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**LOXFORD**  
*School Trust*

## THE LOXFORD SCHOOL TRUST POLICY & PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING SCHOOL COMPLAINTS

<b>Approved by:</b>	MR. D. LOW, CHAIR _____	<b>Date:</b> SUMMER TERM 2021
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## 1. Who can make a complaint?

This Complaints Procedure is not limited to parents or carers of students that are registered at the schools within The Loxford School Trust. Any person who has a legitimate interest in the Trust provision may make a complaint to the Trust I 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. The Loxford School Trust will take seriously any complaint, but must prioritise provision for existing students.

## 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’.

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. The 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, you will be referred to an alternative, appropriate staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, you will be referred to another staff member who can look at your concern objectively and impartially.

We understand, however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns more formally. In this case, the Trust School will attempt to resolve the issue internally through the stages outlined within this Complaints Procedure.

## 3. How to raise a concern or make a complaint

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

Concerns should initially have been raised with an appropriate member of staff; this may be the Class Teacher or Curriculum Team Leader/Achievement Team Leader or, if appropriate, the Headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to begin a formal process.

Complainants should not approach individual governors or The Loxford School Trust Head Office 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.

Complaints against Trust School staff (except the Headteacher) should be made, in the first instance, to the Headteacher. Please mark as ‘Private and Confidential’. Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to the CEO via The Loxford School Trust, Loxford School, Loxford Lane, Ilford, Essex, IG1 2UT or email [joeglas@loxford.net](mailto:joeglas@loxford.net). Please mark as ‘Private and Confidential’.

Complaints about the Chair of the Academy Committee, any individual Committee member or the whole Academy Committee should be addressed to The Loxford School Trust, Loxford School, Loxford Lane, Ilford, Essex, IG1 2UT or email [joeglas@loxford.net](mailto:joeglas@loxford.net). Please mark as 'Private and Confidential'.

The 'The Loxford School Trust Concern Form', at Annex A, should be completed at this stage. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the PA to the Headteacher. You can also ask third party organisations, like 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. Please contact the PA to the Headteacher if you would like to request reasonable adjustments.

Anonymous complaints: We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Trust may determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

#### 4. Time Scales

You must raise the complaint ideally within 10 school days of the incident and certainly within three months; where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame only if exceptional circumstances apply.

#### 5. 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.

#### 6. Scope of this complaints procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by the school, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below:

Exceptions	Who to Contact
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs Admissions to the school on primary transfer	Concerns about the statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs or school admissions on primary transfer should be raised with the Local Authority.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation  If the matter relates to a serious safeguarding concern or an allegation of abuse, the Headteacher must be informed directly as well as the CEO via The Loxford School Trust, Loxford School, Loxford Lane, Ilford, Essex or email <a href="mailto:joeglas@loxford.net">joeglas@loxford.net</a> . Please mark as 'Private and Confidential'	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. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): <b>(Redbridge LADO – Helen Curtis – Telephone Number 020 8708 5350), (Barking and Dagenham LADO – Mike Cullern – Telephone Number 020 8227 3934), (Essex LADO – Duty LADO – Telephone Number 03330 139 797), (Havering LADO – Duty LADO - Telephone Number 01708 431653).</b>

Exclusion of children from school*	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusions can be found at: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">https://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a></p> <p><i>*Complaints about the application of the Behaviour Policy can be made through the School's Complaints Procedure.</i></p>
Whistleblowing (for other regulatory or financial malpractice)	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. If you have a concern about regulatory or financial malpractice please contact The Loxford School Trust, Loxford School, Loxford Lane, Ilford, Essex, IG1 1UT or email <a href="mailto:joeglas@loxford.net">joeglas@loxford.net</a>. Please mark as 'Private and Confidential'.</p> <p>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: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a></p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the School's Complaints Procedure.</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.</p> <p>However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
Complaints about The Loxford School Trust (non-school based) members of staff.	Please contact The Loxford School Trust, Loxford School, Loxford Lane, Ilford, Essex, IG1 2UT or email <a href="mailto:joeglas@loxford.net">joeglas@loxford.net</a> with details of your complaint which will be passed to the relevant line manager.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	<p>Providers should have their own Complaints Procedure to deal with complaints about service.</p> <p>Please contact them directly.</p>
National Curriculum - content	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 the 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.

