Mosaic Partnership Trust

Complaints Policy (Ref 01MPTCP)

Version 2.1

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History of most recent Policy changes:

Version	Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change
V1.0	17/07/2024	Whole Document	Adoption by the Mosaic Partnership Trust and Implementation	New Academy Trust requirement of a Complaints Policy
V1.1	28/07/2025	Page 5	Point 6.17	Clarity that an ACC member from another ACC can be part of Stage 3.
V1.2	21/10/2025	Page 10	6.28 and 6.29: Stage 4 Referral of complaint to Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)	The reference to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) at Stage 4 has been updated to reflect current governance. As the ESFA is no longer in operation, responsibility now falls under the Department for Education (DfE).
V2.0	30/01/2026	Whole Document	Updated to strengthen the informal stage expectations, to include information on training and monitoring and to include template agendas and letters for meetings and hearings.	Trust central reflections on the Complaints process and feedback from the Chairs and Clerks termly working group
V2.1	02/11/2026	Section 10 & ap. 2 Point 13 Part 2	New section added for Artificial Intelligence (AI) use. Accessibility Statement Includes clarity on the process for SARs and FOIs.	Aligns with the Trust AI policy. Accessibility statement included in line with Trust principles Aligns with Freedom of Information Policy.

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1. Aims and application

1.1. The aims of the procedure are to deal with complaints and concerns about a school, the Trust, or any individual connected with it, by following the correct procedure thoroughly and in an open, honest and fair manner. The policy refers to Headteacher and within the context of this policy, this includes Executive Headteachers.

1.2. This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children who are registered at one of the schools within the Trust. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to an individual school within the Trust, or the Trust itself, about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Part 1 of this policy outlines how parents/carers of registered children currently attending schools within the Trust can raise a concern or complaint. Concerns or complaints from other persons will be dealt with in accordance with Part 2 of this policy.

1.3. This procedure does not apply to concerns and complaints relating to the matters listed in Annex 1.

1.4. Anonymous concerns or complaints will not be investigated under this procedure. The Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees, if appropriate, will determine whether there are exceptional circumstances to justify conducting an investigation into the issues raised.

1.5. All MPT Trustees, Academy Community Councillors and members of staff will be made aware of this complaints procedure and are expected to review this procedure regularly in order that they are familiar with our process of dealing with complaints and can be of assistance when an issue is brought to their attention.

1.6. In this procedure:

a) **"Clerk"** means Clerk to the Trustees.

b) **"Complaint"** means an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action.

c) **"Concern"** means an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.

d) **"Meeting"** means an in person or virtual meeting (i.e. telephone or video conference where all parties can participate verbally), virtual meetings will only be held in the event that all parties have access to appropriate equipment to attend and are happy to do so. If the parties are unable to meet virtually and the meeting must take place in person, the meeting may be postponed until it is deemed safe to hold an in person meeting, at the discretion of the Trust.

e) **"Parent"** means a parent, carer or anyone with legal responsibility for a child.

f) **"School Days"** excludes weekends and school holidays and periods of partial or total school closure.

g) **"Trust"** means Mosaic Partnership Trust (MPT).

h) 'School Days' refers to the 190 schools days within the year and therefore responses to complaints work within this parameter rather than working days in line with the operational running of our schools.

1.7. The timeframes referred to in this policy are our usual timeframes and the school will seek to adhere to these timeframes where possible. At a central level the Trust monitors all complaints in the context of the timeframe.

1.8. Reasonable adjustments will be made to this procedure where required to ensure that all complainants can access and complete this complaints procedure. For example, providing

information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

2. Key principles

2.1. The Trust expects all complainants to make reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution. Before moving to Stage 2 as outlined below, it is a requirement that a face-to-face meeting takes place with the relevant school or Trust personnel. The school must make every effort to meet with the parent, making reasonable adjustments as appropriate for a face-to-face meeting. The same effort is incumbent on the parent.

2.2. The Trust expects parents to approach the school with any concerns and refrain from airing concerns about the school and its staff on social media sites. Posting negative comments on social media can cause damage and upset and is often counterproductive to the education of our children.

2.3. To investigate your complaint properly and fairly, we have implemented a staged approach. We anticipate that almost all complaints that arise will be resolved at Stage 1 outlined below.

