



# Coleridge Primary School

## Complaints Procedure

March 2023

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## Legislation and Guidance

This document has been written in conjunction with the DfE's ['Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2022'](#). It also meets the requirements of section 29 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

## Aims and Expectations

Coleridge Primary School takes all concerns and complaints seriously. We will make sure that the necessary time, care and attention is given to investigating complaints, and will aim to resolve matters as quickly and efficiently as possible. **When dealing with concerns and complaints the school will:**

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

### **When dealing with the school, we expect that complainants will:**

- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect and courtesy
- 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
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.
- ask for assistance as needed

## The difference between a concern and a complaint

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

A complaint is 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 as early as possible.

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

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

- Admissions
- Collective worship
- Curriculum
- Safeguarding matters
- School reorganisation procedures
- Staff discipline
- Staff Grievances
- Statutory assessments of Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Suspension and permanent exclusion
- Whistleblowing

Anybody wishing to raise a complaint about these matters, should see Appendix A for information on where and how to raise them.

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

You do not have to be a parent or carer of a child at the school to raise a complaint; anybody, including members of the public, can complain to Coleridge Primary School about any of the facilities or services that we provide, except those that fall outside the scope of this procedure, as described above.

### **Anonymous complaints**

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

### **Time Scales**

You must raise the complaint within 60 school days of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 60 school days of the last of these incidents. We will only consider complaints made outside of this timeframe in exceptional circumstances.

### **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.

## How to Raise a Concern or Complaint

(if not about the headteacher or members of the Governing Body)

### Raising Concerns Informally

It is in everybody's interests that concerns and complaints are addressed quickly, without the need to enact the formal stages of the complaints procedure which can be time-consuming and result in delays to achieving a resolution. We therefore hope that the majority of complaints and concerns can be resolved informally and ask that you begin the complaints procedure at this stage.

If your concern is about teaching, pupil behaviour or other issues in the classroom, you should contact the class teacher who will try to resolve it for you. You can contact the class teacher by speaking to them in person, or by e-mailing or calling the school office [admin@coleridgeprimary.net](mailto:admin@coleridgeprimary.net). The teacher will usually arrange a meeting or telephone conversation with you to discuss your concern and desired outcome, and will then work to resolve it, keeping you updated on their progress and any outcomes.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

### Raising a formal complaint

#### Stage 1 – Investigation by the headteacher

If it has not been possible to resolve the complaint informally, or if the complaint is about a member of staff (other than the headteacher), then you should contact the headteacher [head@coleridgeprimary.net](mailto:head@coleridgeprimary.net). You can also contact the school office in writing or by telephone. Please mark any communication as *Private and Confidential* and make clear that you *wish to enact the first formal stage of the complaints procedure*.

In your correspondence, you should provide details such as relevant dates, and the name of any witnesses to events, alongside a copy of any relevant documents and state what you feel would resolve the complaint. For ease of use, a template complaint form is included (Appendix B). If you require assistance in completing this form then you can contact the school office or seek assistance from a third party like Citizens Advice.

Once the headteacher receives the complaint, they will record the date and will acknowledge receipt in writing (either by letter or email) **within 3 school days**.

Within this letter or email of acknowledgement, the headteacher may seek to clarify matters further and may arrange a face to face meeting or telephone conversation with you in order to do this. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Headteacher may also want to suggest a mediation procedure.

The headteacher will then conduct their own investigation, or may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team. The headteacher will then send you a written response to the complaint **within 15 school days** of receiving it.

## Stage 2 – Investigation by the Chair of the School’s Governing Body

If you are not satisfied with the conclusion of the headteacher’s investigation, then you can escalate the complaint to Stage 2, an investigation by the Chair of Governors.

You have **15 school days** from receipt of the headteacher’s response to the Stage 1 investigation to decide whether to escalate the complaint to Stage 2. Requests made outside this timeframe will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

To escalate the complaint, you should contact the Chair of Governors [chair@coleridgeprimary.net](mailto:chair@coleridgeprimary.net). You can also contact the school office in writing or by telephone. Please mark any correspondence as *private and confidential* and make clear that you *wish to enact the second formal stage of the school’s complaints procedure*.

