



Complaints Procedure



Complaints Policy

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Date of Next Review: May 2027

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This policy was reviewed in **May 2026** and has been approved by the governing body for implementation.



1. Introduction

At Penistone Grammar School we aim to resolve all concerns and complaints at the earliest possible stage, and where possible, informally, and is dedicated to continuing to provide the highest quality of education possible throughout the procedure.

This policy has been created to deal with any concerns/complaints against a member of staff or the school, relating to any aspects of the school or the provision of facilities or services. It is designed to ensure that the school's complaints procedure is straightforward, impartial, non-adversarial, allows a full and fair investigation, respects confidentiality and delivers an effective response and appropriate redress.

Any person, including a member of the public, can raise a concern or make a complaint about the provision of facilities or services that the school provides. This policy outlines the procedure that the complainant and school must follow.

2. Resolving a complaint

At each stage in the procedure, Penistone Grammar School 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

3. Withdrawal of complaint

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

4. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Immigration Act 2016
- The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy has also due regard to guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- HM Government 'Code of Practice on the English language requirement for public sector workers'
- DfE 'Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020'
-

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Records Management Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy



- Grievance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

5. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

A **concern** may be treated as an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important, and for which reassurance are sought.

A **complaint** may be generally recognised as an expression or statement of dissatisfaction taken or a lack of action.

Complaints can be resolved formally, through this procedure, or informally dependent on the complainant's choice. Any complaint or concern will be taken seriously, whether formally or informally, and the appropriate procedures will be implemented.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The complainant will:

- Cooperate with the school in seeking a solution.
- Express the complaint or concerns in full at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Promptly respond to any requests for information or meetings.
- Ask for assistance as needed.
- Treat any person(s) involved in the complaint with respect.

The complaint investigator will:

- Ensure that all parties involved in the complaint are fully updated throughout each stage of the procedure.
- Guarantee that all parties involved in the procedure are aware of any relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- Keep up-to-date records throughout the procedure – these records will be kept securely on the school's ICT system and retained in line with the school's Records Management Policy.
- Liaise with all parties involved to ensure the complaints procedure runs smoothly, including the Principal/Vice Principal, Clerk to Governors and Chair of Governors.
- Ensure, where the complainant is dissatisfied with the response, they are allowed to escalate it to the next formal stage and are provided the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.
- Be aware of issues about sharing third party information.
- Understand the complainant's need for additional support, including interpretation support, and be aware of any issues concerning this.

The Principal/Vice Principal; or where the complaint is against the Principal, the Chair of Governors, will be responsible for:

- Providing a sensitive and thorough interviewing process of the complainant to establish what has happened and who is involved.
- Considering all records, evidence and relevant information provided.
- Interviewing all parties that are involved in the complaint, including staff and pupils.
- Analysing all information in a comprehensive and fair manner.
- Liaising with the complainant and complaint investigator to clarify an appropriate resolution to the problem.
- Identifying and recommending solutions and courses of actions to take.
- Being mindful of timescales and ensuring all parties involved are aware of these timescales.
- Responding to the complainant in a clear and understandable manner.



The panel chair will:

- Ensure that minutes of the meetings are taken on every occasion.
- Explain the remit of the panel to the complainant.
- Ensure that all issues are addressed and that outcomes are reached based on facts and evidence.
- Help to put at ease and console individuals involved who are not used to speaking at such hearings, particularly any pupils involved.
- Conduct the hearing in an informal manner, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect and courtesy.
- Ensure that the room's layout and setting is informal and non-adversarial while still setting the appropriate tone.
- Confirm that no member of the panel has previously been involved in the earlier stages of the procedure or has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings.
- Give both the complainant and the school the opportunity to state their case and seek clarity without undue interruption.
- Provide copies of any written material or evidence to everyone in attendance of the meeting, ensuring that everyone has seen the necessary material.
- Organise a short adjournment of the hearing if required.
- Continuously liaise with the panel clerk and complaint investigator to ensure the procedure runs smoothly.
- Help to provide the support necessary where the complainant is a child.