## 7. Resolving complaints

At each stage of the procedure, the 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 Trust policies in light of the complaint;
- an apology.

## 8. Withdrawal of a complaint

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

## 9. Stage 1a - The School

Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher, (unless they are about the Headteacher). This should be done in writing (preferably on the 'The Loxford School Trust Concern Form' in Annex A) and should be sent directly to the Headteacher.

The school will record the date the complaint was received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within two school days.

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

*Note: The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's Senior Leadership Team but not the decision to be taken.*

During the investigation, the investigator will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in making the complaint;
- if necessary, interview those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- if necessary, interview any person who may have information useful to the investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, a report will be written and the Headteacher will provide a formal written response within ten school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, s/he 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 the School will take to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher will advise the complainant, in writing, of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

If the concerns raised are about the Headteacher, the Chair of the Academy Committee or the majority of the Academy Committee, the Stage 1 complaint must be made to The Loxford School Trust, Loxford School, Loxford Lane, Ilford,

Essex, IG1 2UT or email [joeglas@loxford.net](mailto:joeglas@loxford.net). Please mark as 'Private and Confidential'.

Stage 1 will then be considered by a Senior Member of Staff who has not been involved in the complaint before. At the conclusion of their investigation, the Senior Member of Staff will provide a formal written response.

If a concern or a complaint is made direct to the Loxford School Trust, the complainant will be asked to complete 'The Loxford School Trust Concern Form' at Annex A for submission directly to the school. A matter will only become a formal complaint requiring Trust review after all attempts to resolve the matter through other stages have been exhausted.

## 10. Stage 1b - CEO

If the complainant feels the concern raised has been unresolved at Stage 1a, and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to the CEO who will review the response to the complaint. The complaint may be delegated to an Executive Headteacher for further investigation or dealt with directly by the CEO for review and response. The response from the CEO will be sent within 7 school days, along with details of the final Stage 2 of the complaints process, should the matter remain unresolved.

## 11. Stage 2 - The Final Panel

If the complaint progresses to the final panel hearing stage, the school must:

- allow the parent(s) to attend and be accompanied if they wish
- ensure at least one member of the panel is independent of the **management and running of the academy**

The panel cannot be made up solely of local Academy Committee members because they are not independent of the management and running of the academy.

It is a matter for the Trust to identify suitably independent individuals who can fulfil the role and responsibility of being the independent member.

Our Academy Committees neither manage nor run the academies because they have no delegated powers so to do. All our academies are run and managed by the Trustee/Directors Board - effectively, therefore, providing each Stage 2 panel does not have on it more than two Trustee/Directors the requirement to have one independent member is fulfilled by the addition of an Academy Committee Member.

This is the last stage of the complaints process. Within 10 School days of receiving the Stage 1 response, the complainant must complete 'The Loxford School Trust Complaint to Stage 2 Form' at Annex B, stating they remain unsatisfied with the outcome. The form must be submitted to The Loxford School Trust, Loxford School, Loxford Lane, Ilford, Essex, IG1 2UT or email [joeglas@loxford.net](mailto:joeglas@loxford.net). Please mark as 'Private and Confidential'.

The Trust will record the date the Stage 2 complaint form was received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within two school days.

Requests received outside of the 10 school days will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

Convening and constitution of the Panel: The Trust will convene a Complaints Panel which will comprise of the following:

- At least three Members with no prior direct involvement of the complaint. Loxford School Trust Staff Academy Committee Members may not be included in the Panel as they may not be seen as impartial. At least one of the Panel members must be independent of the management and running of that particular school and cannot be connected to The Loxford School Trust schools.

Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Panel. If there are fewer than two Academy Committee Members from the school available, the Clerk will source any additional independent Academy Committee Members/Governors through another local school, in order to make up the Panel.