2.4. We expect our members of staff to be addressed in a respectful manner and for communication to remain calm at all times. The procedure under Phase 3 will only be used on very rare occasions to deal with unreasonably persistent complainants or unreasonable complainant behaviour.

2.5. Concerns or complaints should be brought to our attention as soon as possible. Any matter raised more than 12 months after the incident being complained of (or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 12 months of the last of these incidents) will not be considered unless the Headteacher accepts that there are good reasons to explain the delay or the complaint is about a particularly serious or safeguarding matter.

2.6. Where a complaint is received outside of term time, we will consider it to have been received on the first school day following the holiday period.

2.7. On rare occasions a school may receive complaints from a number of parents relating to the same issue. In order to deal with these complaints efficiently the school will follow the procedure set out in Part 4.

2.8. If it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines set out within this procedure, you will be advised accordingly and given an explanation as to why this has been the case and provided with revised timescales. If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority safeguarding teams or tribunals/courts, 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.

2.9. Complainants should not approach individual Academy Community Councillors or Trustees to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may prevent them from considering complaints at later stages.

2.10. If a complainant commences legal action against the Trust in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether it would be appropriate to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

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

2.12. As a Trust we take complaints seriously, however at any point in the **parts** and/or **stages** set out in this document where it could be considered that a complainant is unreasonable and/or there is unreasonable complainant behaviour, we reserve the right to cease the complaint at any stage and refer the complainant directly to Stage 4. In making this decision we may seek independent legal advice.

3. Legislation

3.1. This policy is written in accordance with The Independent Schools Standards April 2019 (part 7).

4. Data Protection Summary

4.1. The individual school will keep records of complaints in line with the Records Retention Policy. Complaints will be shared with Ofsted and the LADO on request. Complaint outcomes will be shared with the central team and Audit and Risk Committee of the Trust board three times a year, in line with the meeting cycle. Any learning from any complaints will be communicated to the Audit and Risk Committee and the school Academy Community Council, as appropriate.

5. Equalities Impact Assessment

5.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and can be obtained from the Governance Professional and Compliance Officer.

Part 1: Complaints Procedure for Parents

6. Procedures

Stage 1: Informal concerns

6.1. An informal concern can be raised in person or by telephone. Complaints may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate authority to do so. Most enquiries and concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily by the class teacher or other members of staff without the need to resort to the formal procedure. We value informal meetings and discussions and encourage parents to approach staff with any concerns they may have and aim to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding.

6.2. It is always helpful if you can fully explain the nature of the concern and identify the outcome you are looking for. Trust policy is that you will be invited to an informal meeting with the member of staff most appropriate for dealing with that concern. The member of staff dealing with the concern will make sure that you are clear on what action (if any) has been agreed. This may be put in writing if appropriate.

6.3. If the matter is brought to the attention of the Headteacher they may decide to deal with your concerns directly at this stage. If the concerns are about the Headteacher these should be referred directly to the Chair of the Local Governance Committee under Stage 2.

6.4. The school will respect the views of a complainant who indicates that they would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In this case, the Headteacher will refer the complainant to another designated member of staff. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved in the circumstances leading to the complaint feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, the Headteacher may consider referring the complainant to another member of staff. The member of staff may be more senior, but this is not essential.

6.5. Staff members should log all complaints on the school's central complaints record and inform the Headteacher of any serious concerns.

6.6. There is no suggested timescale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion, although it would be expected that most issues will be resolved within 15 school days. Where no satisfactory solution has been found in face-to-face discussions, you will be advised that if you wish your concerns to be considered further you should write to Headteacher under Stage 2 of this procedure within 15 school days.

Stage 2: Formal written complaints

6.7. If your concerns are not resolved under Stage 1, you should put your complaint in writing and send this to the Headteacher of the relevant school. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or the Headteacher has already considered your complaint under Stage 1, your complaint should be sent to the Chair of the Local Governance Committee who will arrange for the Stage 2 procedure to be carried out. In this context, this will be undertaken by an Local Governor from another Mosaic Partnership Trust School. Please note that unless a face-to-face meeting and discussion has taken place at Stage 1, Stage 2 will not commence, and the complainant will be referred back to Stage 1.

6.8. It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like us to take to resolve your complaint. We strongly encourage you to use the Complaint Form provided at Annex 2 of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you. In all cases your written complaint must include:

a) the nature of the complaint;

b) details of how the matter has been dealt with so far;

c) the names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of all relevant documents; and

d) a clear statement of the actions that you would like us to take to resolve your complaint.

