



**REACH**  
**SOUTH**  
ACADEMY TRUST

# Concerns and Complaints Policy

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## 1. Aims of the Policy

Reach South Academy Trust is committed to fostering a culture of openness, trust, and continuous improvement. While we strive to provide the highest standards of education and care, we recognise that occasionally things may not go as expected. This policy sets out how concerns and complaints will be handled fairly, consistently, and in line with statutory requirements.

Reach South Academy Trust is committed to treating all individuals with dignity, respect, and fairness throughout the complaints process. We will ensure that no person is disadvantaged or discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic. Our approach reflects the Trust's values and our commitment to Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging.

Our aims are to:

- Resolve concerns informally wherever possible.
- Provide a clear, impartial, and non-adversarial process for formal complaints.
- Ensure timely responses at each stage.
- Respect confidentiality and treat all parties with courtesy.
- Learn lessons from complaints to improve practice across the Trust.

The Trust will give complainants the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full. To support this, the policy will be published on the Trust and individual school websites.

Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments for complainants with disabilities or language barriers to accommodate individual needs.

Concerns and complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities are not covered by this policy and should be directed to the provider concerned.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements set out in [part 7 of the schedule to the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of pupils at the school.

It is based on [guidance published by the Department for Education \(DfE\)](#) on creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulations. This policy also complies with our funding agreement and Articles of Association.

In addition, it addresses duties set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework](#) with regards to dealing with complaints about the school's fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

## 3. What is a 'Concern' and what is 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". The school will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible
- A complaint is defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action"

#### 4. Scope

This policy applies to complaints about Reach South Academy Trust or any of its academies.

It does not replace the arrangements for dealing with certain types of complaint that fall outside of its remit. These are set out in the table below:

<b>Nature of complaint:</b>	<b>Procedural route:</b>
Admissions	The admissions appeals process or via the local authority
Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEND)	These should be referred to the SENDCO at the relevant school in the first instance and the local authority
Safeguarding matters	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance
Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions	These are dealt with under the DfE statutory guidance relating to suspensions and permanent exclusions available online here: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion</a>
Whistle-blowing	We have a Whistleblowing Procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. This is available to view on the Trust website here: <a href="https://www.reachsouth.org/policies/whistleblowing">https://www.reachsouth.org/policies/whistleblowing</a>
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Trust's Grievance Policy
Staff discipline	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy and 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

#### 5. Complaint stages and principles of investigation

We follow a three stage Complaints Procedure;

- Stage 1: Informal Resolution
- Stage 2: Formal Resolution
- Stage 3: Panel Hearing

When investigating a complaint, we will consider:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

#### 6. Time scales

The complainant must raise their complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident. While complaints should be raised within 3 months of the incident, exceptions may be made where there are valid reasons for delay and the complaint can still be fairly investigated. Such exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Any complaints made outside of term time will be considered to have been received on the next school day.

Action	Timescale
Acknowledge receipt of concern/ complaint:	2 school days (all stages)
Investigation of complaint (stage 1)	10 school days
Investigation of complaint (stage 2)	10 school days
Panel hearing (stage 3)	Within 20 school days of request

If at any point we cannot meet the time scales we have set out in this policy, we will:

- Set new time limits with the complainant
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay

## 7. Making a Complaint

### Complaint submission methods:

Complaints may be submitted in writing (letter or email), by phone, in person, or through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant.

Where a complainant is unable to submit a written complaint due to disability, language barrier, or literacy difficulty, reasonable adjustments will be made to support them.

Complainants must not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. Governors have no power to act on an individual basis.

The flowchart at appendix 1 summarises the process for dealing with complaints at each stage.

### Anonymous complaints

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

### Stage One – Informal Resolution

Informal concerns and complaints are taken seriously by the Trust. Every effort will be made to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that at stage 1, the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

In the first instance any concerns should be raised directly with the relevant member of staff or the School Leadership as appropriate, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. The informal stage may involve a meeting between the complainant and the relevant member of staff, as appropriate, to try and resolve the issue.