In your correspondence, you should provide a copy of your original complaint to the headteacher, and a copy of the headteacher’s response to the Stage 1 investigation. You should also explain why you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the headteacher’s investigation and state what you think would resolve the complaint.

Once the Chair of Governors receives the complaint, they will record the date and will acknowledge receipt in writing (either by letter or email) **within 3 school days**.

Within this letter or email of acknowledgement, the Chair of Governors may seek to clarify matters further and may arrange a face to face meeting or telephone conversation with you in order to do this.

The Chair of Governors will then decide whether to reinvestigate the complaint or to progress it to Stage 3, the Governors Complaints Panel. In making this decision, the Chair of Governors may seek the advice of external bodies such as the Local Authority Governor Services Team or the School Improvement Adviser.

It is important that the reinvestigation process is independent and impartial. Therefore, the Chair of Governors must not have had any previous involvement with, or knowledge of, the complaint before receiving it at Stage 2.

If the Chair of Governors decides to reinvestigate the complaint, then they will do so and provide a written response to the complaint **within 20 school days** of receiving it.

If the Chair of Governors decides to escalate the complaint to Stage 3 without reinvestigation, then they will notify you of this decision **within 10 school days** of receiving the complaint.

### Stage 3 - Governors Complaints Panel

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wish to take the matter further, you can escalate the complaint to Stage 3, a meeting with the Governing Body Complaints Panel. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

You have **20 school days** from receipt of the response to Stage 2 to decide whether to escalate the complaint to Stage 3. Requests made outside this timeframe will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

To escalate the complaint, you should contact the clerk of the Governing [Brenda.Bruno@haringeyeducationpartnership.co.uk](mailto:Brenda.Bruno@haringeyeducationpartnership.co.uk) You can also contact the school office in writing or by telephone. Please mark any correspondence as *private and confidential* and make clear that you *wish to enact the third formal stage of the school's complaints procedure*.

Once the Clerk receives the complaint, they will record the date and acknowledge receipt in writing (either by letter or email) within **3 school days**.

### Arranging the Complaints Panel Meeting

The Clerk will write to you with three options for meeting dates, and will aim to convene a meeting within **15 school days** of receipt of the Stage 3 request.

If you reject the offer of three proposed meeting dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. The meeting will then proceed in your absence on the basis of written submissions.

### Who are the Complaints Panel?

The complaints panel will be formed of three available impartial governors from the school's governing board. None of the panel members will have prior involvement with, or knowledge of, the complaint. Ahead of the meeting, the panel members will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Panel.

### At the meeting

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings will not be allowed unless somebody attending the meeting has a disability or special need that requires it. If this is the case, then knowledge and consent of everybody attending the meeting will be sought before the meeting takes place.

You are permitted to bring a suitable companion with you if you wish. We don't encourage either party to bring legal representation, but will consider it on a case-by-case basis. For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by their union. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence.

Individuals from both parties, and the panel members, will all be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once both parties have finished presenting their cases, they will be asked to leave and evidence will then be considered.

The panel will then put together its findings and recommendations from the case. The panel will also provide copies of the minutes of the hearing and the findings and recommendations to the complainant and, where relevant, the subject of the complaint, and make a copy of the findings and recommendations available for inspection by the headteacher.

The Chair of the Complaints panel will inform those involved of the decision in writing **within 10 school days** of the meeting.

Further information about the Governor Complaints Panel can be found in Appendix C

### **Outcomes**

At each stage of the complaints procedure, the complaint can be:

- Upheld, in whole or in part
- Dismissed, in whole or in part

If the complaint is upheld, by the Headteacher (stage 1), Chair of Governors (Stage 2), Governors Complaint Panel (Stage 3) then the response may also include:

- An apology
- An admission that the situation should have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that the school will try to ensure that 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 change will be made
- An undertaking to review and amend school policies and practices

### **How to raise a complaint about the headteacher or members of the Governing Body**

If your complaint is about the headteacher or one member of the governing body (other than the chair or vice chair), then you should direct your complaint to the Chair of Governors ([chair@coleridgeprimary.net](mailto:chair@coleridgeprimary.net)) who will carry out the investigation at stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

If your complaint is about the chair, vice-chair, the entire governing body, or the majority of the governing body, then you should direct your complaint to the Clerk of the Governing Body in the first instance [Brenda.Bruno@haringeyeducationpartnership.co.uk](mailto:Brenda.Bruno@haringeyeducationpartnership.co.uk). The Clerk, in conjunction with Haringey Education Partnership, will appoint an independent investigator to carry out the steps in stage 2 and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the independent investigation at Stage 2, then a committee of independent governors will be appointed to carry out the steps at Stage 3, the Governors Complaints Panel. The independent governors will be sourced from local schools and the local authority.

