



Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust

Policy for Complaints (M12)

**The Board of Trustees adopted this policy on 25th November 2024
To be reviewed Autumn 2025 or earlier if required.**

This policy complies with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (“the Regulations”), which academies are subject to.

All schools within Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust (IPAT) are committed to working in close partnership with all members of each school’s community. Our schools aim to be warm and welcoming with positive relationships between all members of each school’s community, striving to provide an outstanding education for all our children, placing great value on the role which parents and carers can play in supporting children’s learning.

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’.

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. Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the School / Trust leader will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the School / Trust leader 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.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

Our complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at our schools. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint 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.

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 complaint will escalate. To this end, all staff, governors and trustees are aware of the procedure to be followed if a complaint is raised. Also, whilst not wishing to encourage complaints, complainants should note that they have a duty to raise a matter as soon as conveniently possible, usually within 3 months. This time limit does not apply if it can be shown that there were good reasons for not making the complaint earlier and it is still possible to investigate the complaint properly. We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period. We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the School

/ Trust leader or Chair of Governors / Trustees, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Where the complaints process has been started but not completed whilst parents / carers have had children at the school, but the children have since left, the school should continue to follow this policy. Where complaints have been started by parents / carers of former pupils after they have left the school, albeit about incidents that arose during the pupil's time at the school, the school may use the shorter complaints procedure (outlined below on page 8).

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of facilities or services by Inspiring Primaries Academy or its Schools, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

EXCEPTIONS	WHO TO CONTACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions to schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about admissions should be handled through the admission appeals process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. 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 (See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion of children from school* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions. <i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistleblowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistle-blowers in education who do not want to raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our Schools / Trust should complain through the Trust's complaints procedure. You may also be

	able to complain directly to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Trust’s internal grievance procedures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Trust’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.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority 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 this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Complaints against school staff (except the school’s leader) should be made in the first instance, to the school’s leader via the relevant school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the school’s leader should be addressed to the Trust Leader (Chief Executive Officer (CEO)) via the relevant school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

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

Complaints about the Trust Leader (CEO) or a trustee of the Trust, should be addressed to Graham Read Chair of Trustees, via the trust office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask a third-party organisation for example 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.



Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, 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.

Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust operates a four stage complaints procedure outlined below.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

An initial concern should be raised with the class teacher or the member of staff concerned. This can be done in writing, by telephone or in person by appointment. The vast majority of concerns can be dealt with at this stage. It would be helpful for the complainant to identify at this point what outcome s/he is looking for in order for the school to address their concern quickly and effectively. At the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide an informal written response within 10 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If a matter is not resolved at this informal stage then the complainant may take it to the formal stage.

It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way consistent with the individual school's behaviour code. The Chair of Trustees shall have a discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution at Local Level: Investigation by a Nominated Individual

1. The complainant must put the complaint in writing (using the form provided at Appendix 1) addressed to the Executive Principal / Headteacher of the school, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the school has not met reasonable expectations. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.
2. An investigation will be carried out by a nominated individual identified by the Executive Principal / Headteacher as appropriate, who may offer the complainant a meeting. The investigator will speak to others involved. The investigator will keep a written record of any meetings / investigations in relation to their investigation. Whenever reasonably possible, any meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received.
3. The investigator will put her/his findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days of any meeting with the complainant; if no meeting is arranged it will be within 25 school days of the written complaint being received. 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 the School / Trust will take to resolve the complaint.

Where the complainant remains dissatisfied s/he may request the complaint is dealt with at Stage 3. Any such request **must** be set out in writing, stating where the complainant remains dissatisfied and lodged within **10** school days of the complainant receiving the Stage 2 findings in writing.

Any complaint relating to the Executive Principal / Headteacher of the school must be raised in the first instance with the Trust Leader (CEO) who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, forward to the Chair of Trustees to designate a member of an alternative Local Governing Body or the Trust Board to investigate the complaint as per **Stage 3. Stage 2 does not apply to a complaint against the Executive Principal / Headteacher.**

Any complaint relating to the Trust Leader (CEO) must be raised in the first instance with the Chair of Trustees who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a member of the Trust Board to investigate the complaint as per **Stage 3. Stage 2 does not apply to a complaint against the Chief Executive Officer.**

For complaints against members of the Local Governing Body please note the process to follow set out at the end of this policy.

