

# WISBOROUGH GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL



## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Approved by the Headteacher on behalf of The Governing Body May 2024  
**Next review due by May 2025**

## **Aims**

Our school aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of pupils at the school, and others.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
- Ensure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes

At Wisborough Green Primary School we try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

The school will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full. To support this, we will ensure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the school website.

Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

## **Legislation and guidance**

This document meets the requirements of section 29 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

It is also based on [guidance for schools on complaints procedures](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), including the model procedure, and model procedure for dealing with unreasonable complaints.

In addition, it addresses duties set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework](#) with regards to dealing with complaints about the school's fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

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

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Wisborough Green Primary School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Wisborough Green Primary School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

**Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.**

## **1.2 The difference between a concern and a complaint**

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 defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

## **1.3 How to raise a concern**

To raise a concern please follow Part A of our procedure.

### **1.3.1 Part A**

**Step 1:** In the first instance, raise your concern with the relevant staff member and agree appropriate actions if applicable.

Concerns regarding the teaching provision or any day-to-day classroom matters should be raised with the class teacher.

We believe that a partnership between home, school and the wider community will enhance good relationships and will enable concerns to be resolved as amicably as possible. Concerns discussed as they occur and in person generally produce a satisfactory solution and require no further action.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, Mrs Bennett, Headteacher, will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, Mrs Bennett will refer you 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 more important.

The school will take concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

The concern should be raised as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office by phone 01403 700280 or email [office@wisboroughgreenschool.org.uk](mailto:office@wisboroughgreenschool.org.uk).

**Step 2:** Should you feel that your concern has not been fully resolved, your concern may be raised again with the relevant staff member or an appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team, agreeing appropriate actions.

On the rare occasion that your concern remains unresolved after completion of Steps 1 & 2, you may consider raising a formal complaint.

To raise a formal complaint please follow Part B of our procedure.

## **1.32 How to raise a complaint**

### **Part B**

You must have completed Steps 1 & 2 in Part A before escalating to Part B, unless in exceptional circumstances or relating to a concern or complaint about the headteacher or a member of the governing body.

A complaint must be made in writing by completing the attached form in full and emailing it to the headteacher via the school office. Please mark it as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office. Please mark as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk of the Governing Body via the school office. Please mark as Private and Confidential.

The template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. Complaints may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

### **1.4 Anonymous complaints**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

### **1.5 Complaint campaigns**

If we receive a large number of complaints, all based on the same subject and possibly from complainants not connected to the school, then we will treat those complaints as being part of a campaign and will respond in one of the following ways, depending on the nature and scale of the complaint:

- Send the same response to all complainants, or
- Publish a single response on the school's website.

## **1.6 Time scales**

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will only consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

## **1.7 Duplicate complaints**

If, after closing a complaint at the end of the complaints' procedure, we receive a duplicate complaint from:

- a spouse
- a partner
- a grandparent
- a child

and the complaint is about the same subject, we will inform the new complainant that the school has already considered that complaint and the local process is complete. We will advise the new complainant to contact the department for education if they are dissatisfied with the school's handling of the original complaint.

## **1.8 Complaints received outside of term time**

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## **1.9 Scope of this Complaints Procedure**

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Wisborough Green Primary, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures.

This policy does **not** cover complaints procedures relating to:

- o Admissions
- o Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- o Safeguarding matters
- o Suspension and permanent exclusion
- o Whistleblowing
- o Staff grievances
- o Staff discipline
- o School re-organisation proposals
- o Curriculum
- o Collective worship

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions to schools</li> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li> <li>• School re-organisation proposals</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with the appropriate team within West Sussex County Council</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):</p> <p>The LADOs for West Sussex County Council are:</p> <p>Donna Tomlinson Tel: 0330 222 7381 Email: <a href="mailto:donna.tomlinson@westsussex.gov.uk">donna.tomlinson@westsussex.gov.uk</a></p> <p>and</p> <p>Miriam Williams Tel: 0330 222 8663 Email: <a href="mailto:miriam.williams@westsussex.gov.uk">miriam.williams@westsussex.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Integrated Front Door – formerly MASH 01403 229 900 <a href="mailto:WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk">WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of children from school*</li> </ul>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p> <p><i>*Complaints about the application of the positive behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing/Confidential Reporting</li> </ul>	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p>

	Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances</li> </ul>	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff conduct</li> </ul>	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.  Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</li> </ul>	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Curriculum - content</li> </ul>	Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Wisborough Green Primary School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

## 2.0 Resolving complaints

Wisborough Green Primary School wants to resolve the complaint. Following an investigation, we will either acknowledge that the complaint is not upheld, is upheld in whole or in part. If upheld in whole or in part, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

### Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

## **2.1 Part B - Stage 1**

**2.2** Formal complaints must be made to the headteacher (unless they are about the headteacher), via the school office. This must be done in writing using the Complaint Form attached.

We will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure as per Section 1.3b.

*Note: The headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.*

Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office. Please mark as Private and Confidential. Steps 1 and 2 above should still be taken in full prior to a formal complaint being raised. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with the headteacher, we will respect your views. In this case, the school's Complaints Coordinator will refer you to another member of the Senior Leadership Team. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the school's Complaints Coordinator will refer you to another Senior Leadership Team staff member.

