





# Lenham Primary School

## Complaints Policy

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Signed - Chair Of Governors	
Signed - Headteacher	

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## **Complaints Policy**

### **1 Introduction**

S29 of the Education Act 2002 requires all maintained schools to have a procedure in place to deal with complaints relating to the school.

At Lenham Primary School we seek to have a positive attitude to complaints. We see them as a constructive and positive means of informing ourselves of concerns. As a consequence we seek to improve in those areas of our work. A number of benefits can be derived by adopting a positive attitude towards complaints:

- Earlier involvement can prevent later crisis;
- Mutual respect gained from taking parents and the community seriously and treating them fairly;
- Having a procedure to deal with complaints shows parents or the public at large that they are being taken seriously and so they will know what to expect and when;
- Reduction of conflicts and tensions;
- Generation of a more positive attitude towards the school and education generally;
- Better and more effective information to aid decision making and to improve our performance and efficiency;
- Identification of gaps in provision which may have been overlooked;
- Demonstrating accountability.

Lenham Primary School respects any claimants' desire for confidentiality but may share outcomes with the Senior Leadership team and Governors in order that services may be improved.

### **2 Defining a concern or complaint**

There will be many contacts with school about parental concerns, most of which are routinely dealt with through contact with, for example, a secretary or class teacher. Very often these concerns will be easily resolved at this level and not reach the stage of a formal complaint. There will be other occasions when a judgement needs to be taken whether the degree of dissatisfaction reaches the level of a formal complaint. The formal procedures will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

A concern may be defined as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought."

A **complaint** may be generally defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”

**It is important to consider, when making a complaint, the time period that has elapsed since the incident. The school can only be reasonably be expected to deal with, and address an issue, that has occurred within the last school term ( old school term) That doesn't exempt a complaint being made outside of this timeframe, but any subsequent investigation could be difficult due to the passage of time.**

**Wherever possible every effort should be made to resolve concerns and issues at the informal stage. (Stage 1)**

Complaints about schools could, for example, be about the following:

- Lack of progress in school;
- Indiscipline and bullying;
- Disagreement over policy;
- Unfair or insensitive treatment;
- Misunderstandings;
- Lack of or incomplete or misleading information;
- Neighbour in dispute.

Some complaints about schools have to follow a **statutory** or formalised process and procedures already exist for complaints or appeals about the following:

- The curriculum and religious education;
- Child protection;
- Admissions and exclusions;
- KCC financial regulations;
- Legal matters eg. contracts;
- Personnel matters including grievances, conduct and competence.

**These complaints listed above will require the school to take advice from the local authority before the matters outlined in the complaint can be addressed through the complaints procedure.**

### **3 Who can make a complaint?**

Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides. It is not limited to parents or carers of children that attend our school

#### 4 How to make a complaint.

Lenham Primary School has a well defined complaints procedure that states at each stage who will be involved and the outcome to expect. There may on occasions be the need for flexibility, eg a member of the Senior Leadership Team or a Governor (although they will be excluded from any further stage 3 proceedings) may need to represent the Headteacher if she is unavailable and the matter cannot be delayed.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of governors. **The Chair of Governors will act in the same capacity as the Headteacher in such instances.** If the complaint is about the Chair of Governors it should be referred to the clerk of the Governing Body and all complaints should be put in writing.

Any discussions will be recorded and provided to the Headteacher on her return for a decision.

- Stage 1: Informal stage
- Stage 2: Headteacher stage/ **Chair of Governors stage**
- Stage 3: Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel

There will be many occasions when concerns can be resolved through the class teacher or secretary as matters of routine. There is no formal procedure to log, deal with and monitor these initial enquiries and concerns, although it is recommended good practice.

The complainant or person who makes the complaint will receive a more effective response to the complaint if he/she:-

- co-operates with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- expresses the complaint in full as early as possible;
- responds promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint;
- asks for assistance as needed;
- treats all those involved in the complaint with respect.

Lenham Primary School will record the progress of the complaint and the final outcome.

**All complaints must follow the stages outlined. Complaints should not in the first instance be directed to the headteacher, it compromises the school's ability to follow the complaint process.**

## **5. Stage One: Complaint Heard by Staff Member/ Class Teacher**

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the concern will escalate. It is important that staff know what to do when they receive a complaint. The following principles guide the handling of complaints at this stage:

- Non adversarial;
- Accentuate the positive;
- Be impartial;
- Be a good listener;
- Seek swift solution, within two weeks wherever possible (excluding no-school days) ;
- Keep all concerned informed of progress made;
- Respect a desire for confidentiality where possible.