Stage 3 – Formal Resolution: Local Governing Body

1. The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Chair of the Local Governing Body of the relevant school, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the School has not met reasonable expectations. In the case of complaints relating to an Executive Principal / Headteacher or the CEO, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees, c/o Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust, Church Lane, Gilmorton, Leicestershire, LE17 5LU. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.
2. The Chair of the Local Governing Body may appoint a member of the Local Governing Body of the school to investigate the complaint. In the case of complaints relating to an Executive Principal / Headteacher, the Chair of Trustees may appoint a member of the Local Governing Body of an alternative Trust school or a Trustee to investigate the complaint. In the case of complaints relating to the CEO, the Chair of Trustees will appoint a Trustee to investigate the complaint. In all cases, the investigation may include the offer of a meeting with the complainant. Whenever reasonably possible, any meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received.
3. The investigator will put her/his findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days of any meeting with the complainant; if no meeting is arranged it will be within 25 school days of the written complaint being received.

Where the complainant remains dissatisfied s/he may request the complaint is dealt with at Stage 4. Any such request **must** be set out in writing, stating where the complainant remains dissatisfied, what remedies are being sought and be lodged within **10** school days of the complainant receiving the findings in writing. The request must be addressed to the Clerk to the Trust Board c/o Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust, Church Lane, Gilmorton, Leicestershire, LE17 5LU. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

Stage 4 – Formal Resolution: Panel Hearing

1. The complaints panel of Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust will consider all complaints at Stage 4.
2. The complaints panel must comprise at least three people, which will include one person who is independent of the management and running of the Academy Trust and any of its schools.
3. The complaints panel may also include one or more persons from the following categories:

- (i) A member of the local governing body of the school where the complaint emanated from;
 - (ii) A member of a local governing body from another school within the Academy Trust;
 - (iii) A member of the board of trustees from the Academy Trust.
4. None of the members of the complaints panel will have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.
 5. At least 15 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:
 - a. 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;
 - b. request copies from all parties of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before 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. 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 Stage 1 of the procedure.
 6. The meeting is not a court case, it will be held in private, and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation is not recommended. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend. 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.
 7. The complainant will have the opportunity to put her/his reasons for dissatisfaction and to enlarge on them but may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. The school will have the opportunity to put its side of things and each side, as well as the panel members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the panel.
 8. The complaints panel will proceed *irrespective of whether or not* the complainant and/or their representative attend. If the complainant fails to attend on the day without compelling reasons, the complaints panel will *still* proceed *in their absence and the process will continue to its conclusion*. Any further attempt to re-open the matter will be considered as falling under the serial/persistent complaint section as below.
 9. The committee can:
 - a. uphold the complaint in whole or in part
 - b. dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
 10. If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:
 - a. decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
 - b. where appropriate, recommend changes to the School's / Trust's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.
 11. The panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 school days, and the Clerk will notify all concerned. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made, the reason(s) for it and include details of actions to be taken to resolve the complaint.
 12. The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Academy Trust, the Executive Principal / Headteacher and the CEO.
 13. The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

All correspondence statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Serial or persistent complainants

Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our schools / Trust. 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.

Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school/s / Trust, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to cooperate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the Trust's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the ESFA
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on School / Trust time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

If any of the behaviour described above continues, the Chair of the Trustees may write to the complainant to inform him/her that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter closed, that continued correspondence on the same matter is vexatious and that the academy trust will not respond to any further correspondence on this issue or a closely related issue. Those complainants who regularly complain and act disruptively but don't engage with the complaints procedure will be classed as 'persistent complainants'. For those who behave unreasonably, the Chair of Trustees will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it.



For complainants who excessively contact causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the School / Trust site.

Complaint against a member of a Local Governing Body / Chair of a Local Governing Body / Trustee

Where a complaint is brought against a member of the Local Governing Body, the Chair of the Local Governing Body will investigate the complaint (or appoint another member of the local governing body to do so) in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process at **Stage 3**. **Stage 2** does not apply.

