff/Student Complaint procedure is designed to provide a clear step-by-step process through which a member of staff/student may, without adversely affecting his/her position on the Programme, pursue legitimate complaints with respect to any aspect of the teaching and general treatment pertaining to the BA Acting Programme. Members of staff/students are reminded that only by following the procedure outlined below can they expect a full and satisfactory outcome to any complaint process.

i) A legitimate complaint is defined as a justified concern regarding any aspect of the teaching, learning process, or general treatment by other members of staff or students which appears to fall below the standard which can reasonably be expected by the Academy.

ii) Unsatisfactory treatment of one student by another will be dealt with through the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

iii) Suggestions for alterations or improvements to the content or delivery of the Programme, or to the general conditions in the building, do not constitute a complaint matter, and should be reported through the HOD/student representatives via the Programmes Board.

v) If a member of staff or student has a legitimate complaint concerning other members of staff or a student, he/she should in the first instance report the matter verbally, in confidence, to a Head of Department or the Programme Director. This will normally constitute an informal complaint. Wherever possible the Head of Department/Programme Director will seek to resolve the problem informally, and to bring about an enhanced level of communication and understanding between the parties involved.

vi) Legitimate complaints fall into a wide range of categories and may include:

- *Victimisation*
- *Sexual harassment*
- *Any other form of harassment, including inappropriate expression of religious, political or other beliefs, or persistent and unwelcome attempts to recruit a staff/student to any organisation or cult.*
- *Insulting or offensive behaviour*
- *Any form of physical assault by a member of staff or student.*
- *Any form of financial dealing or transaction between a member of staff and a student other than relevant private tuition or other programme related costs without the prior knowledge and consent of the Programme Director.*
- *Any other unreasonable behaviour by a member of staff which can be shown to have adversely affected either the professional nature of the staff/student relationship, or the progress of the student on the Programme.*
- *A concern or dissatisfaction with aspects or the quality of services provided*

vii) The Head of Department/Programme Director will advise the member of staff/student as to whether he/she has a legitimate complaint, and will suggest a programme of action. Such action may include:

- *No action on this occasion*
- *Discussion of the complaint matter with the member of staff/student concerned*
- *Informal action by the Head of Department/Programme Director - normally discussion with the member of staff/student concerned.*
- *Formal action by the staff/student. This will involve making a formal complaint in writing to the Programme Director.*

viii) No staff/student should involve him/herself in another staff/student's complaint unless he/she is directly implicated as co-party or witness, or is asked to do so as an elected staff/student representative.

ix) Staff/Students involved in a complaint procedure are expected to avoid discussion of the matter with other staff/students or outsiders.

Complaints Procedure: SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) – Parents/Pupils,
FUTHER EDUCATION (FE) – Students, HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) – Students/Staff

- x) Where a member of staff is perceived by the Programme Director or Programmes Co-ordinator to be failing to meet the required standards of professionalism demanded by the Academy, the Programme Director or the Programmes Co-ordinator, will take immediate and appropriate action in accordance with the Staff Disciplinary Procedure. Any student concerned, or other students directly implicated, may be asked to produce further written statements, as part of any action taken by the Academy.
- xi) Where the Programme Director or Programmes Co-ordinator has no reason to believe that there are grounds for action following a formal complaint, he/she will normally make such reason clear to the staff/student, according to the Staff and Student Conduct.
- xii) Where the Programme Director or Programmes Co-ordinator upholds the complaint and finds there are grounds for action he/she will provide a formal response to the staff/student according to the terms of the Staff/student Disciplinary Procedure.
- xiii) Where a formal Programme of action taken by the Programme Director or Programmes Co-ordinator proves unsuccessful in eliminating a problem, a member of staff/student should make direct representation in writing to the Principal.
- xiv) When such a direct representation is received The Principal will respond in writing to the student within an appropriate time frame according to the Academy's Staff/student Disciplinary Procedure.
- xiv) Staff are reminded that they are welcome to involve their union representative in complaint procedures.
- xv) The Academy reserves the right to alter these procedures where it is deemed appropriate.
- xvi) Complaint procedures within the Academy will be independent of any formal legal proceedings which may ensue from the matters in question.