If the complaint is about the School Leader (Headteacher) or a Governor/ Trustee, the complaint should be directed to the Trust via email to [listening@reachsouth.org](mailto:listening@reachsouth.org) in the first instance. A suitably impartial and independent investigator will be appointed to handle such complaints.

Stage 1 gives all parties the opportunity to explore the issues causing concern and to seek to resolve

them without recourse to formal stages. The member of staff dealing with the concern will ensure they have a clear understanding of the issue(s), what it is that the complainant considers should have been done, or where they feel the school has not met reasonable expectations, as well as the resolution being sought. The focus will be on working with the complainant to resolve this matter.

Stage 1 outcome - A written response is not necessarily required at stage 1 but may be helpful and will be provided where appropriate. A written response is unlikely to be required if the complainant is satisfied with the response and outcome, and the situation has been resolved verbally. The stage 1 complaint will be logged in the school's MIS (Management Information System).

Despite the best efforts of all parties there will be occasions where informal resolution is not possible, in which case the complainant may escalate the issue to stage two, as set out below.

## **Stage Two – Formal Resolution**

All complaints at stage 2 must be received in writing, within 10 days of stage 1 having been completed, ideally using the Stage 2 Concerns and Complaints Form which is provided in appendix 2. However, stage 2 complaints received in writing via other means (e.g. letter or email) will be accepted. Where a complainant is unable to submit a written complaint due to disability, language barrier, or literacy difficulty, reasonable adjustments will be made to support them in raising their complaint.

The stage 2 written complaint must provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents; and include details of what action they feel would resolve the complaint. The complaint will be investigated by the School Leader\* who will decide, after completing their own investigation, the appropriate course of action to take.

\* If the complaint is about the School Leader (Headteacher) or a Governor/ Trustee, the complaint should be directed to the Trust via email to [listening@reachsouth.org](mailto:listening@reachsouth.org) in the first instance. A suitably impartial and independent investigator will be appointed to handle such complaints. Where the complaint is about the entire Local Governing Body or a majority of its members, a committee of independent governors will be convened from other schools or external bodies.

Stage 2 outcome - The written conclusion of the stage 2 investigation will be sent to the complainant within ten (10) school days. Any delay to this timescale will be communicated to the complainant at the earliest opportunity. The response will outline whether the complaint has been upheld or not, and the reasons behind this.

It is hoped that the vast majority of complaints can be resolved at stage 2 or before. However, if, after completing stage 2, the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may proceed to the next and final stage of our complaints procedure – stage 3. To do this, the complainant should inform the Governance Team via email to [listening@reachsouth.org](mailto:listening@reachsouth.org) within ten (10) school days of receiving the final stage 2 response. Requests received outside of this timescale will not be considered, except in exceptional circumstances.

## **Stage 3 – Complaints Panel Hearing**

A request to escalate the complaint to the final stage (stage 3), should be made in writing to the Governance Team at [listening@reachsouth.org](mailto:listening@reachsouth.org) within **10 school days** of receiving the stage 2 outcome, stating the specific reasons for disagreement with the stage 2 outcome. Where a complainant is unable to submit a written complaint due to disability, language barrier, or literacy difficulty, reasonable adjustments will be made to support them.

The panel will be appointed by the Trust and will consist of **at least three people** who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

At least **one panel member must be independent of the management and running of the school**. In line with the DfE's guidance for academies on setting up a complaints procedure, a governor from a local governing body at a different school within the MAT, who has no conflict of interest or prior knowledge of the complaint, can be used as the independent panel member. This is because such a person has no direct involvement with the management and running of the school being complained about.

If the complainant believes there is likely to be bias, they may request an independent panel. The Trust will consider such requests and will not unreasonably withhold consent.

The panel will be convened by the clerk within **twenty (20) school days** of receiving the request, where possible. The complainant will receive **reasonable notice** of the date of the hearing.

If the complainant rejects **three proposed dates without good reason**, the clerk will set a date, and the hearing will proceed using written submissions from both parties.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least **5 school days** before the meeting.