All complaints have a word limit of 1000 words. If we receive a complaint that contains more than the word limit, the Trust reserves the right to ask that this be condensed to the requested word count.

6.9. Your complaint will normally be acknowledged in writing within 5 school days of receipt. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the school's complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This will normally be within 15 school days of receipt.

6.10. The Headteacher/Local Governor hearing the complaint will invite you to a meeting to clarify your complaint and to explore possible resolutions, you may be accompanied by one other person, such as a friend, relative, advocate or interpreter, to assist you. Where possible, this meeting will take place within 10 school days of receipt of the written complaint. The scope of the meeting will be as follows

- the parent attends the meeting and has a face-to-face opportunity to explain the complaint to the person hearing the complaint;
- the school representative then has a separate face-to-face opportunity to provide a response to the complaint;
- the person hearing the complaint has an opportunity to ask for additional information to support their assessment of the complaint as outlined in 6.11;
- a response to the complaint will then be put in writing, shared with the complainant, the school representative and the Governance Professional as outlined in 6.12;

6.11. If necessary, witnesses will be interviewed and statements taken from those involved. If the complaint centres on the child, the child should also be interviewed. Children should normally be interviewed with their parent present, but if this would seriously delay the investigation of a serious or urgent complaint or if the child has specifically said that s/he would prefer that their parents were not involved, another member of staff with whom the child feels comfortable should be present. If the matter includes a complaint relating to a member of staff, the member of staff must have the opportunity to respond to the complaint.

6.12. Once the relevant facts have been established as far as possible, you will be provided with a written response to the complaint, including an explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. This will include what action will be taken to resolve the complaint (if any). You will be advised that if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, you may request that your complaint be heard by the Complaints Committee under Stage 3 of this procedure.

6.13. The Trust may engage an independent, external person to carry out the investigation into the Stage 2 complaint or to review the investigation and response at Stage 2. This may be appropriate where the complaint is particularly complex and involves legal issues.

Other complaints:
If the complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust, your complaint should be sent to the Clerk to the Trustees c/o Mosaic Partnership Central Offices, Parkwall Primary School, Earlstone Cresent, Cadbury Heath Bristol, BS30 8AA, who will arrange for a Trustee to carry out all the Stage 2 procedures.

If the complaint is about a Trustee you should contact the Clerk to the Trustees, who will arrange for another Trustee to investigate the concerns in accordance with Stage 2. If the complaint is about the Clerk to the Trustees, your complaint should be sent to the Chair of the Trustees c/o Mosaic Partnership Central Offices, Parkwall Primary School, Earlstone Cresent, Cadbury Heath Bristol, BS30 8AA. If your complaint is about the Board of Trustees as a whole, you should send your complaint to the Clerk to the Trustees who will arrange for the matter to be independently investigated.

Please be aware that where your complaint relates to an employee a copy of the complaint may be shared with them in order to investigate the issues raised.

Stage 3: Referral to the Complaints Committee

6.14. If you are dissatisfied with the decision under Stage 2, you may request that a Complaints Committee be convened to consider your complaint. The Complaints Committee 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.

6.15. To request a hearing before the Complaints Committee, you should write to the Clerk to the Trustees c/o Mosaic Partnership Central Offices, Parkwall Primary School, Earlstone Cresent, Cadbury Heath Bristol, BS30 8AA within 15 school days of receiving notice of the outcome of Stage 2. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. You should ensure that you provide copies of all relevant documents and state all the grounds for your complaint and the outcome that you are looking for.

6.16. Your written request will be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt.

6.17. The Clerk will arrange for a Complaints Committee to be convened, made up of at least three members, including:

a) A member of the Local Governance Committee where the complaint is based and/or a Trustee of the Trust Board if this is a centrally based complaint. In both incidences, they should have no prior involvement in the matter;

b) Two people who are independent of the management and running of the school which could be Academy Community Councillors of another school or Trustees, if this is a centrally based complaint, this will involve two further Trustees;

c) With the addition of a Clerk, which could be the Trust Clerk or a Clerk for an Local Governance Committee depending on availability. The Trust Clerk will source the clerking for the Complaints Committee.