All panel members will be aware that:

- The review panel meeting is independent and impartial.
- No individual with prior involvement in the complaint, or the circumstances surrounding it, is permitted to sit on the panel.
- The aim of the panel is to achieve a reasonable resolution and, ultimately, attain a harmonious reconciliation between the parties involved.
- Reconciliation between the school and complainant is not always achievable, and it may only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations to reassure the complainant that their case has been taken seriously.
- The panel can:
 - Dismiss or uphold the complaint, in whole or in part.
 - Decide on appropriate action to be taken.
 - Recommend changes that the school can make to prevent reoccurrence of the problem.
 - Complainants may feel nervous or inhibited in a formal setting and, therefore, the proceedings should be as welcoming as possible.
 - When a child is present at the hearing, extra care needs to be taken to ensure that the child does not feel intimidated, as well as ensuring the child's view is represented equally.

The panel clerk will:

- Continuously liaise with the complaint investigator.
- Record the proceedings.
- Set the date, time and venue of all hearings, ensuring that this is appropriate, convenient and accessible to all parties involved.
- Collate all written material or evidence involved and send it to the parties involved in timely advance of the hearing.
- Greet all parties as they arrive at the hearing.
- Ensure that the minutes of the panel hearing are circulated.
- Notify the relevant parties of the panel's decision and any other actions to be taken.

7. Complaints not covered by this procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Penistone Grammar School, 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 • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals 	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Barnsley Local Authority.</p>
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our 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>Barnsley Local Authority Designated officer (LADO) can be contacted on 01226 772341.</p> <p>Barnsley Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub can be contacted on 01226 772423 (01226 787789 out of hours service) or by email to mash@barnsley.gov.uk.</p>
Exclusion of children from school*	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p> <p>*Complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</p>
Whistleblowing	<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: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</p> <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.</p>
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>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.</p>
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus



If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, Local Authority (LA) Safeguarding Teams, Department for Education (DfE), Ofsted 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 Penistone Grammar 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.

8. Making a Complaint

Penistone Grammar School is aware that any member of the public, including the parents of past and present pupils, can make a complaint about the provision of facilities or services that a school provides.

We will consider all complaints, and ensure that the complaints procedure is:

- Easily accessible and publicised on its website.
- Simple to understand and put into practice.
- Impartial, non-adversarial and fair to all parties involved.
- Respectful of confidentiality duties.
- Fairly investigated, by an independent person where necessary.
- Continuously under improvement, using information gathered during the procedure to inform the school's SLT.
- Used to address all issues to provide appropriate and effective redress where necessary.

Complaints are expected to be made as soon as possible after an incident arises to amend the issue in an appropriate timescale. The school upholds a **three-month** time limit in which a complaint can be lodged regarding an incident. Complaints made outside this time limit will not be automatically refused and exceptions will be considered. In the case of any timescales changing, all parties involved will be informed of the changes in a timely manner.

Complaints should be made using the appropriate channels of communication. All complaints will be considered, whether they are made in person, by telephone, in writing, electronically via email, or via a third party (such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau), providing they are not anonymous.

All complainants will be given the opportunity to fully complete the complaints procedure and a complaint can progress to the next stage of the procedure even if it is not viewed as "justified".

Complaints about staff

Any complaint made against a member of staff will be initially dealt with by the Principal/Vice Principal, and then committee of the governing board if not resolved.

Any complaints raised about other Senior Leaders will be dealt with by the most appropriate staff, either the Principal or Vice Principal.

Any complaint made against the Principal will be initially dealt with by a suitably skilled member of the governing board and then by a committee of the governing board.

Complaints about governors

- Complaints may be made against:
 - The Chair of Governors .
 - The Vice Chair of Governors .
 - Any other member of the governing board
 - The governing board as a whole.

These complaints should be made to the clerk to the governing board, who will then arrange for the complaint to be heard.

For complaints about the entire governing board, or the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors, the Clerk to Governors will determine the most appropriate course of action, depending on the nature of the complaint. This action may involve sourcing an independent investigator to initially deal with the complaint and then getting the complaint to be heard by co-opted governors from another school.



Under some circumstances, it may be necessary to deviate from the complaints procedure. Any deviation will be documented, along with the reasons for this.

Information about a complaint will not be disclosed to a third party without written consent from the complainant.

9. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) when expressing a concern or making a complaint

The school recognises that some complainants may use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to help draft concerns or complaints. Whilst this can be helpful, concerns or complaints generated in this way may sometimes be overly detailed, may include incorrect references to legislation, or lack clear explanation of how the issues relate specifically to the concern or complaint being made.