The school respects the views of a complainant who indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In these cases, the complainant may be referred to another staff member, usually a teacher. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the complainant will be referred to the Chair of Governors.

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

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

At stage 1 it is recommended that staff maintain a log of the complaint. They may decide to do so using the school complaints log format in the appendix, or their own notes. Notes made at the time should be shown to the complainant and the context agreed and signed.

## **5. Stage Two: Complaint Heard by Headteacher**

Lenham Primary School has an open-door policy to parents. This may mean that on some occasions complaints may come directly to the Headteacher in the first instance. In this case the Headteacher will either commence with stage two of the procedure, or if appropriate move back to stage one where the member of staff meets with the complainant. To register a complaint with the Headteacher, whether as part of a course of action (ie dissatisfied with stage1) or in the first instance; this must be done in writing and on the form at Appendix A.

Lenham Primary School is mindful of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. If any complainant has difficulties in completing the complaint form in writing, the school will make alternative provisions to ensure your complaint is recorded in another way.

The Headteacher will log the complaint using the school complaints log format (Appendix B), attaching the complaint form to it. The Headteacher will also record outcomes of discussions.

The Headteacher will give an agreed timescale to respond to the complaint. This would normally be as short as possible and certainly not exceed 10 school days except in exceptional circumstances such as imminent school holidays. If additional time is required, the Headteacher will send an acknowledgement to the complainant within three days explaining who is dealing with the complaint and when they can expect a reply. The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but the decision on the action to be taken will be the Headteachers decision or a member of the Senior Leadership team in her absence. The Headteacher will give the complainant any decision or outcome as a result of his/her investigation. This will be by letter recording decisions/outcomes.

## **6. Stage Three: Complaint Heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel**

The complainant needs to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. This should outline the reason for dissatisfaction with stage 1 and stage 2 and include a copy of the initial complaint form. The Chair, or a nominated governor, will convene a Governing Body complaints panel.

The complainant, if dissatisfied with the result at stage 2, must instigate stage 3 within 28 days of receiving the outcome from the Headteacher.

The governors' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process, and is not convened to merely rubber-stamp previous decisions.

Individual complaints would not be heard by the whole Governing Body 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 Governing Body nominates three members with delegated powers to hear complaints at this stage, and has the following terms of reference:

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

The panel may choose their own chair.

## **7. 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.

There are several points which any governor sitting on a complaints panel needs to remember:

- a. It is important that the appeal hearing is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it. In deciding the make-up of the panel, governors need to try and ensure that it is a cross-section of the categories of governors and is sensitive to the issues of all the 'protected characteristics'
- b. The aim of the hearing, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make



recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.

- c. An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.
- d. Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings will ensure that the child does not feel intimidated. The panel needs to be aware of the views of the child and give them equal consideration to those of adults. Where the child's parent is the complainant, it would be helpful to give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, if any, the child needs to attend.
- e. The governors sitting on the panel need to be aware of the complaints procedure.

## **8. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Role of the Headteacher.**

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure;
- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure will be aware of the legislation around complaints including the Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- liaise with staff members to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure;
- keep records;
- be aware of issues regarding sharing third party information;

### **The Role of the Investigator**

The Investigator is the person involved in Stages 1 and 2 of the procedure. The Investigator's role can include:-

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:-
  - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved;
  - consideration of records and other relevant information;
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint;
  - analysing information;
- effectively liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- identifying solutions and recommending courses of action to resolve problems;
- being mindful of the timescales to respond; and
- responding to the complainant in plain and clear language.

The person investigating the complaint should make sure that they:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting.

### **The Role of the Clerk**

Any meeting of the Complaints Panel of Governors to hear a stage three appeal will 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;
- circulate the minutes of the panel hearing
- notify all parties of the panel's decision.

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

The nominated governor role:

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

### **The Role of the Chair of the Panel**

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

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

### **Role of the Panel Member**

- it is important that the review panel hearing is independent and impartial, and that it is seen to be so;

No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.

- the aim of the hearing, which will be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant;

However, it must be recognised that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.

- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting;

Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible.

- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the hearing;

Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings will ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated. The panel should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.

If the child/young person is the complainant, the panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, if any, the child/young person needs to attend. The parent should be advised however that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting which the panel considers not to be in the child/young person's best interests.

The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

**See also Checklist for Panel Appeal – Appendix C**

## **9. Notification of the Panel's Decision**

The chair of the panel needs to ensure that the complainant is notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response; this is usually within a deadline of ten days. The letter needs to explain if there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed.