6.18. The Clerk shall appoint one of these members to be the Chair of the Committee, but the Chair should not be from the school where the complaint is based in the context of a school-based

complaint. Decision making should be through consensus, where consensus is not achieved, the decision will be based on a 2:1 majority vote.

6.19. Every effort will be made to enable the hearing to take place within 20 school days of the receipt of your request. As soon as reasonably practicable and in any event at least 5 school days before the hearing, you will be sent written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the committee members who will be present. Fair consideration will be given to any bona fide objection to a particular member of the committee. You will also be informed of the name of the person who will be presenting the case on behalf of the school (referred to in this procedure as the 'school representative'). This may be the person who is the subject of the complaint, the person who undertook the investigation at Stage 2 or another person with sufficient knowledge of the matter.

6.20. If, despite best efforts, it is not possible to find a mutually convenient date and time for a hearing within a reasonable timeframe, the Clerk may determine that the hearing proceeds on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

6.21. You have the right to be accompanied to the hearing by a friend, relative, advocate or interpreter. You should notify the Clerk in advance if you intend to bring anyone to the hearing. We do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the Complaints Committee meeting. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend. The Complaints Committee itself may take legal advice on matters of law and procedure.

6.22. A copy of the complaint and any other documents provided by you in support of your complaint, or by the school representative in defence of the complaint, will be provided to the Complaints Committee as soon as practicable upon receipt. Copies of these documents shall also be provided to you or school representative (as applicable) at least 3 school days before the hearing. The Complaints Committee reserves the right not to consider any documentation presented by either party less than 3 school days prior to the hearing. The Complaints Committee is under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and/or may take written statements into account. The committee will not normally accept recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

6.23. The hearing will be conducted to ensure that each party has the opportunity to address the Complaints Committee. The procedure to be followed during the hearing will be explained to the parties by letter in advance of the hearing. The Clerk will ensure that sufficient notes are taken to record an accurate reflection of the points considered and any decisions taken, or actions agreed. Electronic recordings of the hearing will not normally be permitted and, in any event, would require the consent of all those present.

6.24. Unless otherwise stated, the procedure for the Stage 3 hearing is as follows:

a) the parent and school representative will enter the hearing together;

b) the Chair of the Committee will introduce the committee members and outline the process;

c) the parent will explain the complaint;

d) the school representative and committee members will question the parent;

e) the school representative will explain the school/Trust's actions;

f) the parent and the committee members will question the school representative;

g) the parent will sum up their complaint;

h) the school representative will sum up the school/Trust's actions;

i) the Chair of the Committee will explain that both parties will hear from the committee within 5 school days;

j) both parties will leave together while the committee decides; and

k) the Clerk will stay to assist the committee with its decision making.

6.25. The Clerk and or Complaints Committee reserves the right to modify the above procedure at their sole discretion, for example requiring the parent and the school representative to present their complaint/actions separately to the Complaints Committee in the absence of the other party.

6.26. A Complaints Committee may be adjourned if the Complaints Committee requires further evidence or in exceptional circumstances (for example, if clarification sought by the Complaints Committee is essential to the proceedings). The adjourned date must be as soon as possible.

6.27. After the hearing, the Complaints Committee will consider their decision and inform you and, where relevant, the person complained about of their decision in writing within 5 school days. The letter will set out the decision of the committee together with the reasons underpinning that decision. The committee can (by a majority if necessary):

a) dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;

b) uphold the complaint in whole or in part;

c) decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;

d) recommend changes to the school and/or Trust systems and procedures

This then concludes the final stage of the Trust Complaints process.

Stage 4: Referral of complaint to the Department for Education (DfE)

6.28. If, after Stage 3, you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may escalate your concern to the Department for Education (DfE) for review. The DfE will only investigate whether the complaint was handled properly and in accordance with education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

6.29. You can make a complaint to the DfE via its online portal: Complain about a school or academy
Alternatively, you can write to:
Department for Education
Ministerial and Public Communications Division
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1. The role of the Clerk:

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the Complaints Committee and should:

a) ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure;

b) liaise with staff, Headteacher, CEO and Chair of the Trustee board to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure;

c) be mindful of the timescales to respond to complaints;

d) ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR);

e) ensure that the Complaints Committee has access to legal advice, where appropriate;

f) set the date, time and venue of the meeting, taking reasonable steps to find a date that is convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;

g) 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;

h) minute the meeting or action an Local Governance Committee (ACC) Clerk to do so;

i) notify all parties of the Complaint Committee's decision; and

j) assist the school/Trust in issuing a summary letter to the complainant.