To ensure that concerns or complaints can be considered fairly and efficiently, the school may ask complainants to clarify or re-present their concern or complaint where AI use is suspected. This may include asking the complainant to:

- Clearly separate the concern or complaint into individual points.
- Explain how any referenced legislation applies to their specific concern or complaint.
- Use clear and concise language.
- Provide relevant dated evidence, rather than general statements.
- Outline, where appropriate, the outcome they are seeking.

This approach will help the school to understand and deal with the complainants concern or complaint in or a timely manner.

10. Anonymous Complaints

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

11. Complaints Procedure

Stage one: Informal concern made to a member of staff

A complaint may be made in person, by telephone or in writing. Complaints can be made by emailing complaints@penistone-gs.uk they will initially be responded to by the Governance and Compliance Officer.

The member of staff the complaint has been made against can discuss the concern with the Principal/Vice Principal to seek support.

To prevent any later challenge or disagreement over what was said, brief notes of meetings and telephone calls will be kept and a copy of any written response added to the record. These notes will be kept securely on the school's ICT system and, where appropriate, encrypted.

If the concern is about the Principal, the complaint must be made in writing to the Clerk to Governors. The complainant will then be referred to the Chair of Governors .

Where a complaint is made initially to a governor, the complainant will be referred to the appropriate person. The individual in question will not act alone on a complaint outside the procedure; if they do, they will not be involved if the complaint is subject to a hearing at a later stage of the procedure.

Within **10** school days, the complainant and the relevant member of staff will discuss the issue in a respectful and informal manner to seek a mutual resolution. Notes will be taken during this discussion.



At this stage, the complainant will be asked what they think might resolve the issue – any acknowledgement that the school could have handled the situation better is not an admission of unlawful or negligent action.

If an appropriate resolution cannot be sought at this informal level, or if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome following the initial discussions, the complainant may wish to proceed to the next level of the procedure.

Stage two: Formal complaint made to the Principal/Vice Principal, or in the case of a complaint against the Principal, made in writing to the Clerk to Governors for the Chair of Governors

Formal complaints must be made to the Principal (unless they are about the Principal), via the main office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone.

The Principal/Vice Principal will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

Within this response, the Principal/Vice Principal will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Principal/Vice Principal can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Please note: The Principal/Vice Principal may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's strategic leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the Principal/Vice Principal (or 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.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Principal/Vice Principal will provide a formal written response within 28 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the Principal/Vice Principal is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

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 Penistone Grammar School will take to resolve the complaint.

The Principal/Vice Principal will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3.

If the complaint is about the Principal/Vice Principal, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2.

Complaints about the Principal/Vice Principal or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

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

Stage 3 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.

Stage three: Investigation by the Chair of Governors or Nominated Governor



If the complainant is still dissatisfied, they should submit any complaint in respect of the Principal/Vice Principal's investigation in writing (or via an alternative method if necessary) to the Chair of Governors within 10 school days.

The Chair of Governors or a nominated governor will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

Please note: The Chair of Governors may delegate the investigation to another Governor.

The Governor will carry out an investigation and consider all available evidence. Where the Chair of Governors has already been involved, e.g. in complaints against the Principal/Vice Principal, the investigation will be carried out by the Vice Chair of Governors.

The complainant and the Principal/Vice Principal will be informed of the outcome within **20** school days of the Chair of Governors receiving the complaint. The complainant will be advised of any escalation options, e.g. escalation to stage four, and will be provided with details of this process.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, considers the decision to be perverse, or believes that the Chair/nominated governor has acted unreasonably, they may request that the governing board reviews the complaint (stage four).

Stage four: Complaints Committee

Following receipt of a stage three outcome, the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors within **10** school days. Where there are communication difficulties, the complaint may be made in person or via telephone.

To prevent any later challenge or disagreement over what was said, brief notes of meetings and telephone calls will be kept, and a copy of any written response added to the record. These notes will be kept securely by the Clerk to Governors.

Written acknowledgement of the complaint will be made within 5 school days. This will inform the complainant that a Complaints Committee will hear the complaint within 20 school days.

Neither the school nor the complainant should bring legal representation to the Complaints Committee proceedings; however, there are occasions where legal representation may be appropriate, e.g. where a school employee is a witness in a complaint, they may be entitled to bring union or legal representation. The Chair of Governors, or another nominated governor, will convene a Complaints Committee comprising of three members of the governing board.