## **10. Learning from Experience**

The whole procedure must be constructive. It is important to see if any lessons can be learnt and improvements made e.g. better communication links, changes to work patterns, etc. An established pattern of complaints can also be invaluable in identifying areas for

attention. By being prepared to change and make improvements in this way the school will become more effective, more trusted and feel a closer part of the community. Any complaint which has reached the formal stage will be discussed at School Management Team level to ensure the above.

## **11. Investigating Complaints**

At every stage it is important that the person investigating the complaint makes sure that they:

- establish **what** has happened so far, and **who** has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- respect a desire for confidentiality where possible.

At stage 1 it is recommended that the member of staff concerned maintains a log of the complaint.

At stage 2 and beyond, notes of the complaint, interview, findings and agreed outcomes must be documented

## **12. Resolving Complaints**

At each stage in the procedure the Headteacher/staff will be sure to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

It would be useful if complainants were encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence. It is important to identify areas of agreement between the parties. It is also of equal importance to clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

If after governor consideration the complainant is still dissatisfied, they can take their complaint to the secretary of state for education.

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

### **13. Vexatious Complaints**

Lenham Primary school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

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. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of Governors is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

Habitual and / or vexatious complainants can be a problem for School staff and Governors. The handling of such complaints can place a strain on time and resources. Whilst the School endeavors to respond with patience and sympathy to the needs of all complainants there are times when there is nothing further which can reasonably be done.

Each case will be viewed individually and decided on its merits. However, a complainant (and / or anyone acting on his or her behalf) may be deemed to be habitual or vexatious if previous or current contact shows that they may meet any or all of the following criteria, dependent upon degree.

On the occasion where complainants:

- a) Persist in pursuing a complaint where the school's complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted (e.g. where several responses have been provided);
- b) Change the substance of a complaint or continually raise new issues or seek to prolong contact by continually raising further concerns or questions upon receipt of a response. **Care must be taken not to discard new issues which are significantly different from the original complaints. These may need to be addressed as separate complaints.**
- c) Are unwilling to accept proper and reasonably documented evidence of action.
- d) Are unwilling to accept that the Governing body has reached a final decision on a chosen course of action.
- e) Deny receiving an adequate response in spite of correspondence specifically answering their questions.
- f) Persist in pursuing a matter when they have already exhausted other statutory routes of appeal.
- g) Do not clearly identify the precise issues which they wish to be investigated, despite reasonable efforts to help them specify their concerns.
- h) Continue to seek to pursue a complaint where the concerns identified are not within the remit of the Governing body to investigate
- i) Focus on a trivial matter to an extent which is out of proportion to its significance and continue to focus on this point. It is recognised that in determining what is a 'trivial' matter can be subjective and careful judgments must be used in applying this criterion.
- j) Have, in the course of addressing a complaint, had an excessive number of contacts with the School placing unreasonable demands on staff time. A contact may be in person or by telephone, letter, e-mail or fax.
- k) Discretion must be used in determining the precise number of 'excessive contacts' applicable under this section, using judgment based on the specific circumstances of each individual case.
- l) Have threatened or used physical violence towards staff at any time – this will, in itself cause personal contact with the complainant and / or their representatives to be discontinued and the complaint will, thereafter, only be continued through written communication. All such incidences will be documented.
- m) Have harassed or been either personally abusive or verbally aggressive on more than one occasion towards staff dealing with the complaint. Staff recognise however, that complainants may sometimes act out of character in times of stress, anxiety or distress. They will document all instances of harassment, abusive or verbally aggressive behaviour.

- n) Are known to have recorded meetings or face-to-face / telephone conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of other parties involved.
- o) Make unreasonable demands on the complaint procedure and fail to accept that these may be unreasonable (e.g. insist on responses to complaints or enquiries being provided more urgently than is reasonable within the complaints procedure or normal recognised practice)

#### **14. Strategy for Dealing with Habitual or Vexatious Complainants**

Where complainants have been identified as habitual or vexatious under this policy, taking account of the above criteria, the Head and Chair will determine what action to take. In all cases the Area Education Officer will be notified and the course of action will be discussed in consultation with them. The complainant will be notified in writing of the reasons why he or she has been classified as habitual or vexatious, what action will be taken and of the review procedure detailed in the next section.

This notification may be copied for the information of others already involved in the complaint or matters closely related to it. A record must be kept of the reasons why a complainant has been classified as habitual or vexatious.