7.2. The role of the Headteacher (or other party investigating as applicable in accordance with the procedure) at Stage 2:

a) to ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure;

b) to ensure that the correct procedure has been followed;

c) to ensure that an investigation is carried out and a report compiled;

d) to meet the complainant, if appropriate; and

e) if the complaint is being referred to Stage Three, notify the Clerk to arrange the Complaints Committee.

7.3. The role of the Chair of the Complaints Committee:

The Chair of the Complaints Committee has a key role, ensuring that:

a) 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;

b) 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;

c) the remit of the Complaints Committee is explained to the complainant;

d) the 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); key findings of fact are made and that any issues not previously mentioned in writing should not be raised at the meeting and, if they are mentioned at the meeting, these should not be noted or considered by the Complaints Committee;

e) both the complainant and the school/Trust are given the opportunity to make their case, and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting, or verbally in the meeting itself;

f) the Complaints Committee is open-minded, acts independently and no Complaints Committee member has an external interest in the outcome or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure; and

g) the meeting is minuted.

Complaints Policy (Ref 01MPTCP)

Part 2: Overview: Managing SAR & FOI complaints and complaints from other persons

8. Overview

8.1. Part 1 of this Complaints Procedure applies only to complaints made by parents or carers of current registered children of schools within the Trust in relation to **with the exception of those specifically related to the handling of Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information Requests**.

8.2. This section defines both how the Trust:

a) Manages complaints from parents and carers in the context of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Subject Access Requests (SAR)

b) Manages complaints from other persons, including other persons that have a complaint in relation to a SAR or FOI

8A. Overview: Parent/Carer FOI and SAR complaints

8.3. In line with the Trust Freedom of Information Policy, a requester (SAR or FOI) has the right to ask for an internal review if they are dissatisfied with the handling of a request. Internal review requests should be made within **40 working days of the initial response**. This deadline should be communicated to the requester in that response. We are not obliged to provide a review if it is requested after more than 40 working days. Requests for internal review must make clear why they are dissatisfied with the original decision, detailing why they feel that the Trust has not complied with Freedom of Information Law.

8.4. Following an internal review, any written expression of dissatisfaction **will then be managed directly at Stage 3** of the Complaints Policy where a committee is convened.

8B. Overview: Complaints from other persons

8.5. The Trust will manage concerns and complaints as follows:

- Stage 1: a concern regarding a school or the Trust and its operations should be put in writing to the Headteacher in the context of a school and the Trust CEO in the context of the Trust. A summary written response to the complaint will be completed normally within 10 days of receipt of the complaint, depending on the level of investigation into the complaint required. The school and Trust reserve the right to take longer to respond, but where a response is not provided within 15 school days, the complainant will be informed.
- Stage 2: where a concern is not resolved at stage 1, the Chair of ACC in the context of a school based complaint and a Trustee in the context of a Trust based complaint will hear the complaint and a written summary response will be completed normally within 10 days of receipt of the complaint, depending on the level of investigation into the complaint required. The school and Trust reserve the right to take longer to respond, but where a response is not provided within 15 school days, the complainant will be informed. This is the final stage of the complaint process.

8.6. Concerns or complaints regarding the Headteacher should be referred to the Chair of the Local Governance Committee as stated above via the Clerk to the Academy Community Council.

8.7. Concerns or complaints about the Trust as a whole should be referred directly to the Clerk to the Trustees c/o Mosaic Partnership Central Offices, Parkwall Primary School, Earlstone Cresent, Cadbury Heath Bristol, BS30 8AA who will arrange for the stages above to be considered by an appropriate person and a written response provided.

Part 3: Unreasonably persistent complainants and unreasonable complainant behaviour

9. Overview

9.1. There are rare circumstances where we will deviate from the Complaints Procedure set out in Parts 1 and 2. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:

a) where the complainant's behaviour or language towards staff, councillors or Trustees is abusive, offensive, discriminatory or threatening;

b) where the complaint's behaviour is hindering our consideration of complaints and/or the proper running of the school because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact, such as, if the complainant:

i) refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;

ii) refuses to cooperate with the complaints investigation process;

iii) refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure;

iv) insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice;

v) introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on;

vi) raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;

vii) makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;

viii) changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;

ix) seeks an unrealistic outcome, such as the inappropriate dismissal of staff;

x) makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with;

xi) knowingly provides falsified information; and/or

xii) publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

c) where the complainant's complaint is clearly frivolous, vexatious and/or has patently insufficient grounds. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint as:

i) complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;

ii) insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;

iii) insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner;

iv) complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance;

v) demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value.

d) where the complainant's complaint is the same, similar to or based on the same facts of a complaint which has already been considered in full.