## Referring complaints on completion of the school's procedure

If you are still unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure, you can refer your complaint to the DfE.

The DfE will not re-investigate the matter of the complaint. It will look at whether the school's complaints policy and any other relevant statutory policies that the school holds were adhered to. The DfE will also look at whether the school's statutory policies adhere to education legislation.

The DfE will intervene where a school has:

- Failed to act in line with its duties under education law
- Acted (or is proposing to act) unreasonably when exercising its functions

If the complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage:

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

## Withdrawal of a complaint

If you wish to withdraw your complaint at any point during the process, we will ask you to confirm this in writing

## Persistent complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure
- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
- Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure, beyond all reason
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the timeframes it sets out
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value

## Steps we will take

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place. We may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as [Citizens Advice](#)
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary

### **Stopping responding**

We may stop responding to the complainant when all of these factors are met:

- We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns
- We have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
- The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

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 our school site.

### **Duplicate complaints**

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and that the local process is complete
- Direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint

If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

### **Complaint campaigns**

Where the school receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school, the school may respond to these complaints by:

- Publishing a single response on the school website
- Sending a template response to all of the complainants

If complainants are not satisfied with the school's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

### **Record keeping**

The school will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and held centrally, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or through a subject access request under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with the school's data retention schedule.

The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole governing board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point.

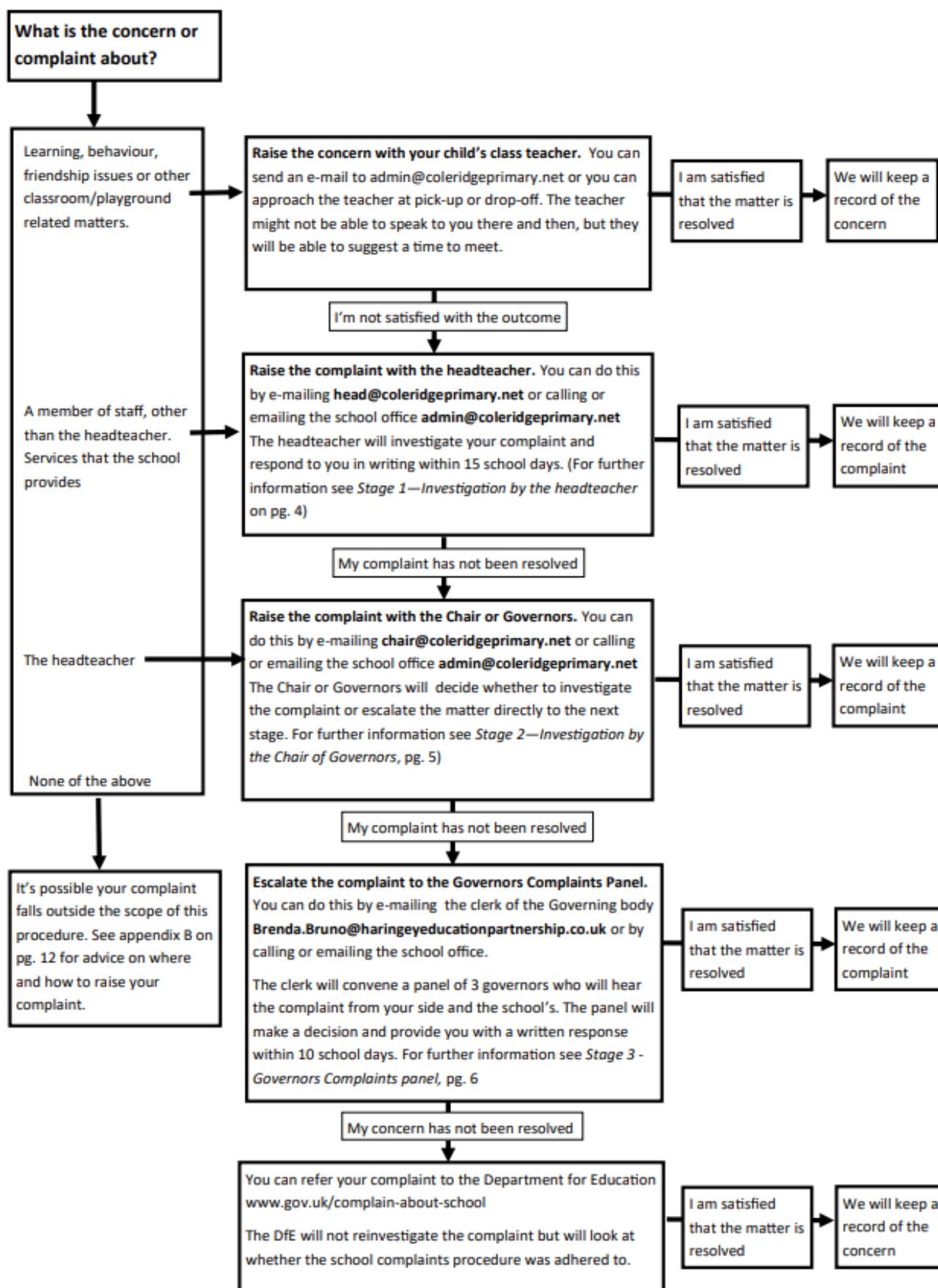
Where the governing board is aware of the substance of the complaint before the review panel stage, the school will (where reasonably practicable) arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.

