



Petersfield Church of England (A) Primary School
Complaints Policy and Procedure

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Introduction

God teaches us we are all equal, valued and unique.

We are a small rural school with deeply held Christian values which motivate and inspire us to provide a rich and diverse education. **"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."** John 10:10.

Our school values are:

- Love: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 - It is integral in all our decision-making. This equips our children for all aspects in life, as they grow and reach their full potential.
- Trust: Isaiah 26:4 - It encourages the whole school to work together for the mutual benefit of all, promoting an excellent working relationship
- Peace: Thessalonians 5:13 - It helps us to respect each other, recognising all opinions to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment that encourages discussion of all ideas, so promoting a deeper understanding of each other and the wider world.
- Friendship: Luke 6:31 - We constantly strive to build and foster the positive relationships so providing a safe and caring environment in which to learn.
- Creativity: Romans 12:6 - Each one of us has a unique talent, we all have inherent creativity, and we actively encourage this in all aspects of school life.

Through the daily living of our school values and commitment to our vision, we strive to provide a safe, happy, engaging and caring environment in which everyone is given the opportunity to learn and develop positive, pro-social attitudes and values.

Teachers are educational professionals with a wealth of knowledge and experience of educating and ensuring the wellbeing of all pupils. In speaking and acting, school staff are considering the varying needs of all pupils in context, not just one individual pupil.

As a school, our focus is to deliver high quality teaching and learning for our pupils. We strive to communicate and collaborate to enable all members of our school community live life to the full in an imperfect world. The principles of our behaviour policy apply to all in school and promotes comfort and forgiveness, ensuring that when things go wrong the opportunity for learning is not lost and another opportunity to get it right is given.

COMPLAINTS PROCESS FLOWCHART

Please refer to Policy for more detailed information

INFORMAL RESOLUTION OF CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

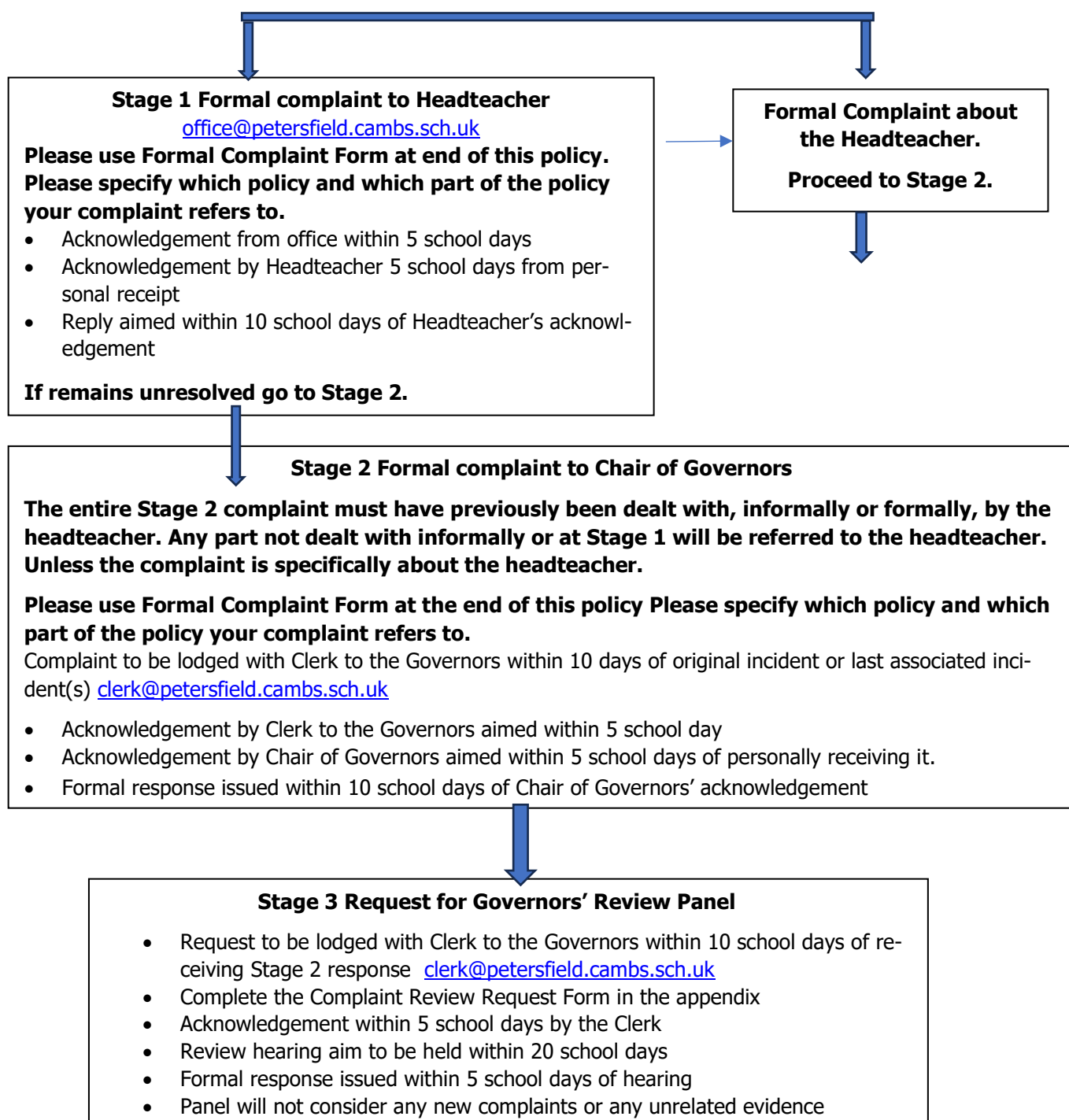
Concerns to be raised informally with class teacher, senior leader or Headteacher with the aim of resolution within 10 school days.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION UNSUCCESSFUL