The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting, as will the school representative; 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 Panel meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. 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. This decision will be at the discretion of the Panel Chair.

*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.*

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend. As soon as possible before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- confirm and notify the school representative of the date, time and venue of the meeting ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the Panel at least **10** school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least five school days before the date of the meeting. The Panel will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The Panel will 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.

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 for electronic recordings before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The Panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The Panel can:

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

If the complaint is upheld, in whole or in part, the Panel 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.

The Chair of the Panel will provide the complainant and the school with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within five school days of the hearing.

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.

**If the complaint is about the CEO:**

The complainant must complete the 'The Loxford School Trust Concern to Stage 1 Form', at Annex A, stating their concerns. The form must be submitted to Mr. J. Glassman, Director of People, The Loxford School Trust, Loxford School, Loxford Lane, Ilford, Essex, IG1 2UT or email [joeglas@loxford.net](mailto:joeglas@loxford.net). Please mark it as 'Private and Confidential'

Stage 1 will be completed by a member of the Trust Board.

If the complainant remains unsatisfied, the 'The Loxford School Trust Complaint to Stage 2 Form', at Annex B, should be completed within 10 School days and sent to Mr. Glassman as above.

Stage 2 will be heard by a Panel of independent, Co-Opted Directors from the Trust's Main Board, who have not been involved in the complaint.

**If the complaint is about:**

- **jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair;**
- **the entire Academy Committee;**
- **the majority of the Academy Committee.**

The complainant must complete the 'The Loxford School Trust Concern to Stage 1 Form', at Annex A, stating their concerns. The form must be submitted to The Loxford School Trust, Loxford School, Loxford Lane, Ilford, Essex, IG1 2UT or email [joeglas@loxford.net](mailto:joeglas@loxford.net). Please mark them as 'Private and Confidential'

Stage 1 will be completed by the CEO

If the complainant remains unsatisfied the 'The Loxford School Trust Complaint to Stage 2 Form' at Annex B should be completed within 10 School days and sent to Governor Services as above.

Stage 2 will be heard by a Panel of independent, Co-Opted Directors from the Trust's Main Board, who have not been involved in 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. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the Trust will take to resolve the complaint.

## **12. Next steps**

If the complainant believes the Trust 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.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the School; they will consider whether the School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

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.

## **13. Dealing with vexatious, persistent or unreasonable concerns or complaints**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures>



The Trust is committed to dealing with all concerns and complaints fairly and impartially. In the case of vexatious, persistent or unreasonable concerns/complaints, if the complainant remains unsatisfied after all the stages have been exhausted, the CEO will inform the complainant in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. Should any individual's approach to their concern/complaint become disturbing, intimidating or harassing, legal advice may be sought. The LoxfordSchool Trust have a duty of care to their staff and this will be upheld, as we do not expect our teaching or operational staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour that may be deemed abusive, threatening or offensive.

#### **14. Reporting and recording complaints**

The 'The Loxford School Trust Complaint to Stage 2 Form' at Annex B should be used for all formal complaints and, once received, the Trust School will record all issues, with the Headteacher holding responsibility for ensuring staff consistently and accurately record all formal complaints.

It is good practice to also record concerns dealt with at Stage 1 along with actions taken.

Records relating to individual complaints are confidential, except in limited circumstances to comply with specific acts or statutory law. This includes Data Protection and Freedom of Information, or where the Secretary of State or another Statutory Body conducting an inspection requests access.

The Loxford School Trust will monitor the level of concerns and complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis. Where possible, the complainant will not be identified.