After the hearing, the panel will decide whether the complaint is:

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

If the complaint is upheld (in whole or in part), the panel will:

- Decide appropriate actions to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future

The outcome of the stage 3 panel hearing and the reasons for the panel's decision will be communicated in writing within five (5) working days of the meeting. In exceptional circumstances, there may be a delay to this deadline. Any delay will be explained and revised timescales provided.

Further information on the format of, and procedures during, the stage 3 complaints panel hearing is provided in Appendix 3

Stage 3 concludes the Trust's complaints process. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome after stage 3, they can refer the complaint to the DfE as set out in section 11 of this policy. Details of how to do this will be included with the stage 3 outcome letter.

## **8. Complaints about the Trust, CEO or Trustees**

Complaints about the Trust, CEO or Trustees should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Trust Board via email to [listening@reachsouth.org](mailto:listening@reachsouth.org)

The process for responding to and investigating such complaints will follow the same principles as outlined in the three-stage procedure above, with an impartial investigator appointed by the Trust Board.

If the complaint is jointly about the Chair and Vice-Chair, or the majority of the Trust Board, a panel of independent members will be convened to hear the complaint.

## **9. Deviation from the published complaints policy**

Reach South Academy Trust is committed to resolving all complaints at the earliest opportunity and in line with this published complaints procedure. However, there may be exceptional circumstances when it is necessary or reasonable to deviate from the published complaints procedure. If this situation arises, we will inform you in writing of the reasons for the deviation from the published complaints procedure.

## **10. Learning Lessons**

The Trust Board and Executive Team will review on a termly basis any underlying issues raised by complaints across schools to determine whether improvements can be made to procedures or practices. This review will inform strategic development and support structures across the Trust.

## **11. Referring complaints on completion of the Trust's procedure**

If, after completing all stages of our internal complaints process, the complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome of the complaints procedure they can refer their complaint to the Department for Education (DfE).

It is important for complainants to be aware that the DfE will not overturn an academy's decision about a complaint. The DfE's role is to make sure the academy handles a complaint properly. The DfE may intervene if a school has:

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

In addition, if the Trust's complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

For more information about the DfE's remit in complaints and how to refer a complaint to them, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy/complain-about-an-academy#dfes-remit-in-relation-to-academy-complaints>

## **12. Unreasonable and persistent complaints**

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

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing.

### **Unreasonable complaints**

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

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure

- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- Raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed, including referral to the DfE
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome
- 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
- Uses threats to intimidate
- Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- Knowingly provides falsified information
- Publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums

Please note: the above list is not intended to be exhaustive and is for guidance purposes only. It is at the discretion of the School /Trust what is deemed to be unreasonable.

### **Steps we will take:**

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's comments and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

Whenever possible, the School/Trust will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the School/Trust will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable, refer them to this policy and remind them to act in accordance with it.

For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, 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

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 school premises and ensuring appropriate measures of support are provided to staff where they are the subject of aggression and/or violence.

### **Serial/persistent/duplicate complaints**

If the complainant contacts the school/trust again on the same issue, the correspondence may then be

viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent'. We may stop responding to the complainant when the following conditions are met:

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

The case to stop responding is stronger if:

- The complainant's communications are often or always abusive or aggressive
- The complainant makes insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff
- We have reason to believe the individual is contacting the school/trust with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience

Where we decide to stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will consider any new complaints they make provided the concerns raised are materially different to those raised previously and/or are unconnected to the previous concern

If the School/Trust has resolved a complaint under this procedure and received a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, the school/trust will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information that needs to be taken into account.

If the School/Trust is satisfied that there are no new aspects, it will:

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

If a duplicate complaint is raised which in the view of the school / trust warrants further consideration, the procedure outlined in section 7 will be repeated.

### **13. Complaint campaigns**

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

- Publishing a single response
- Sending a template response to all the complainants

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

### **14. Early years only - complaints about our fulfilment of early years requirements**

We will investigate all written complaints relating to the school's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and notify the complainant of the outcome within twenty-eight (28) days of receiving the complaint. The school will keep a record of the complaint (see section 15) and make this available to Ofsted on request.