9.2. In these circumstances, we may:

a) inform the complainant that their behaviour is unacceptable or unreasonably persistent and ask them to change it;

b) restrict the complainant's access to the school e.g. requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only), requiring contact to take place with a named person

only, restricting telephone calls to specified days and times or banning the complainant from the school's premises. Any such arrangements will be reviewed after six months;

c) conduct the Complaints Committee on the papers only i.e. not hold a hearing;

d) refuse to consider the complaint and, where Part 1 of this procedure applies, refer the complainant directly to Stage 4.

9.3. In all cases we will write to tell the complainant why we believe his or her behaviour is unacceptable or unreasonably persistent, what action we are taking and the duration of that action.

9.4. We may take the decision not to respond to any further correspondence where:

a) we have taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns;

b) the complainant has been given a clear statement of our position and their options; and

c) the complainant contacts us repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time.

9.5. The case for ceasing further correspondence is stronger where:

a) letters, emails, or telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive or make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff; and

b) we have reason to believe the complainant is contacting us with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience.

9.6. Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, councillors or Trustees, we will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.

Part 4: Artificial Intelligence Use and Complaint campaigns

10. Artificial Intelligence Use and Complaint campaigns

10.1. **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The Trust recognises that artificial intelligence tools may be used to assist with drafting or presenting correspondence. However, complainants are expected to ensure that any complaint submitted accurately reflects **their own experiences, concerns and desired outcomes**. AI should not be used to generate allegations, evidence or purported facts that the complainant cannot personally substantiate. **The Trust may not respond individually to extensive AI-generated material that is repetitive, irrelevant or does not relate directly to the substance of the complaint.** Where appropriate, the Trust may ask the complainant to identify clearly the specific matters they wish to have investigated, and to be more explicit in scope.

10.2. The Trust reserves the right not to consider a complaint where there is sufficient evidence to reasonably conclude that the complaint is substantially reliant on AI-generated content to the extent that it does not provide a clear, authentic and factually grounded account of the complainant's own concerns.

10.3. Similarly, the Trust will not use AI as a substitute for appropriate human judgement when investigating complaints, assessing evidence or reaching decisions. Responsibility for the investigation and outcome of a complaint will remain with the appropriate person or panel.

10.4. **Complaint campaigns:** For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint campaign is defined as a complaint from three or more separate individuals (whether or not connected with a school or the Trust) which are all based on the same subject.

10.5. Depending on the subject in question, we may deviate from the procedure set out in this procedure and instead:

a) send a template response to all complainants; and/or

b) publish a single response on the school/Trust's website (as applicable).

11.0 Training and Monitoring

11.1. The Trust mandates that at all Headteachers, at least two ACC members and 3 Trustees complete the Learning Pathway on Governor Hub: Complaints | GovernorHub

11.2. Annual update training for Headteachers is also included in the cycle of Headteacher meetings.

11.3. All Stage 3 complaint outcome letters are sent to the CEO and the Audit and Risk Committee for review, with the exception of any complaints in relation to the CEO which are sent to the Chair of Trustees and the Audit and Risk Committee members. Stage 2 complaint outcome letters are sent to the CEO for review.

11.4. The Governance Professional oversees all complaints, and it is incumbent on each school to share when they receive a Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaint. The number of complaints reported and then actioned is reported to the Audit and Risk Committee three times per annum. Analysis takes place on risk types, patterns and actions.

12.0 Complaint meetings (format)

12.1 Part 1, Stage 1 complaint meetings must be held face to face and in person whereas Stage 2 and Stage 3 can be undertaken face to face, on Teams or hybrid. Part 2 complaint meetings do not require a face-to-face meeting and can be undertaken virtually.