Please use the Formal Complaint Form at the end of this policy.

The complaint must be lodged within 90 days of the original incident or last associated incident(s)

(If you have any difficulties with this then please refer to the policy for guidance.)



Complaints Policy

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Petersfield CofE (VA) Primary School. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. Where a person is not able to make a complaint himself or herself, a friend or other family member may do so on their behalf, but that person does not become the complainant.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

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

Exceptions	Who to contact
- Admissions to schools - Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs - School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Childrens Services representation and complaint procedure - Cambridgeshire County Council
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	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). Making a Referral Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board (safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk).
Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions. <i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i>
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 matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. 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.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will 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.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Petersfield C of E (VA) Primary School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

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

A complaint may be defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Petersfield C of E (VA) Primary School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. Please refer to the flow chart to make sure that your concern has been dealt with appropriately before you consider making a formal complaint.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

The person raising the concern or making the complaint will receive a more effective response if they:

- explain the concern or complaint in full as early as possible.
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the concern or complaint.
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the concern or complaint.
- ask for assistance as needed.
- treat all those involved with respect.
- refrain from publicising the details of their concern or complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

If the complainant feels that their concern or complaint remains unresolved after raising it informally, they can raise it formally under this Complaints Policy. In which case, Petersfield C of E (VA) Primary School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this Complaints Procedure.

There is Complaint Form for completion at the end of this procedure. Completion of this will ensure all the relevant information is provided.

The complaint may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

A complaint should be made in accordance with the flow chart above.

How to make a formal complaint

Please ensure that the Flow Chart above has been followed before considering making a formal complaint. If these processes have not been followed, then your complaint will be referred back to the appropriate person.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 or 3 of the procedure.

Whilst the school acknowledges that, on rare occasions, parents may wish to contact solicitors, the school will not accept a complaint from a legal representative. The school will not use legal representation within the complaint resolution process but nor will parents' legal representative be permitted to attend relevant meetings. We recognise, however, there are occasions where legal representation may be appropriate.

The Formal Complaints Form is at the end of this procedure.

All Stage 1 complaints should be addressed to the Headteacher via the school office office@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk and must be clearly identified as a **Formal Complaint**.

If the complaint has not been resolved at Stage 1 **or** is about the Headteacher it should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the Clerk to the Governing Body. The clerk should be contacted by email at clerk@petersfield.cambs.sch or by letter via the school office. Please mark emails or letters as Private and Confidential.