The Governing Body will consider any requests for complainants' to be accompanied by representatives on a case-by-case basis. Such requests should be made at least 5 school days in advance of the meeting.

If the whole governing board is aware of the substance of a complaint before the Complaints Committee has been completed, an independent panel will be arranged to hear the complaint.

If the complainant believes there is likely to be bias in the proceedings, they reserve the right to request an independent panel – complainants should provide evidence to support their request. Where the appearance of bias is sufficient to taint the decision reached, the request will likely be granted by the governing board.

To appoint a governor from another school onto an independent complaints panel, the governing board does not have to enter, or already be in, a formal arrangement under the School Governance (Collaboration) (England) Regulations 2003.

Where an independent panel is arranged on an ad-hoc, informal basis, governors who are suitably skilled and who can demonstrate their independence will be sourced. Governors from any category of



governor or associate members of another governing board can be approached to take part in an independent panel.

A formal collaborative arrangement will be made with another maintained school where the school wishes to appoint a standing committee to hear all the complaints received under the **complaints committee's** tenure.

Where appropriate, the Clerk to Governors will ask for support from their network or **governor services team at the LA.**

5 days' notice will be given to all parties attending the Complaints Committee, including the complainant. Prior to the hearing, the Chair of Governors will have written to the complainant informing them of how the review will be conducted. The Principal/Vice Principal will also have a copy of this letter. At the hearing, all participants will be given the opportunity to put their case across and discuss any issues.

The Complaints Committee will consider issues raised in the original complaint and any issues which have been highlighted during the complaint's procedure.

The meeting will allow for:

The complainant to be present and accompanied at the hearing if they wish.

The complainant to explain their complaint and the Principal/Vice Principal and Senior Leaders or Key Staff to explain the reasons for their decision.

The complainant to question the Principal/Vice Principal, and vice versa, about the complaint.

Any evidence, including witnesses who have been prior approved by the chair of the Complaints Committee, to be questioned.

Members of the Complaints Committee to question both the complainant and the Principal/Vice Principal
. Final statements to be made by both parties involved.

The complainant and the person complained about, where relevant, will receive a written response, via email or otherwise, explaining the panel's findings and recommendations within **10** school days. This response will also explain whether there are any further rights of appeal and to whom they need to be addressed.

Where relevant, the person complained about will receive a summary of the panel's findings and recommendations.

Final stage: Appeal

If a complaint has completed the school's process and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they have the right to refer their complaint to the Secretary of State using the online form or in writing to:

Ministerial and Public Communications Division
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

The Secretary of State has a duty to consider all complaints raised but will only intervene where the governing board has acted unlawfully or unreasonably and where it is expedient or practical to do so. In this case, the word "unreasonably" is used in a strict sense and means acting in a way that no reasonable school or governing board could act in the circumstances.

12. Interviewing witnesses

When interviewing pupils to gather information regarding a complaint, the interview should be conducted in the presence of another member of staff or, in the case of serious complaints, e.g. where the possibility of criminal investigation exists, in the presence of their parents.



The school will ensure that the conduction of interviews does not prejudice a police or LA designated officer's (LADO) investigation.

The school will understand the importance of ensuring a friendly and relaxed area which is free from intimidation. All pupils interviewed will be made fully aware of what the interview concerns and their right to have someone with them. Staff are allowed a colleague and/or trade union representative to support them at their interview. The colleague must not be anyone likely to be interviewed themselves, including their line manager.

The interviewer will not express opinions in words or attitude, so as to not influence the interviewee. The interviewee will sign a copy of the transcription of the interview.

13. Recording Complaints

A written record will be kept of any complaint made, whether made via phone, in person or in writing, detailing:

- The main issues raised, the findings and any recommendations.
- Whether the complaint was resolved following an informal route, formal route or panel hearing.
- Actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).

Recording devices **will not** be used to review discussions of complaints at a later date. Where there are communication difficulties or disabilities, recording devices may be used for the purposes of reasonable adjustments. The school will consult with the LA before using recording devices.