13.0 Accessibility statement

13.1 Accessibility and reasonable adjustments

Mosaic Partnership Trust is committed to ensuring that its complaints procedure is accessible to everyone. We recognise that some individuals may require additional support or reasonable adjustments to enable them to raise a concern or complaint and to participate fully and fairly in the complaints process.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Trust will make reasonable adjustments where appropriate. These may include providing information in an alternative or accessible format, allowing a complaint to be submitted in a different way where a person has difficulty in putting it in writing, providing additional support with the complaints process, making reasonable adjustments to meetings or hearings, or considering other arrangements appropriate to an individual's needs.

No person will be disadvantaged in the consideration of their complaint because they require a reasonable adjustment. Anyone who requires assistance in accessing or using this Complaints Policy should contact the relevant school or the Trust, who will discuss their needs with them and seek to provide appropriate support.

Complaints Policy (Ref 01MPTCP)

Appendix 1: Matters excluded from the scope of this procedure

Excluded Matters	Signposting
Admissions	The process for challenging admissions decisions is set out in our admissions policy in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
Child protection matters	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
Exclusions	The process for challenging exclusions decisions is set out in the DfE's statutory guidance and information can be found at School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
National Curriculum content	Please contact the Department for Education at www.education.gov.uk/contactus
School re-organisation proposals	Where concerns are not adequately addressed by the Trust, complaints can be raised directly with the Department for Education.
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.
Staff grievances	Staff grievances Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Certain complaints about staff may need to be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Concerns about statutory assessments of special educational needs should be raised directly with the local authority.
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. Volunteer staff who have concerns should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of the complaint.

Complaints Policy (Ref 01MPTCP)

Appendix 2: Complaints Form

Your name	
Child's name	
Your relationship to the child	
Your school	
Your address including post code	
Your contact telephone number	
Your email address	
Your complaint is: (if you have more than one complaint, please number these)	*(Maximum 1000 Words)*
What action have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint(s) in accordance with Stage 1 of the complaints procedure which requires a face-to-face meeting before it is taken to Stage 2?	
What would you like as an outcome from your complaint(s)?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, give details here:	
Please confirm that the complaint has not been generated by Artificial Intelligence and that where AI has been used this is to support or to provide clarity.	
Your signature	
Date	

All functions of the Complaints Procedure must adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please complete and return in a sealed envelope, addressed as appropriate to:

1. the Headteacher (at the school office)
2. the Clerk to the Trustees (c/o Mosaic Partnership Central Offices, Parkwall Primary School, Earlstone Cresent, Cadbury Heath Bristol, BS30 8AA)

Office use

Date received	
Date acknowledgement sent	
Responsible member of staff	

Complaints Policy (Ref 01MPTCP)

Appendix 3: Summary of complaints procedure for parents and carers

Stage 1: Informal Concerns	Parent brings complaint to attention of member of staff.
	Issue to be resolved within 15 school days through a **face-to-face** meeting.
	Where no satisfactory solution has been found, parent to be advised that they should proceed to Stage 2.
Stage 2: Formal Written Complaint	Parent to put complaint in writing using Complaint Form within 15 school days, which must not be generated by AI.
	Complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school days.
	Face to Face Meeting with parents and school representative to take place within 10 school days.
	Response to the complaint sent within 15 school days.
Stage 3: Referral to Complaints Committee	Parent to request hearing within 15 school days of receiving notice of the outcome of Stage 2.
	Request to be acknowledged within 5 school days.
	Hearing to take place within 20 school days of receipt of request.
	Notification of date, time and place of the hearing and details of the committee members present sent at least 5 school days before the hearing.
	School representative and parents to submit evidence in support of their case to Clerk at least 3 school days before the hearing.
	Complaints Committee decision sent not more than 5 school days after the hearing.