Procedure

If a STUDENT or STAFF MEMBER has a legitimate complaint:

1. Informal Stage:

- 1.1 In the first instance the student should approach and discuss their concern with their Year Tutor or Head of Department / Co-ordinator or Course Administrator.
- 1.2 Should the student/staff member be dissatisfied with the level of action proposed at the Informal Stage, the student may decide to proceed with a formal complaint.

2. Formal Stage:

- 2.2 The student/staff member should submit a formal written outline of their complaint and the circumstances surrounding it to the Programmes Director who will investigate the complaint and work towards finding a reasonable resolution.
- 2.3 The formal grievance should be submitted in writing to the Programmes Director who will acknowledge the receipt of the grievance within 7 working days, inform the relevant member (s) of staff/students that a complaint has been lodged and consider the complaints based on the evidence provided and discussions deemed appropriate
- 2.4 The Programmes Director will work to establish whether or not there is good reason for the complaint or if the complaint does not fall within the grievance procedure and requires to be dealt with in another way.
- 2.5 Where it has been determined that there is a genuine reason for the grievance ,the Programmes Director will arrange for the appropriate action to be taken and communicate this to the student/staff member within 21 days.

Complaints Procedure: SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) – Parents/Pupils,
FUTHER EDUCATION (FE) – Students, HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) – Students/Staff

3. Final Stage

- 3.1 Where a student/staff member is not satisfied that their grievance has been dealt with appropriate, then they should contact the Principal and make a formal complain.
- 3.2 Complaints should be submitted in writing to the Principal who will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint within 7 working days, consider the complaint, review the evidence and previous efforts made to resolve the complaint.
- 3.3 Any decision will be communicated to the student in writing within 21 days.
- 3.4 The Principals decision is final

The Academy reserves the right to alter these procedures where it is deemed appropriate.

Complaint procedures within the Academy will be independent of any formal legal proceedings which may develop from the matter in question.

APPENDICES - THEATRE ARTS SCHOOL (SECONDARY EDUCATION)

Appendix A: Checklist

Checklist for a Panel Hearing:

The hearing is as informal as possible

Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence

After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses

The Head Teacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken

The Head Teacher is then invited to explain the academy's actions and be followed by the academy's witnesses

The complainant may question both the Head Teacher and the witnesses after each has spoken