Parents and carers can notify Ofsted if they believe that the school is not meeting Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, by:

- calling 0300 123 4666
- emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.
- using an online contact form which is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted#org-contacts>

We will notify parents and carers if we become aware that the school is to be inspected by Ofsted. We will also supply a copy of the inspection report to parents and carers of children who attend the setting on a regular basis.

### **15. Record keeping and confidentiality**

The progress of all complaints will be recorded, 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 where appropriate. Complaints about the Trust or central staff will be recorded and managed by the Governance Team and stored securely in the Trust's offices under restricted access.

This material will be treated as confidential and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel and be kept for a period of two years, in line with data protection law, privacy notices and the Trust's retention schedule. 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 (SAR) under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

### **16. Monitoring arrangements**

The Trust Executive Team will monitor the effectiveness of complaints procedures across all schools, tracking the number and nature of complaints and reviewing trends. Trends will be reported to the Trust Board each term. This monitoring will support continuous improvement and ensure consistency in handling complaints Trust-wide.

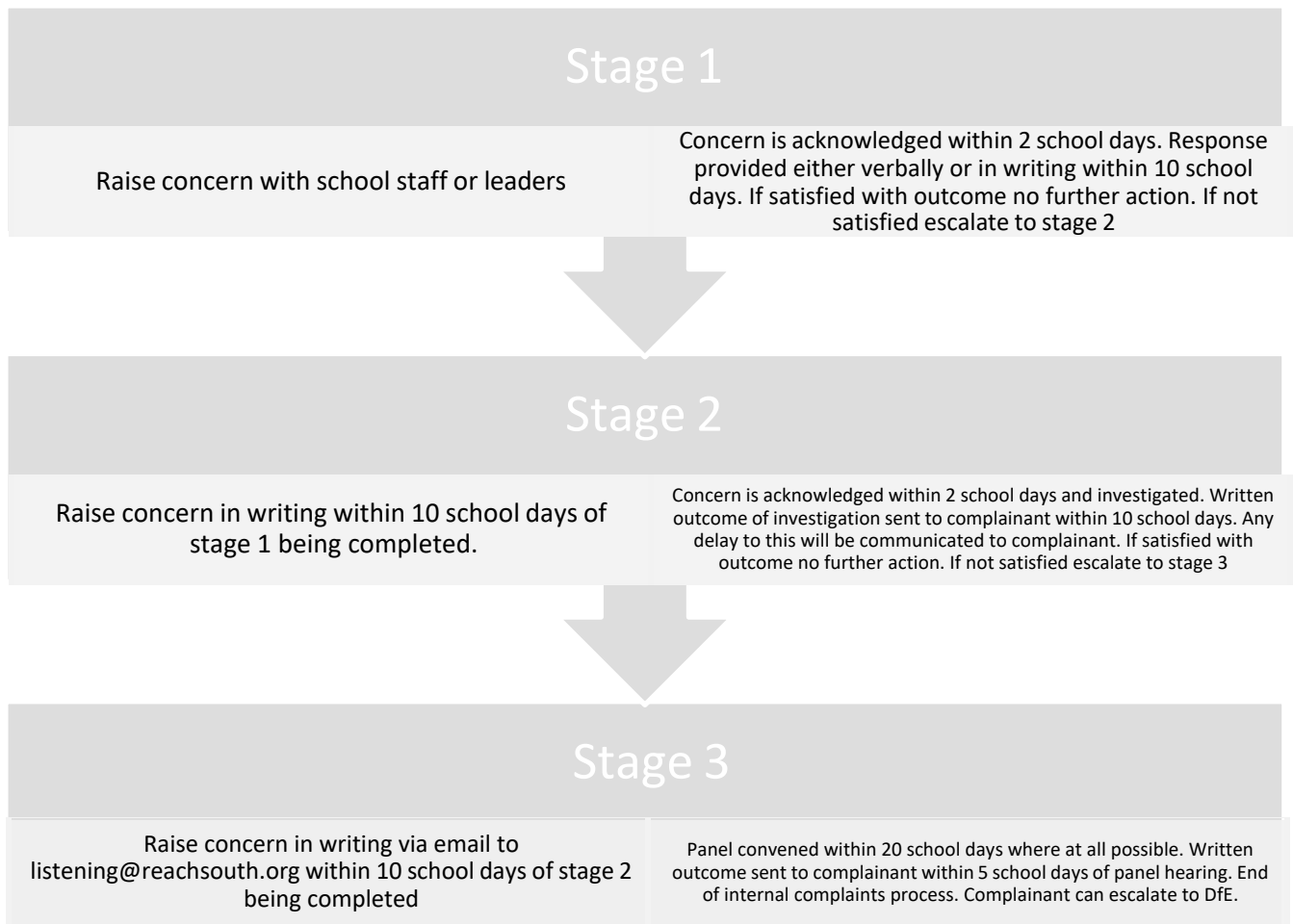
This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Trust Board annually or when there are legislative changes.