**Annex A: The Loxford School Trust Concern to Stage 1 Form**

Please complete and return to the PA to Headteacher, who will acknowledge receipt. You should receive a response from the School within 7 School days. Many thanks for your patience and we hope your concern will be resolved to your satisfaction.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address:
Contact numbers, please state preferred contact time:
Email address:
Please give details of your concern, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the School about it.
What actions do you feel might resolve the concern at this stage?
Signature:      Date:
Official use
Date acknowledgement sent:
By who:
Complaint referred to:
Date:

**Annex B: The Loxford School Trust Complaint to Stage 2 Form**

Please complete and return to The Loxford School Trust, Loxford School, Loxford Lane, Ilford, Essex, IG1 2UT or email [joeglas@loxford.net](mailto:joeglas@loxford.net). This form can only be used when all informal and Stage 1 processes have been exhausted.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address:
Contact numbers, please state preferred contact time:
Email address:
Details of complaint
Why was the Initial (Stage 1) response not satisfactory? What further actions would the Panel need to agree in order to resolve this complaint?
Signature:
Date:
Official use
Date acknowledgement sent:
By who:
Complaint referred to:
Date:

**Annex C: Indicative Timelines**

School staff will try to resolve all concerns as soon as possible, but it must be recognised that teachers and support staff have other important demands on their time. In some complex cases, it may take longer than indicated below however, it must also be recognised that making a complaint can cause anxiety and so the investigator must keep complainants informed on any time delays. A complaint will not be upheld solely because a deadline is missed.

Complaints NOT about the Headteacher:

<b>Stage 1a</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Deadline for action</b>
Parent/carer raises concern using form at Annex A	Complainant	If unhappy with response from School
Concern acknowledged	School	2 School days from concern received
Investigation and response	School/Headteacher	10 School days from concern received
<b>Stage 1b</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Deadline for action</b>
Unresolved concern referred to Secondary/Primary Director	School/Headteacher and/or Complainant	Within 5 School days
Concern acknowledged	Senior Member of Staff	2 School days from receiving notice of unresolved concern
Review and response	Senior Member of Staff	7 School days from receipt of unresolved concern
<b>Stage 2</b>		
Unresolved concern referred to Trust Governance	Complainant	Within 10 School days of receiving a response
Request for final Panel stage using form at Annex B	Complainant	Within 20 School days of receiving a response
Panel to convene	Director of People	20 School days from request

Complaints about the Headteacher or Executive Headteacher:

<b>Stage 1a</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Deadline for action</b>
Parent/carer raises concern using form at Annex A	Complainant	10 School days from incident
Concern acknowledged	Chief Executive Officer	2 School days from concern received
Investigation and response	Chief Executive Officer	10 School days from concern received
<b>Stage 1b</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Deadline for action</b>
Unresolved concern referred to Secondary/Primary Director	Chief Executive Officer	Within 5 School days
Concern acknowledged	Chief Executive Officer	2 School days from receiving notice of unresolved concern
Review and response	Chief Executive Officer	7 School days from receipt of unresolved concern
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Deadline for action</b>
Unresolved concern referred to Directors	Complainant	Within 10 School days of receiving response
Request for final Panel to be convened using form at Annex B	Complainant	Within 20 School days of receiving response
Panel to convene	Director of People	20 School days from request for Panel received
Final response	CEO/Director of People	5 School days from Panel meeting

## Annex D: Roles and Responsibilities

Both the School and Trust recognise that it is important that, at all stages, staff and those involved with governance within the Trust are well trained to enable them to carry out their roles and responsibilities appropriately when dealing with any part of the Complaints Procedure. Headteachers will ensure staff are familiar with the Complaints Procedure and their role in helping to deal with any concerns at an early stage successfully. The Director of People will ensure anyone delegated to deal with complaints or be part of a Panel will have appropriate training.

### 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.

### 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 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 brief notes of interviews or where appropriate 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/Executive Headteacher/Director or Complaints Panel that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

Headteacher or Complaints Panel will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

The Director of People is the contact point for the complainant at Stage 2 and the Panel should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaints 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 Panel's decision.

### Panel Chair

The Panel'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, 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 Panel 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 Panel is open-minded and acts independently;
- no member of the Panel 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.