The panel may ask questions at any point

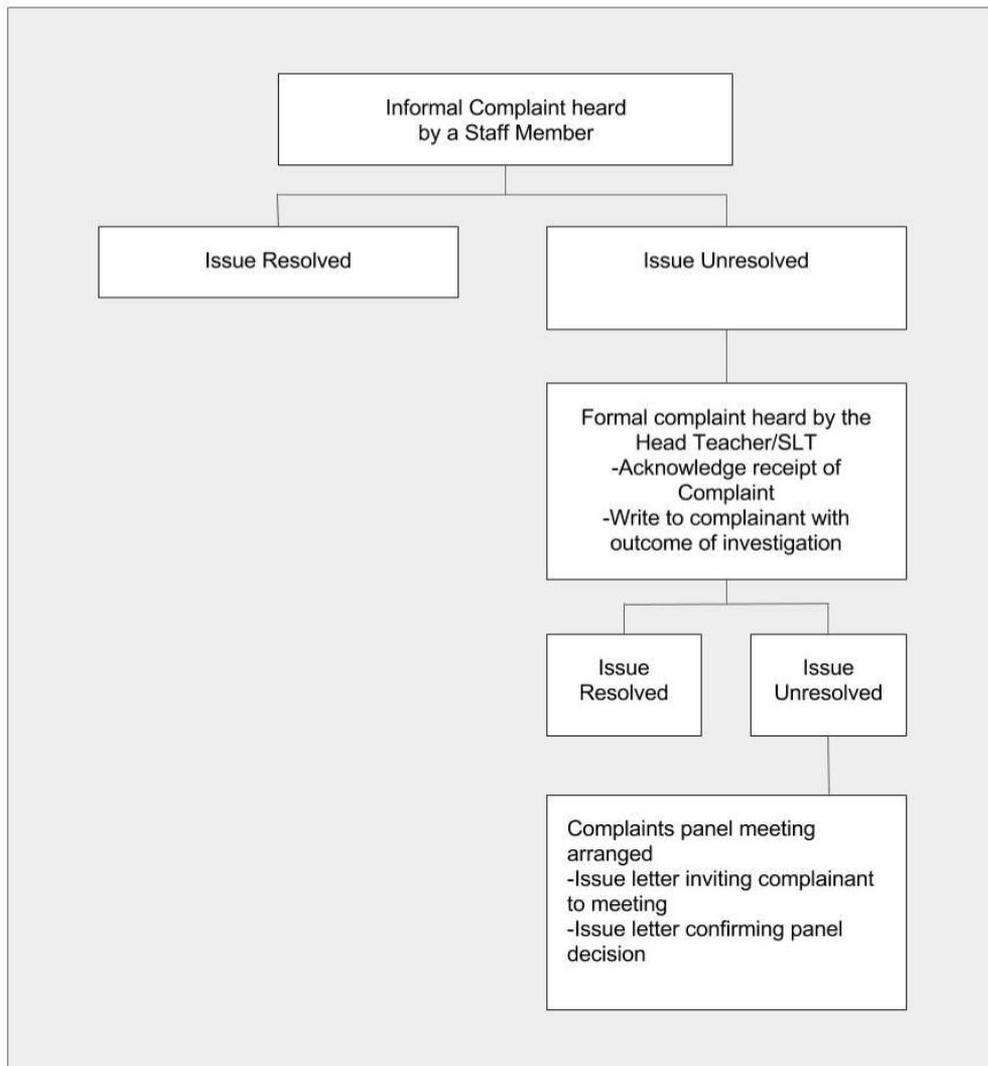
The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint

The Head Teacher is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint

Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues

The chair explains that both parties will hear the panel within a set time-scale

Appendix B: Summary of dealing with complaints



If a formal complaint is made, Stage 2 of the process is automatically invoked.

Appendix C: Complaint Form

ACADEMY - COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to the Clerk to the Complaints Panel (complaints co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain the complaints process.

Your Name

Pupil's name

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant)

Address

.....
.....

Telephone number (day)

Telephone number (evening)

Please give brief details of your complaint

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint?
(Who did you speak to and what was their response?)**

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.....
.....
.....

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

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.....

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

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.....
.....

Signature (Complainant)

Date

Appendix D: Policy on unacceptable behaviour

The Complaints Panel recognises that it is the last resort for complainants. They also have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils, parents and staff.

The Complaints Panel is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service to those who make them. As part of this service it would not normally limit the contact complainants have. However the Complaints Panel does not expect the Academy's staff to tolerate behaviour by complainants, which is unacceptable, for example, which is abusive, offensive, or threatening, and it will take action to protect staff from that behaviour. This applies to unacceptable behaviour on any part of the school premises, including the yard.

If the Head Teacher/Principal considers that a complainant's behaviour is unacceptable the complainant will be told why their behaviour is deemed to be unreasonable and will be asked to change it. If the unacceptable behaviour continues the Head Teacher/Principal will take action to restrict the complainant's contact with the Academy.

Unacceptable actions and behaviours

These are some of the actions and behaviours of unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants which academy often find problematic. It is by no means an exhaustive list and local factors may vary, but these are examples that frequently come to our attention.

- foul and abusive language towards staff, other parents and pupils
- behaviour that staff consider to be harassing and intimidating, including in person, over the telephone, or any other type of communication
- undermining school policies by actively encouraging pupils to ignore staff requests
- making unnecessarily excessive demands on the time and resources of staff, by for example excessive telephoning or sending emails to numerous staff, writing lengthy complex letters every few days and expecting immediate responses
- combinations of some or all of these.