Complainants also have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The decision to approve this request is made by the governing board, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

### **Learning lessons**

The governing body will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the headteacher and senior leadership team, where appropriate, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

## Appendix A – Complaints procedure flow diagram



## Appendix B – Raising concerns and complaints that fall outside the scope of this procedure

Exceptions	Whom to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions to schools</li> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li> <li>• School re-organisation proposals</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Haringey</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of children from school*</li> </ul>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy <a href="https://coleridgeprimary.net/about-us/policies/behaviour/">https://coleridgeprimary.net/about-us/policies/behaviour/</a> can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to whistle-blowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff conduct</li> </ul>	<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>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</li></ul>	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Curriculum - content</li></ul>	Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>

### Appendix C: Template Complaints Form

Please complete and return to [head@coleridgeprimary.net](mailto:head@coleridgeprimary.net) or place in an envelope marked Private and Confidential and return via the school office, who will acknowledge receipt.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b> <b>Day time telephone number:</b> <b>Evening telephone number:</b>
<b>Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.</b>

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

**Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Official use**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**By who:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**

## Appendix D – Further information about the Governor Complaints Panel (Stage 3)

### Prior to the Panel Meeting

As soon as possible after a date has been set, the Clerk, Chair of the panel or the PA to the headteacher will write to you, the Headteacher, and the Chair of Governors to request that the following be provided **at least 7 school days** in advance of the meeting:

- all previous paperwork concerning the issues raised in the complaint,
- any further documents they intend to rely on at the meeting, and
- the names of the witnesses (if any) they will be calling.

**Witnesses** - The Headteacher, any teacher involved and the complainant may all invite any other individual who is directly involved in the complaint to attend the meeting as a witness. However, the involvement of additional persons is at the discretion of the Chair of the Complaints Panel. Accordingly, the Chair of the Complaints Panel may decide the Panel will not hear from witnesses who in their view has no evidence to give which is relevant to the issues the Panel has to decide.

**Support at the meeting** - The Chair of the Complaints Panel will inform the complainant of their right to bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. The Headteacher and any teacher involved will also be informed of their right to be accompanied by a friend/supporter or representative for example a member of their professional association or union.

**Legal representation** - We do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the panel meeting. However, there may be exceptional circumstance 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. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

**Date, time and venue** The Clerk will confirm the date, time and venue of the meeting **at least 7 school days** in advance of the meeting, ensuring that the venue and proceedings are accessible.