### **17. Links with other policies**

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Admissions policy
- DfE suspensions and exclusions statutory guidance
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- SEND policy and information report
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Exams Complaints Policy (Secondary Phases only)

## Appendix 1: Complaints management flowchart



## Appendix 2: Stage 2 Formal Complaint Submission Form

It is helpful if stage 2 complaints are submitted using the form below. However, stage 2 complaints received in writing via other means (e.g. letter or email) will be accepted. Please ensure you have followed the process for dealing with concerns and complaints at stage 1 **before** escalating your complaint to stage 2.

If you are unable to submit a written complaint due to disability, language barrier, or literacy difficulty, please contact the school office for support in raising your complaint

Please read these notes carefully before completing the form:

1. Please submit this form within 10 school days of receiving the stage 1 response. Stage 2 forms should be submitted to the School Leader (Headteacher) or if the complaint is about the School Leader (Headteacher) or a Governor/ Trustee, the complaint should be directed to the Trust via email to [listening@reachsouth.org](mailto:listening@reachsouth.org)
2. Please attach any supporting documents that are relevant to your complaint.
3. If you require reasonable adjustments (e.g., large print, interpreter), please indicate this at section 7 of the form
4. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

<b>Section 1: Complainant's details</b>	
Full Name	
Address	
Contact number	
Email address	
Preferred method of contact (please state e.g. email, phone)	
<b>Section 2: Pupil Details (if applicable)</b>	
Pupil Name	
Pupil Year Group / Class	
<b>Section 3: Complaint Reference</b>	
Date stage 1 response received	
Name of person who dealt with complaint at stage 1	
<b>Section 4: Details of Complaint</b>	
Please provide a clear summary of your complaint and why you are dissatisfied with the stage 1 outcome. Please attach additional sheets if necessary.	

<b>Section 5: Desired Outcome</b>	
What outcome or resolution are you seeking?	
<b>Section 6: Supporting Evidence</b>	
Please list any documents you are attaching to support your complaint.	
<b>Section 7: Accessibility &amp; Adjustments</b>	
Do you require any reasonable adjustments to assist you in submitting or discussing this complaint? Please state Yes or No.	
If yes, please specify what reasonable adjustments you require: e.g., large print, interpreter, alternative format etc	

Please return completed stage 2 complaints forms to:

- The relevant school leader (i.e. the Headteacher or other School Leader) at the school to which the complaint relates

**Or**

- If the complaint is about the School Leader (Headteacher) or a Governor/ Trustee, the complaint should be directed to the Trust via email to [listening@reachsouth.org](mailto:listening@reachsouth.org)

### **Appendix 3: Stage 3 Complaints Panel Meeting Procedures**

The objective of the stage 3 complaints panel is to ensure a fair, impartial, and efficient hearing of the complaint, focusing on resolution and clarity.

A member of the Governance Team will convene a time and date for the panel hearing in conjunction with the panel, complainant and school representative and ensure that there is not a conflict of interest. Electronic recording is not permitted unless agreed upon in advance due to reasonable adjustments.

All parties will receive all relevant materials from the previous stage and an overview of the order of proceedings, five (5) school days in advance of the hearing. This will include complaint letters, investigation findings, and supporting documents. Please note no new issues, concerns or complaints can be raised at stage 3. Any new concern or complaint must start at stage 1 of the process.