The decision to restrict access to our school will be taken by the Head Teacher.

Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate. The options most likely to be considered are:

- requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only);
- requiring contact to take place with a named member of staff;
- restricting telephone calls to specified days and times; and/or
- asking the complainant to enter into an agreement about their conduct.

In all cases we will write to tell the complainant why we believe his or her behaviour is unacceptable, what action we are taking and the duration of that action. Where a complainant continues to behave in a way which is unacceptable, we may decide to terminate contact with that complainant and discontinue any investigation into their

Complaints Procedure: SECONDARY EDUCATION (SE) – Parents/Pupils,
FUTHER EDUCATION (FE) – Students, HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) – Students/Staff

complaint. However the Complaints Panel will seek to limit any detriment to any pupils who attend the school, as far as is reasonable within these circumstances e.g. access to parents evenings, newsletters, and any other correspondence.

Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of the school's staff, we will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.

Appendix E: Policy on unreasonably persistent complainants

The Academy recognises that it is the last resort for complainants and is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service to those who make them. As part of this service it does not normally limit the contact complainants have with the academy/school.

However there are a small number of complainants who, because of their frequent contact with the academy, hinder consideration of their or other people's, complaints. Such complainants are referred to as 'unreasonably persistent complainants' and, exceptionally, the Head Teacher will take action to limit their contact with academy.

Actions and behaviours of unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants

These are some of the actions and behaviours of unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants which schools often find problematic. It is by no means an exhaustive list and factors may vary, but they are examples that may come to our attention.

- refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of assistance with this from the academy's staff.
- refusing to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
- refusing to accept that issues are not within the remit of a complaints procedure despite having been provided with information about the procedure's scope.
- insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practise.
- making what appear to be groundless complaints about the staff dealing with the complaints, and seeking to have them replaced.
- changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds and/or denying statements he or she made at an earlier stage.
- introducing new information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raising large numbers of detailed questions which are particularly time consuming and costly to respond to and insisting they are all fully answered.
- electronically recording meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the other persons involved.
- adopting a 'scattergun' approach: pursuing a complaint or complaints with the academy and, at the same time, with a Member of Parliament/a councillor/the authority's independent auditor/the Local Authority/local police/solicitors/the Ombudsman / OFSTED/ISA.

- making unnecessarily excessive demands on the time and resources of staff whilst a complaint is being looked into, by for example excessive telephoning or sending emails to numerous academy staff, writing lengthy complex letters every few days and expecting immediate responses.
- submitting repeat complaints, after complaints processes have been completed, essentially about the same issues, with additions/variations which the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints which should be put through the full complaints procedure.
- refusing to accept the decision – repeatedly arguing the point and complaining about the decision.
- combinations of some or all of these.

The decision to restrict access to the academy will be taken by the Head Teacher, Vice-Principal or Principal and will normally follow a prior warning to the complainant. Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate. The options we are most likely to consider are:

- requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only);
- requiring contact to take place with a named member of staff;
- restricting telephone calls to specified days and times; and/or
- asking the complainant to enter into an agreement about their future contacts with us.

In all cases where we decide to treat someone as an unreasonably persistent complainant, we will write to tell the complainant why we believe his or her behaviour falls into that category, what action we are taking and the duration of that action. We will also tell them how they can challenge the decision if they disagree with it. If we decide to carry on treating someone as an unreasonably persistent complainant and we are still investigating their complaint six months later, we will carry out a review and decide if restrictions will continue.

Where a complainant whose case is closed persists in communicating with us about it, we may decide to terminate contact with that complainant. In such cases, we will read all correspondence from that complainant, but unless there is fresh evidence which affects our decision on the complaint we will simply acknowledge it or place it on the file with no acknowledgement.

New complaints from people who have come under the unreasonably persistent complainant's policy will be treated on their merits.