Where the school allows complainants to record meetings, the following will be considered:

- How any decision to allow recordings may affect any third parties called to act as witnesses
- The impact and consequences on the individuals involved in the complaint in the event that recordings are lost or leaked

The school will not accept, as evidence, any recordings that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

Details of any complaint made will not be shared with the entire governing board. The exception to this is when a complaint is made against the whole governing board and they need to be aware of the allegations made against them, to respond to any independent investigation. Complainants have a right to access copies of these records under the UK GDPR and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The school will hold all records of complaints centrally. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection requests to access them.

As data controllers, the schools will ensure in all cases that they comply with their obligations and responsibilities as outlined in the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.

14. Managing serial and unreasonable complaints

We are 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 it; however, we will not expect staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- 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 while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.



- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure.
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or 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 school's complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education.
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful 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 limit the numbers of communications with a school while a 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.

Whenever possible, the Principal/Vice Principal or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Principal/Vice Principal will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, the school may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after six months.

A decision to stop responding will only be considered in circumstances where the following statements are true:

- Every reasonable step has been taken to address the complainant's concerns.
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options.
- The complainant contacts the school repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time.

If the above criteria are met, in making a decision to stop responding the school will also consider if the complainant is often abusive or aggressive in their communication, makes insulting personal comments about staff or threats towards them, and if the school believes their intent is to disrupt or inconvenience the school.

The school will not stop responding to a complainant on the basis that they are difficult to deal with or they ask complex questions.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the premises.

15. Monitoring and Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually by the governing body and Principal/Vice Principal, or sooner should a change in legislation require an earlier review. The next scheduled review date for this policy is May 2027.



Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the school marked **Private and Confidential for the Attention of the Complaints Coordinator**, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken. You can return your form in person, by handing it in at our Main Office, by post to Penistone Grammar School, Huddersfield Road, Sheffield, S36 7BX, or by email to enquiries@penistone-gs.uk.

Your Name:	
Student's Name (if relevant):	
Your relationship to the student (if relevant):	
Your Address	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	
Email address:	

Please use the space below to provide details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anyone at the school about it, who you spoke to, when you spoke to them and what was their response? (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).



What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
e.g. An apology; an explanation of what went wrong; a practical action to correct the problem;
recommendations to the school to avoid a similar situation happening again.

Are you attaching any paperwork or evidence? If so, please provide details regarding this.



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Your signature:	
Date:	

Official Use Only

Date received:	
Reference:	
Date acknowledgement issued:	
Person issuing acknowledgement:	
Complaint referred to:	
Date:	



Model agenda Stage 4 Complaint Committee

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Chair outlines the purpose of the meeting
3. Complainant Presents their case
4. Questions from Committee
5. Questions from Principal/Vice Principal /School Staff
6. Principal/Vice Principal /School Staff presents their case
7. Questions from Complainant
8. Questions from Panel
9. Sum up by Complainant
10. Sum up by Principal/Vice Principal /School Staff
11. Committee close meeting and explain next steps



Complaints Procedure Flow Chart part 1

Is this a **CONCERN** or a **COMPLAINT**?

CONCERN
(Defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought')

Concern is raised with either the Subject Teacher, Curriculum Area Leader, Mentor, Achievement Leader, or the Principal in person, in writing or by telephone.

Has the concern been resolved?

Yes

No further action necessary

No

Raise as a **COMPLAINT**

COMPLAINT
(Defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action')

Who is the Complaint about?

School staff (except the Principal)

Complaint is made to the Principal/Vice Principal

The Principal

Complaint is made to the Chair of Governors

Governing Body (Chair, individual or full GB)

Complaint is made to the Clerk to Governors

STAGE ONE INFORMAL

Complaints can be raised by emailing complaints@penistone-gs.uk
Complainant is acknowledged and responded to within 10 school days in an informal manner to seek a mutual resolution

Has the complaint been resolved?

Yes

No further action necessary

No

Complainant requests to escalate complaint to **Stage 2** within 10 days of receipt of the Stage 1 response being received by contacting (either in person, in writing or by telephone)

STAGE TWO FORMAL

Complainant receives acknowledgement of the request to escalate to Stage 2 (within 5 school days)

Complaint is investigated by Principal/Vice Principal, or Governor when complaint is about Principal

Complainant receives a formal written response to the complaint (within 28 school days*)
(The response will detail any actions taken, a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it and, where appropriate, details of any actions to be taken to resolve the complaint)

Has the complaint been resolved?