#### **Attending the complaints panel hearing**

Complainants are encouraged to attend the panel hearing and may be accompanied by a relative, friend, or supporter. In line with DfE guidance for academies on setting up a complaints procedure, we recommend that neither the complainant nor the school bring legal representation. A stage 3 complaints panel hearing is not a form of legal proceedings.

- Representatives from the media are **not permitted** to attend.
- With agreement from all parties, the meeting may take place via an electronic platform such as MS Teams.
- The meeting will be held **in private** and will be **confidential**.
- Electronic recordings are **not normally permitted**, unless required as part of reasonable adjustments for disability or medical needs. Prior consent of all parties must be obtained and recorded in the minutes.

#### **At the meeting**

- The panel members will nominate one of themselves to act as Chair of the panel.
- The Chair of the panel will provide an overview of the purpose and proceedings of the panel hearing.
- The complainant and school representative(s) will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence
- Each party may call witnesses, as appropriate.
- The panel, the complainant and the school representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions.
- The Chair will emphasise confidentiality and respectful language and behaviour. Any questions and/or discussions will be focused solely on the complaint itself, if this is breached the hearing will be adjourned. This is for the wellbeing of all parties.
- Once both parties have presented their cases, the complainant and school representative(s) will leave while the panel considers the evidence. The Governance Professional (Clerk) will remain with the panel to advise on any legislation and take notes where appropriate.

#### **The outcome**

The panel can either:

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

The decision to uphold or not uphold the complaint is based on the documentation provided in advance of the hearing, discussions during the hearing, and is determined on the 'balance of probabilities'.

If upheld, the panel will:

- Decide appropriate actions to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future

The panel's decision and their reasons for it as well as any recommendations, will be communicated in writing within five (5) school days of the stage 3 hearing. In exceptional circumstances, there may be a delay to this deadline. Any delay will be explained and revised timescales provided. Minutes of the hearing can be provided to the complainant on request. The outcome letter will include details of how the complaint can be referred to the DfE should the complainant remain dissatisfied.

## **Appendix 4: Roles and Responsibilities**

Persons responsible at each complaint stage:

### **Stage 1:**

Concerns and complaints should be raised with the relevant school staff or school leaders (Headteacher). If the initial complaint is about the Headteacher or a Governor / Trustee, it should be raised with the Trust via email to [listening@reachsouth.org](mailto:listening@reachsouth.org)

School staff or School Leaders will provide the outcome at stage 1. This may be provided verbally OR in writing.

### **Stage 2:**

Requests for complaints to be considered at stage 2 should be raised with the School Leader (Headteacher). If the complaint is about the Headteacher or a Governor / Trustee, it should be raised with the Trust via email to [listening@reachsouth.org](mailto:listening@reachsouth.org)

The School Leader will provide the outcome in writing at stage 2

### **Stage 3:**

Requests for complaints to be considered at stage 3 should be raised with the Reach South Academy Trust Governance team via email to [listening@reachsouth.org](mailto:listening@reachsouth.org)

The Panel will provide the outcome in writing at stage 3

Note: Any stage 1 or 2 complaint that is made directly to the Trust may be referred back to the school leader to deal with unless the complaint is directly about the Headteacher or a governor / trustee.

The following roles are involved in the complaints process:

- Complainant – The individual raising the complaint. They are expected to follow the procedure, respond to deadlines, and treat all parties respectfully.
- Investigator – Appointed to establish facts, interview relevant parties, and prepare a report with findings and potential solutions.
- Complaints Co-ordinator – Oversees the process, liaises with stakeholders, and ensures smooth progression. This person may be the Headteacher or a designated staff member.
- Clerk to the Panel – Manages communication, circulates papers, arranges hearings, and records minutes and outcomes.
- Panel Chair – Leads the panel hearing, ensures fairness, and facilitates respectful discussion focused on the complaint

<b>Date</b>	<b>Summary of change</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Policy Implementation Date</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
February 2026	Review	Governance Team	February 2026	February 2027