The entire Stage 2 complaint must have previously been dealt with by the headteacher. Any part not dealt with informally or at Stage 1 will be referred to the headteacher. Unless the complaint is about the headteacher.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body. The clerk should be contacted by email at clerk@petersfield.cambs.sch or by letter via the school office. Please mark emails or letters as Private and Confidential.

If you require help in completing the Complaint Form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

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

Covert recordings

Complainants must not covertly record any conversations about complaints. Unless exceptional circumstances apply, the Department for Education will support schools who refuse to accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without informed consent of all parties being recorded.

Time scales

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

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.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Petersfield C of E (VA) Primary School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate at Stage 2 and 3, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation.
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur.
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made.
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.
- an apology.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

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

Stage 1 – Referring a complaint to the Headteacher

Formal complaints should be made to the Headteacher and sent to the office@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk. This will be acknowledged within 5 school days. This may be done by email or letter, but the Complaint Form below could be used or referenced to ensure all the relevant information is provided. Please specify which policy and which part of the policy your complaint refers to.

Please mark the email or letter as confidential. If the complaint is about the headteacher then proceed to Stage 2.

The headteacher will record the date the complaint is received by her and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days of personally receiving it.

Within this response, the Headteacher will (if needed) contact the complainant to:

- consider the issues raised.
- clarify the nature of the complaint.
- ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see.
- consider any aspects of the complaint where additional clarification is required.
- consider the extent to which any evidence is available that has not been mentioned on the complaint form.
- establish the complainant's view as to witnesses who might need to be interviewed.
- explore what might represent an acceptable resolution to the complaint.

The headteacher can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the Headteacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response within 10 school days of having personally acknowledged the complaint.

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

Where appropriate, the response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Petersfield C of E (VA) Primary School will take to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint, to Stage 2, should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

At this point, if appropriate, the Headteacher may offer the complainant an informal meeting with the Chair of Governors to see if the complaint can be resolved without the need to proceed to Stage 2. Minutes will be taken.

Stage 2 – Referring a formal complaint to the Chair of Governors

An unresolved complaint from Stage 1 or a complaint about the headteacher or a member of the governing body should be made to the Chair of Governors. This may be done by email or letter, but the Complaint Form below could be used or referenced to ensure all the relevant information is provided. Please specify which policy and which part of the policy your complaint refers to. It should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body. The clerk should be contacted by email at clerk@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk or by letter via the school office. If the complainant has difficulty writing a letter or an email then a face to face meeting or telephone

call can be arranged. If the complainant needs assistance with this they can delegate a representative to speak on their behalf.

The complaint must have previously been dealt with by the headteacher. Any part not dealt with informally or at Stage 1 will be referred back to the headteacher, unless the complaint is about the headteacher.

In the subject field or on the envelope the complainant should write 'Formal Complaint'. This must be done within **10 school days** of receiving the Headteacher's response or from meeting with the Chair of Governors.

If the complainant requires assistance in completing the paperwork, then support may be provided. It is not for those supporting the complainant to comment on the merits or otherwise of the review, but rather to help the complainant articulate their position to the Chair of Governors through the Complaint Form.

The Chair of Governors may delegate the investigation into the complaint to another member of the Governing Body. At the conclusion of their investigation, a formal written response will be provided.

If the complaint is:

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

The letter or email should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body. The clerk should be contacted by email at Clerk@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk or by letter via the school office. The complaint will be referred to the Vice Chair or another governor, and then a committee of members of the Governing Body if it progresses to the next stage. If the complaint is jointly about the Chair of Governors and Vice Chair, or the entire Governing Body, or the majority of the Governing Body, then the issue will be considered by an independent investigator. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

The procedure

The complainant should not share details of the complaint with other governors. A detailed knowledge of the complaint will preclude governors from serving on a review panel if the complaint is not resolved by the Chair of Governors. Governors receiving a complaint in this way should immediately refer it back to the Chair of Governors without considering the content.