Yes

No further action necessary

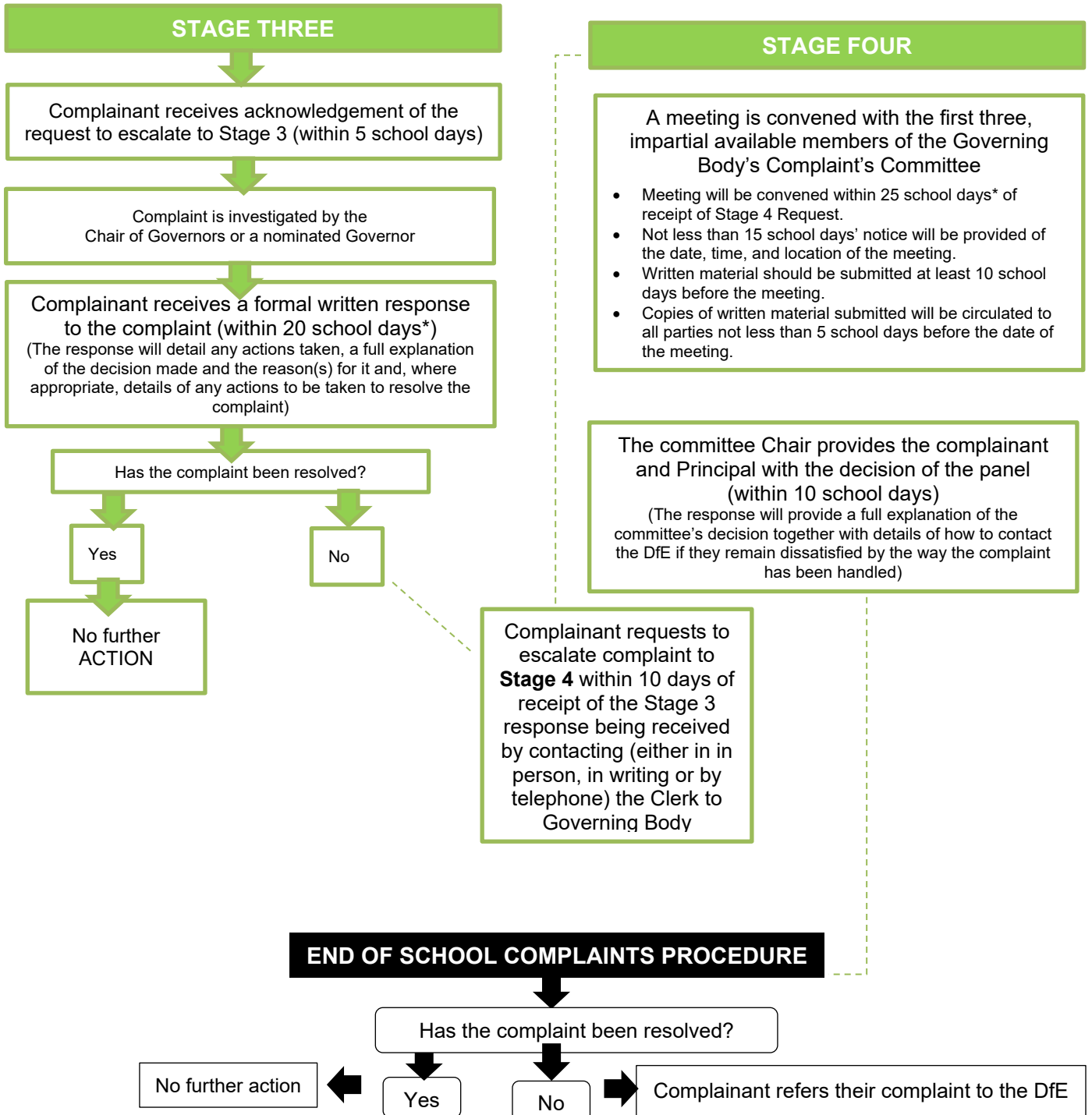
No

Complainant requests to escalate complaint to **Stage 3** within 10 days of receipt of the Stage 2 response being received by contacting (either in person, in writing or by telephone) the Clerk to Governing Body

* Where it is not possible for the timeframe to be adhered to, the complainant will be informed

SEE PART 2 – STAGE 3

Complaints Procedure Flow Chart part 2





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Achieving Excellence through a Values Driven Education

Never Stop Flying

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