It may be decided that complainants will be dealt with in one or more of the following ways:

- a) Withdraw contact with the complainant either in person, by telephone, by email, by fax, by letter or any combination of these, provided that at least one form of contact is maintained. If staff are to withdraw from a telephone conversation with a complainant there will be an agreed statement available for them to use at such times.
- b) To restrict contact to liaison through a designated officer (and alternative arrangements in that officer's absence)
- c) Notify the complainant in writing that the Governing body has responded fully to the points raised and has tried to resolve the complaint but there is nothing more to add and continuing contact on the matter will serve no useful purpose. The complainant should be notified that any form of contact, either orally or in writing, in relation to their complaint, or any further complaints relative to the same period of time, or the same or similar issues as an earlier complaint,



is at an end, and that further contact received will be acknowledged but not answered.

- d) Temporarily suspend, for a period to be specified to the complainant, all contact with the complainant, provided that the Governing body shall not, withdraw or fail to provide any services which the complainant or his / her family are entitled to receive.
- e) In extreme circumstances inform the complainant that unreasonable or vexatious behaviour may result in legal action against them.

If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases the Headteacher or Local Authority can notify them in writing that their implied license to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked, subject to any representations they wish to make. The decision to bar them from the premises will be made in writing and reviewed as documented.

## **15. Review Decisions and Withdrawing 'Habitual or Vexatious' Status**

Once a complainant has been determined as habitual or vexatious, such status shall be reviewed regularly (as provided below) and if / when appropriate, withdrawn. Such action may be appropriate where a complainant subsequently demonstrates a more reasonable approach or submits a further complaint for which the normal complaints procedures would appear appropriate.

The Head and Chair (or panel) will review their decisions to categorise a complainant as habitual or vexatious at least every six months. In addition, they will review that decision on receipt of a request to do so from the person so categorised, provided such a request has not been received in the preceding six months.

If the person categorised as habitual or vexatious is not satisfied with the decision reached they may request that the decision be reviewed by the Governing body which will appoint an appeal panel of three governors to review the decision. Such a request for a review may only be received once in any six month period. Notice of that decision will be given, as far as is practical, within 15 working days of receipt of the request.

The panel on review may either confirm or withdraw the categorisation of a person as habitual or vexatious or amend the strategy being applied to that person.

If the panel considers it appropriate to withdraw the status of a habitual or vexatious complainant, normal contact with the complainant and application of the school's complaints procedure will be resumed. Notice of that decision will be supplied to the person or persons forthwith.

Copies of all decisions relating to the categorisation of a person as a habitual or vexatious complainant will be sent to the clerk who will hold and maintain a central register of such decisions.

## **16. Repetitive communications**

If an individual is so persistent and vexatious against the school (e.g. with repetitive communications) they should be invited to make a complaint in respect of any issue they are raising to bring them within the complaints policy. Should they remain vexatious following the outcome of that complaints investigation or if they choose not to follow the complaints process, then the process outlined in Paragraph 4 may be applied.

If communication is so substantial that it becomes unreasonable, all communication may be directed to a Member of the Senior Leadership Team or LA Borough Solicitor who will review all communication to decide how the school should respond

## **17. Time Limits**

The complainant will be notified that their complaint has been received within 10 school days of receipt and detail the course of action expected. Complaints need to be considered, and resolved, as quickly and efficiently as possible. There are realistic time limits for each action within each stage. However, where further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set and the complainant sent details of the new deadline and an explanation for the delay.

## **18. Follow up to any complaint**

It is important for the Headteacher and staff to follow up any complaint at later stages to ensure that the issue(s) have been fully resolved and satisfaction is achieved in a sustained way.

## **19. Monitoring and review**

The Governing Body will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. Complaints information may be shared with the whole Governing Body but individuals will not be identified.

Any outcomes may need to be reflected on the school improvement plan.

The monitoring and review of complaints may be a useful tool in evaluating the schools performance.

This policy is available on the website or by request at the school office.

This policy will be reviewed every three years and every time a formal complaint reaches stage 2 or 3, whichever is earlier.

## Complaint form

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

**Your name:**

**Pupil's name:**

**Your relationship to the pupil:**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Day time telephone number:**

**Evening telephone number:**

**Please give details of your complaint.**

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.  
(Who 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:**

**Official use**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**By who:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**

### Complaint Log

Name of complainant	
Person receiving	
Date and time	
Previous action relating to complaint	
Complaint	
Agreed Action	
Review Meeting	

## **Checklist for a Panel Hearing**

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

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