If the complaint is about the Chair, Vice Chair or a member of the governing body, Steps 1 and 2 should still be taken prior to a formal complaint being raised. If you find this difficult, the school's Complaints Coordinator will refer you to another suitably skilled member of the governing body. Complaints about the chair, vice chair or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

**2.3** If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

**2.4** The date the complaint is received will be acknowledged in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

**2.5** During the investigation, the investigator will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

**2.6** At the conclusion of their investigation, the investigator will provide a formal written response within 25 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. If appropriate, it will include details of actions Wisborough Green Primary



School will take to resolve it.

**2.7** If the investigator is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

**2.8** The response will be marked private and confidential.

**2.9** The investigator will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

### **3 Stage 2**

**3.1** If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 - a meeting with a complaints committee, which will be formed of three, impartial, governors. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

**3.2** A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

**3.** The Clerk will record the date the Stage 2 complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

**3.4** Upon receipt of the complaint the clerk and/or Chair of Governors will convene a committee which will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. If there are fewer than three suitable governors from Wisborough Green School, the Clerk and/or the Chair of Governors will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through WSCC Governor Services team, to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2.

**3.5** If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent governors.

**3.6** The clerk will provide the committee and all parties with the written evidence from Stage 1 which will be redacted as appropriate. The committee will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. The committee will also decide what evidence or further information is needed to consider the complaint and who they may wish to talk to. The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting the complainant to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

**3.7** The committee must decide as soon as possible if they wish to request any witnesses to attend the meeting. Written material is not shared with witnesses invited to attend the meeting. Witness statements should be written independently, but if support writing a statement was needed, someone who is not involved in the complaint could be approached. The committee should aim to give notice of at least 5 school days to witnesses invited to attend the meeting.

**3.8** The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 30 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request, allowing reasonable time for the collation of information and for all parties to be able to read any written material submitted. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

**3.9** If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, including cancellation of a previously agreed date, and reasonable attempts to accommodate the complainant regarding a meeting date have been undertaken, the meeting can be convened in their absence. The Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. The meeting will then proceed in the complainant's absence based on written submissions from both parties in order to reach a conclusion in the interests of drawing the complaint to a close.

**3.10** The Clerk will request written material from the school and the complainant, requesting that any written material is sent to the Clerk within 15 school days, allowing time for collation of information and for the school to ensure that any written material is anonymised/redacted, preferably by using letters (e.g., Child A) to represent names.

**3.11** Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 10 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded. All parties may respond to the material circulated or provide further written material at least 5 school days before the meeting. The clerk will send a reminder at least 7 school days before the meeting for copies of any further written material, from all parties, to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting.

**3.12** If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

**3.13** For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

*Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.*

**3.14** Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

**3.15** At least 5 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible. The names of the governors on the committee should be provided to all parties prior to the meeting, ideally first name and surname will be stated.

**3.16** The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Part A of Stage 1 of the procedure.

**3.17** The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken

**3.18** The committee will consider the complaint in full, and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

**3.19** If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

**3.20** The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Wisborough Green Primary School will take to resolve the complaint.

**3.21** The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

**3.22** The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Wisborough Green Primary School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days. This will usually be signed by the Clerk on behalf of the panel and will be written by the Chair of the Committee, with the support of the other committee members.

**3.23** The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled.

## **4 Next Steps**

**4.1** If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

**4.2** The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Wisborough Green Primary School They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

**4.3** The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus), by telephone on 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD.

## 5 Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the headteacher via the office, marked PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL. Only forms completed in full will be accepted. Incomplete forms will be returned for completion prior to processing.

You must have completed Steps 1 & 2 in Part A before escalating to Part B unless in exceptional circumstances.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b> <b>Telephone number:</b>
<b>Please reference the statutory document(s)/policies and appropriate section(s) which relate to your complaint:</b>
<b>Please provide details below of the actions you have taken to date in line with section 1.3a Part A Steps 1 &amp; 2 of our Complaints Policy</b>

**Step 1**

**Details of the initial concern:**

**Name of staff member:**

**Date raised:**

**Actions agreed (if applicable):**

**Step 2**

**Reason for feeling dissatisfied after initial concerns raised:**

**Name of staff member:**

**Date raised:**

**Actions agreed:**

**Part B**

**If the concern has still not been satisfactorily addressed, please provide details of your complaint (see 2.1).**

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

**Please attach and list all relevant paperwork including any emails sent or received by the staff member(s).**

<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Official use</b>
<b>Date acknowledgement sent:</b>
<b>By whom:</b>
<b>Complaint referred to:</b>
<b>Date:</b>

## **6 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **6.1 Complainant**

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

### **6.2 An Investigator**

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- 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
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
  - consideration of records and other relevant information
  - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- 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
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

**6.3 Complaints Co-ordinator** (this could be the headteacher / designated governor or other staff member providing administrative support at Stage 1, or the Clerk at Stage 2 or whomever is overseeing the complaint if this is not the Clerk)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
  - sharing third party information
  - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records.

#### **6.4 Clerk to the Governing Body**

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting



- notify all parties of the committee's decision.

## **6.5 Committee Chair**

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.

If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting

- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the committee is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one).

## **6.6 Committee Member**

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so

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

- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant

We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

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

Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.

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

Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.

The committee 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 committee 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 committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.

However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

## **7.1 Links with other policies**

This complaints procedure is linked to our policy for managing serial and unreasonable complaints.