Complaints Policy (Ref 01MPTCP)

Appendix 4: Stage 2 Meetings Agendas *(Stage 1 and 2 for non-parent/carer complaints)*

Parent/Complainat Meeting

- The person overseeing complaint welcomes the parent
- The parent has an opportunity to explain the complaint to the person hearing the complaint and any related evidence
- The person overseeing the complaint has an opportunity to ask questions

School Representative meeting

- The person overseeing complaint welcomes the school representative
- The school representative has a face-to-face opportunity to explain the complaint to the person hearing the complaint and any related evidence
- The person overseeing the complaint has an opportunity to ask questions

Complaints Policy (Ref 01MPTCP)

Appendix 5: Letter Template for Stage 2 Outcome *(Stage 1 and 2 for non-parent/carer)*

Dear [Name]

Re: Stage 2 Complaint: Panel Hearing Outcome

I am writing to inform you of the outcome of your complaint hearing on [Date], attended by:

- [Name and role] and Chair of the Panel
- [Name and role]
- [Name and role]
- [Name and role] and Clerk of the Panel

The following evidence was considered:

- [Evidence considered]

After reviewing the evidence, the panel has [insert the outcome, which may be:]

Upheld the complaint and, as a result, has recommended to the Academy Community Council/Board of Trustees that the school's and/or Trust's policies are reviewed

Not seen enough evidence to reach a conclusion. No further action will be taken on this occasion

Judged the complaint to be unsubstantiated. No further action will be taken

These are the reasons behind the decision:

[Reasons listed]

[Recommendations listed (if appropriate)]

In all scenarios where complaints are dismissed and no further action will be taken, explain:

If you're unsatisfied with this outcome, you can refer your complaint to Stage 3 of the Trust's Complaints Policy by writing to the Governance Professional and Compliance Officer.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of person hearing the complaint]

Complaints Policy (Ref 01MPTCP)

Appendix 6: Agenda for Stage 3 Complaint

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Chair opens meeting and welcomes the panel members, clerk, complainant and the school representatives
- Chair explains purpose of the panel:
    - To review how the complaint was handled at earlier stages;
    - To consider whether the process was fair, thorough and in line with Trust policy;
    - To consider the evidence presented by the complainant and school representative;
    - To reach a conclusion and, if appropriate, make recommendations to the school and/or Trust.

2. Review of Documentation:

- Clerk confirms receipt of:
    - Complaints written submission [Date] received
    - Trusts written response dated [Date] received (attached)
    - Stage 1 and Stage 2 correspondence and decision letters received
    - Panel members confirm they have all received the documentation and reviewed this in advance

3. Consideration of Submissions

The panel reviews all submissions, focusing on whether:

- The Trust followed its complaints procedure correctly;
- The complainant was treated fairly and without bias;
- The Stage 2 outcome was reasonable and supported by evidence;
- There are any process improvements or recommendations.

4. Panel Discussion and Deliberation

- Panel discusses findings and reaches a collective decision.
- Governance Professional supports on process and recording only.
- Chair ensures all points raised have been fully considered.

5. Decision and Recommendations

The panel determines:

- Whether the complaint is upheld in full, upheld in part, or not upheld; and
- Any recommendations or learning points for the Trust

6. Outcome Letter

- The clerk drafts the letter for the Chair's approval and it is sent to the parties within 5 school days.
- The letter must:
    - Summarise the panel's consideration;
    - Address each key point of the complaint;
    - Explain the panel's findings clearly;
    - Confirm that this is the final stage of the Trust's complaints procedure.

Appendix 7: Stage 3 Outcome Letter

Letter template for Stage 2 Outcome

Dear [Name]

Re: Stage 2 Complaint: Panel Hearing Outcome

I am writing to inform you of the outcome of your complaint hearing on [Date], attended by:

- [Name and role] and Chair of the Panel
- [Name and role]
- [Name and role]
- [Name and role] and Clerk of the Panel

The following evidence was considered:

- [Evidence considered]

After reviewing the evidence, the panel has [insert the outcome, which may be:]

Upheld the complaint and, as a result, has recommended to the Academy Community Council/Board of Trustees that the school's and/or Trust's policies are reviewed

Not seen enough evidence to reach a conclusion. No further action will be taken on this occasion

Judged the complaint to be unsubstantiated. No further action will be taken

These are the reasons behind the decision:

[Reasons listed]

[Recommendations listed (if appropriate)]

In all scenarios where complaints are dismissed and no further action will be taken, explain:

If you're unsatisfied with this outcome, you can refer your complaint to the Department for Education (DfE). The DfE will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the school. It won't overturn our decision about a complaint, but will intervene if we have:

- Breached a clause in our funding agreement
- Failed to act in line with our duties under education law
- Acted (or are proposing to act) unreasonably when exercising our functions

If our complaints procedure is found not to meet regulations, we will be asked to correct our procedure accordingly.

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

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

Yours sincerely,

[Name of the governance professional/panel clerk], on behalf of the panel.