If the complaint is against the Chair of the Local Governing Body, then the Vice Chair of the Local Governing Body will investigate the complaint (or appoint another member of the Local Governing Body to do so) in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process at **Stage 3**. **Stage 2** does not apply.

If the complaint is against a member of the Board of Trustees, then the Chair of Trustees, (or in the case of a complaint against the Chair, the Vice Chair) will investigate the complaint (or appoint another trustee to do so) in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process at **Stage 3**. **Stage 2** does not apply.

In exceptional circumstances the Chair of Trustees may at his or her absolute discretion determine that a complaint against an Executive Principal, Headteacher, the Chief Executive Officer or a member of a Local Governing Body should be dealt with at board level and if so determined the Chair of Trustees will oversee **Stage 3**.

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

If the complainant believes the School / Trust 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 ESFA after they have completed Stage 3. The ESFA will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the School / Trust but will consider whether the School / Trust has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and whether they have followed Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. If they find an academy did not deal with a complaint properly they will request the complaint is looked at again.

The ESFA will usually only consider complaints about academies that fall into any of the following three areas:

1. Where there is undue delay or the academy did not comply with its own complaints procedure when considering a complaint.
2. Where the academy is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State.
3. Where an academy has failed to comply with any other legal obligation.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the ESFA online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
5 Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Complaints Relating to Fulfilment of the EYFS Requirements

In order to comply with the statutory framework, written concerns or complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS Requirements will be dealt with in accordance with the following process:



- The written concern/complaint will be acknowledged within 5 days;
- The Executive Principal / Headteacher will investigate the concern or complaint which may include meeting with the complainant and the Leader of Early Years. A written response notifying the complainant of the outcome of the investigation will be sent within 28 days of the complaint being received.
- Where the complainant remains dissatisfied, the Executive Principal / Headteacher will ensure that a formal complaints panel will be convened in accordance with stage 4 of this policy.

A record of the written complaints and their outcome will be maintained and made available to Ofsted on request. Parents are further advised that concerns regarding the school meeting EYFS requirements they may contact Ofsted on 0300 123 4666.

Shorter Complaints Procedure

Complaints raised by anyone other than parents / carers of pupils at Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust schools will be dealt with as follows:

Complainants should first attempt to address their complaint to the School or the Trust (as appropriate) informally. Only if this fails to resolve the situation should the complaint be submitted in writing to the Executive Principal / Headteacher, Chair of the Local Governing Body if the complaint is about the school in general; or to the Chief Executive Officer if the complaint is about the Executive Principal / Headteacher specifically; or to the Chair of Trustees if the complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer specifically. The roles referred to will acknowledge receipt of the complaint before considering it and issuing a final written response.



APPENDIX 1
Complaint Form for Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust

School name:	
Your name:	
Pupil's name:	
Your relationship to pupil:	
Address:	
Post Code:	Daytime tel:
Mobile:	E-mail:
Please give concise details of your complaint:	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to, when 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.	
Signed:	Date:

Official Use: Date acknowledgement sent: By who:	Complaint referred to: Date:
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APPENDIX 2 Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

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

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- cooperate with the school / academy trust 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.

Nominated Individual (investigator):

The nominated individual'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 and other people relevant to the complaint
 - consideration of records and other relevant information
 - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right

The nominated individual 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 that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems
- communicate the decision to all parties and provide the complainant of appropriate escalation details.

Clerk to the Committee

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 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.

Committee Chair

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint panel 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
- 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 / Academy Trust 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.

Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so
- no one 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 or Trust 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. Committee chair and members should:

- understand many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting
- understand parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child
- provide extra care when the complainant is a child who will be present during all or part of the meeting
- give careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings to ensure that the child does not feel intimidated
- respect the views of the child and give them equal consideration to those of adults
- if the child is the complainant, ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint
- where the child's parent/carer is the complainant, give the parent/carer the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child needs to attend; also advise agreement might not always be possible if the parent/carer wishes the child to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child's best interests



- ultimately, the welfare of the child is paramount.