The Clerk to Governors will aim to acknowledge receipt within 5 school days of receiving it. The Chair of Governors will aim to acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing **within 5 school days of receiving it personally** and will ensure that the complainant receives a response within **10 school days of personal receipt** of the complaint. On rare occasions, the complaint may be too complex to investigate within this time frame and, in these circumstances, the Chair of Governors will write to the complainant explaining why it is not possible to work within the time frame laid down and to advise when a response may be issued.

As part of the investigation, the Chair of Governors or nominated Governor may contact the complainant by email, to arrange a face-to-face meeting or telephone call, if there is additional information needed. If this is arranged by telephone, then the Governor's number will be withheld. **However, if the Complaint form has been sent or has been referred to then all the necessary information should be available and should avoid any delay.**

The focus of this conversation may be to:

- consider any gaps on the complaint form.
- consider any aspects of the complaint where additional clarification is required.
- consider the extent to which any evidence is available that has not been mentioned on the complaint form.
- establish the complainant's view as to witnesses who might need to be interviewed.
- explore what might represent an acceptable resolution to the complaint.
- the only complaint that will be discussed is the one made under Stage 2.

The key elements of the Governor's investigation are likely to include:

- achievement of a shared understanding with the complainant of the nature of the complaint and of what it is that remains unresolved.
- referring to the particular policy referred to by the complainant
- establishing what has happened and who was involved.
- written statements from those adults and children whose information and views need to be considered. It is expected that the voice of the child/ren will be appropriately heard and be given sufficient weight; (any interviews with a child will be carried out by a trusted (by the child) member of staff and will be minuted).
- a detailed report that will provide a clear record that will be helpful for any subsequent review.
- a clear analysis of the information and conclusions reached.
- an authoritative outcome that is based on the evidence and does not merely state acceptance of evidence.
- recommendations to resolve the complaint.

Expected Outcomes

The Chair of Governors will report in writing on the extent to which s/he considers the complaint is:

- upheld in whole or in part.
- dismissed in whole or in part

Give:

- an explanation for these decisions
- the evidence reviewed
- conclusions about what happened or occurred
- the extent to which you consider each aspect of the complaint should be:

It may also include:

- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur.
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made.
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.
- an apology.

The letter should state:

- that if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome then contact the Clerk to the Governing body at clerk@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk to request the complaint is reviewed by a Governor Review panel. This should be done within 10 school days of receipt of this letter. Should you require any further details please contact the Clerk.
- This letter represents the conclusion of Stage 2 of this process. Neither the Chair of Governors or nominated Governor nor any member of staff should respond to the complainant after this point about the issues raised in the complaint. The Clerk should thereafter handle all correspondence.

Stage 3

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3.

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made using the Governor Panel Review request form (available from the Clerk at clerk@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk) within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response. In the subject field of the email, the complainant should write, 'Governor Panel Review'. If delivering or posting a letter, the complainant must address it to the Clerk at the school address and write 'Governor Panel Review' on the envelope'. The Clerk will record the date the request for review is received and acknowledge the request within **5 school days**.

If the complainant requires assistance in completing the paperwork, then support may be provided. It is not for those supporting the complainant to comment on the merits or otherwise of the review, but rather to help the complainant articulate their position to the governors' panel through the Governor Panel Review form.

The governors' panel will only consider requests for review outside the 10 school days timeframe in exceptional circumstances. These might include:

- the reasons for a review not being known to the complainant within 10 school days.
- the complainant needing to delay making their request for review because they needed the time to collect evidence that could not have been gathered during the first 10 school days.
- the complainant not having been able to request a review within 10 school days because of being abroad or being incapacitated.

In cases where requests for review are received outside of the 10 school days and the exceptional circumstances are unclear, the Clerk may convene a short meeting of the governors' review panel in order to consider whether the review should take place.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. The Clerk will aim to give the complainant a final decision from the panel within 20 school days. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

The Governor Panel will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from Petersfield C of E (VA) Primary School available, the Clerk will source any suitable skilled and independent governors from another local school.

A Local Authority Advisor may be invited to the meeting, at the discretion of the governors, to give procedural advice.

The Governing Body has decided that all evidence given to the Review Panel will be in writing. This is because:

- face-to-face hearings can be emotive and stressful for both complainants and staff.
- a face-to-face meeting may become more adversarial in nature.
- there should be no new evidence in support of the complaint that cannot be aired in writing.