**Circulation of papers** - All papers and the names of the witnesses (if any) to be called should be circulated by the Clerk to the Governing Body **at least 5 school days** in advance of the meeting. In certain situations, it will be unfeasible to circulate papers by email and a hard-copy pack will be available to collect from the school office. The panel will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

**Translation and Interpreting** – The complainant should inform the Chair of the Complaints Panel of any translation and interpreting needs. The Panel Chair will ensure these are met as requested.

**Note.** The panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

## The Panel Meeting

- Immediately prior to the start of the meeting the Panel will hold a pre-meeting on its own with the Clerk and its adviser (if any).
- The hearing of the complaint at this stage is to hear the complaint afresh not rather than a consideration as to whether earlier stages have been handled correctly.
- The aim of the meeting is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. The complainant will be asked what outcome they are seeking.
- At the start of the meeting the Complaints Panel will identify in discussion with the parties the issues it is to decide. Once these issues are identified the Complaints Panel will not consider or decide any other issues.
- The remit of the panel will be explained to the parties by the Chair of the Complaints Panel.
- Each party will be given the opportunity to put their case forward and to ask questions
- All issues identified by the Complaints Panel will be addressed.
- The meeting will be properly minuted by the Clerk to the Governing Body and key findings of fact will be noted.
- The Chair of the Complaints Panel has the power to regulate the meeting, provided any decisions they make are not inconsistent with this Procedure.
- The Chair of the Complaints Panel has the power to require additional documentary evidence and/or witnesses to be provided/ called, if not provided/called by a party.
- The hearing is to be conducted in an informal manner with everyone treated with respect and courtesy.
- The meeting will be held in private.
- If a party wishes at the meeting to introduce previously undisclosed documentary evidence or witnesses, the meeting will be adjourned to allow the other parties time to consider and respond to the new evidence. The Chair of the Complaints Panel has the power to refuse to admit such evidence.

## Appendix E: Roles and Responsibilities

### Complainant

Complainants will receive a more effective response to a 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 and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints panel that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The Headteacher, Chair of Governors or Complaints panel (as appropriate, depending on the Stage) will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

## Clerk to the Governing Body

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

- set 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
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 and stage 2 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale. *[This can undertaken by Panel Chair or PA to Headteacher]*
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the panel's decision.

## Complaints 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, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the 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

## Panel Member

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 the complainant's 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 the complainant, the panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help the child/young person present the 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.

## Appendix F: Useful Contact Details

### **Governor Services**

Haringey Education Partnership  
Inderwick Rd,  
Crouch End  
N8 9JF  
Tel: 0203 9675100

### **Education Welfare Service**

The Children and Young People's Service  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Alexandra House  
10 Station Road  
London N22 7TR  
Tel: 0208 489 3866  
Email: [education.welfareservices@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:education.welfareservices@haringey.gov.uk)

### **Translating and Interpreting Service**

thebigword  
Tel: 0800 757 3100  
Email: [info@thebigworld.com](mailto:info@thebigworld.com)  
<https://en-gb.thebigword.com/>

### **The Department for Education (DFE)**

Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT  
Tel: 01325391102

### **Haringey First Response Service**

The Children and Young People's  
Service  
River Park House  
225 High Road  
London N22 8HQ  
Tel: 0208 489 4592/5652/5762/4582

### **Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)**

National Business Unit – OFSTED  
Royal Exchange Building Street  
Anne's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA  
Tel: 08456 40 40 45

### **Office Hours**

(Monday to Thursday 8.45 am to  
5pm; Friday 8.45 am to 4.45pm)  
Tel: 0208 489 6081/6082

### **Equalities and Diversity**

River Park House  
225 High Road  
London N22 8HQ  
Tel: 0208 489 2518

### **Local Safeguarding Children's Body**

The Children and Young People's Service  
River Park House  
225 High Road  
London N22 8HQ  
Tel: 0208 489 1472

### **The Advisory Centre for Education**

72 Durnsford Road  
London  
Tel: 0208888 3377

### **Haringey's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

Sharon Ackbersingh  
02084892968  
[Lado@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:Lado@haringey.gov.uk)