### Final Panel Members

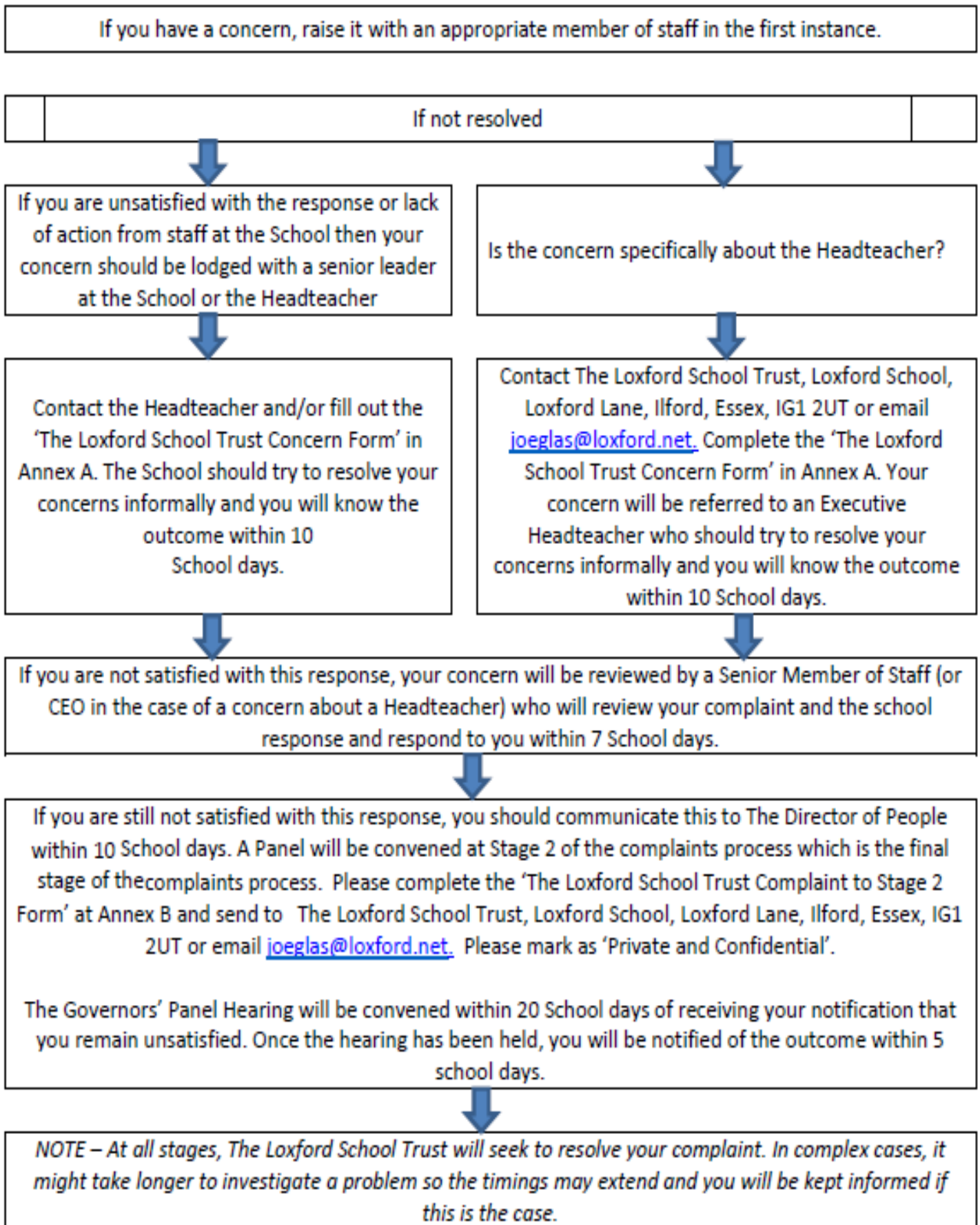
Panel members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so. No Governor may sit on the Panel 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 Panel should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
  - If the child/young person is at the centre of the complaint, the Panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant,

the Panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the 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 Panel considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

Annex E: Flow Chart Summary of Complaints Process





**Annex F: General Information**

1. Following a Complaint any findings and recommendations of the panel will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Loxford School Trust and the Headteacher.
2. A written record will be kept of all complaints made along with details of whether they were resolved following a formal procedure, or progression to a panel hearing.