This will include any transcripts of the original complaint made by the complainant or their representative.

When the Governor Panel Review form is received, the Clerk will collate the relevant information:

- The original completed complaints form.
- The response to the complaint from the Headteacher and/or the Chair of Governors.
- The completed Governor Panel Review Form.
- All additional written information from the Chair of Governors.

The panel is also able to request any other documents that they believe may help with their decision making.

Any written material will be circulated to all members of the panel at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly, except in exceptional circumstances that have been approved by the DfE.

The committee will not review any new complaints or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint.

The meeting will be held in private.

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

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- request additional information.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action, after discussion with the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors, to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- where appropriate, after discussion with the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors, recommend to the Head Teacher a review or changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future
- if further information is requested, an additional meeting will be scheduled to finalise the decision

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Petersfield C of E (VA) Primary School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Petersfield C of E (VA) Primary School.

The review decision letter concludes the school complaints process, and the school will not enter into any further correspondence with the complainant about the issues raised. The information about redress beyond the school will be included in the panel response letter.

A written record will be kept of the complaint together with the outcomes. Correspondence, statements and records relating to the complaint will be filed confidentially for 5 years.

Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Petersfield C of E (VA) Primary School. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint. The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD.

Appendix 1

Stage 1 & 2 Complaint Form

If you feel it might be helpful to have an informal meeting with the Chair of Governors prior to making a Stage 2 complaint then please contact the school office office@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk

Please complete and return to the Headteacher or Clerk – see flowchart at the beginning of this procedure for the appropriate person to contact (and the contact details) - who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:	
Pupil's name (if relevant):	
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):	
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:	
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it. Please ensure you specify which policy and which part of the policy your complaint refers to.	
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 2

Complaint review request form (Stage 3)

Please provide your details	
Full name	
Address (including post-code)	
Email address	
Phone number	
Review of Complaint: Please explain why you would like a Governor panel to review your complaint. For example, do you consider that: • not all aspects of the complaint have been addressed. • not all available evidence has been considered. • not all relevant witnesses have been approached. • the decision has not been adequately justified or explained.	
Resolution: What would represent for you an acceptable resolution to the complaint?	
Further Information: Do you have any further information relevant to your Stage 2 complaint to add?	
Signed:	Date:

Appendix 3

Roles and Responsibilities

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.
- 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 committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The headteacher or complaints committee 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 committee and should:

- act in a 'progress chasing' role to track the complaint and to ensure that timeframes set out within the policy are being adhered to wherever possible.
- ensure that the complainant is kept up to date, including where timeframes have not been met and the reasons why.
- be aware of issues regarding:
 - sharing third party information
 - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- inform the Governing Body of any shortcomings in the delivery of its complaint's procedure, both during the process and subsequently.
- arrange for the outcome of the investigation to be communicated to all parties (the complainant and where relevant the person complained about) so they receive it at the same time. This will be in the form of an email or letter from the Chair of Governors.
- ensure that a written record of the complaint is kept, along with details of whether they were resolved following the formal procedure or progressed to a panel hearing.
- receive from the relevant Governor a file containing all of the information collected.

The Clerk will ensure that correspondence statements and records relating to individual complaints are stored confidentially. Complaint documentation does not form part of the child's educational record.

The letter from the Chair of Governors represents the conclusion of Stage 2 of this process. Neither the Chair of Governors, nor any member of staff should respond to the complainant after this point about the issues raised in the complaint. The Clerk should thereafter handle all correspondence.

Committee Chair

The committee'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.
- 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.

- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity through written submissions ahead of the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed.
- key findings of fact are made.
- the committee is open-minded and acts independently.
- no member of the committee 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.

Committee Member

Committee 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 committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

Appendix 4

Serial and persistent complaints policy

Petersfield C of E Aided Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening. This policy outlines how the school will respond to serial and persistent complaints, which may be deemed unreasonable in nature.

We define unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- 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 complaint 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 complaint's procedure or with good practice.
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be considered 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 complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education.
- seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, 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.

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

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will contact the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

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

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 the school premises.