



QUEENS' SCHOOL

Dare to be Great

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

This document sets out for students, parents, carers and members of the public the policy and procedure for making and dealing with complaints about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

2. The difference between a concern and a complaint

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

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

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Queens' School takes concerns and complaints seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern or complaint 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 the most important factor.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Queens' will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

3. How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with the member of staff who is best placed to deal with the issue, starting with the individual Form Tutor/Class Teacher, for example, followed by the Head of Department/member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to Headteacher via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Trustees, any individual Trustees or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Trustees via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure (Appendix A). If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask a third-party organisation for example 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.

If a complainant is unable to submit their complaint in writing, the School will ensure that the issues being complained about and the outcomes being requested are documented in writing. The School may do this in either of the following ways

- Invite the complainant to a meeting with the Headteacher or Chair of Trustees (depending on what stage the complaint has reached) and a Notetaker. The Notetaker will document the issues being complained about and the complainant's desired outcomes, as discussed and agreed during the course of the meeting. At the end of the meeting, the complainant will be given a copy of the notes of the meeting containing this information and the School will retain the original copy for the purpose of investigating the complaint(s).
- Signpost the complainant to independent support, including Advocacy. Advocates provide qualified, independent support for people that have difficulty understanding information and advice or who would like support in communicating their views. Advocates can help complainants to formulate their complaint and then submit it on their behalf and support them through the complaints process. POhWER was founded in Hertfordshire in 1996. They deliver services in Hertfordshire as part of the HertsHelp service, in partnership with a wide range of voluntary sector organisations, including Advocacy. It is a free and impartial service. Their contact details are as follows:

POhWER

Telephone: 0300 456 2370

Text: send the word 'pohwer' with your name and number to 81025

Email: pohwer@pohwer.net

Post: PO Box 14043, Birmingham, B6 9BL

4. Anonymous Complaints

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

5. 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 consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

6. 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.

7. Scope of the Complaints Procedure

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

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools	Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process – either through the appeals process or via the local authority.
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). <insert LADO/MASH details>.
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. <link to school behaviour policy>.</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 whistle-blowers 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.
• 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.
• National Curriculum content	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 this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against Queens' School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

8. Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Queens' School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

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

9. Withdrawal of a complaint

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

10. Stages of complaint

There are three Stages to the School's Complaints Procedure:

1. **Stage 1:** Informal complaints
2. **Stage 2:** Formal complaints
3. **Stage 3:** Panel Hearing

11. Stage 1: Informal complaints

It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis.

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, or Director of Learning / Head of Department.

Complainants should not approach individual Trustees 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 3 of the procedure.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide an informal written response within 28 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

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

12. Stage 2: Formal complaint

Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in person or in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form, Appendix A).

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

Within this response, the Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. 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 their investigation, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response within 28 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

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

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

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

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled Trustee will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2.

Complaints about the Headteacher or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

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

Stage 2 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

13a. Stage 3: Panel Hearing – Child on roll

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 panel hearing consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within 21 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response.

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

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 15 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

If the complaint is:

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

Stage 3 will be heard by a completely independent committee panel.

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 15 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

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

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

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.

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

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Queens' 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 DfE if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Queens' School.

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 Queens' School will take to resolve the complaint.

The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headteacher.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

13b. Stage 3: Trustee Review – Child no longer on roll

The purpose of this complaints process is to ensure that if an error has been made, or an injustice has occurred, action can be taken to try and provide a remedy. Where the complainant has removed their child from the School, it is impossible for the School to provide a remedy that will directly benefit them or their child.

However, as the Governing Body has a duty of care to pupils who remain on roll, where a child has left the School, it will ensure that the circumstances of any complaint made are reviewed so that the Governing Body is satisfied that the School had acted appropriately and that the relevant policies and procedures had been followed correctly.

Under this policy and procedure, where a child no longer attends the School and their name has been removed from the School roll, the Chair of Trustees has the discretion to commission a Stage 3 Trustee Review instead of a Stage 3 Complaints Panel. The Chair of Trustee will choose one of the two options, to ensure that the complaint is investigated appropriately and that the complaints process can be concluded, however, the final decision as to which option they choose is entirely at their discretion.

If a decision is taken to commission a Stage 3 Governor Review instead of a Stage 3 Complaints Panel Hearing, the Chair of Trustees will appoint a Trustee who has had no prior involvement in the complaint to undertake this. If a Trustee cannot be appointed from the School's own Governing Body (for example due to sickness or other prior commitments), the Chair of Trustees will appoint an independent Trustee.

Once a Trustee has been appointed, they will review the original complaint, the Stage 2 Investigation and response, the complainant's reply to the Stage 2 response (including their escalation request) and any further evidence the complainant has submitted (this must relate to the complaint and cannot be in relation to new matters).

When the review is complete, either the Chair of Trustee or the Trustee who conducted the review will write to the complainant to inform them whether the complaint has been upheld or rejected, in full or in part, and of any changes to practice and procedures which have been agreed by the Governing Body.

14. 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 DfE after they have completed Stage 3.

The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Queens' School. They will consider whether Queens' School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and whether they have followed [Part 7 of the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

The complainant can refer their complaint to the DfE online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit
DfE
Cheylesmore House
5 Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

15. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Provision Complaints

Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) about the support provided to them by the School are within scope of this policy.

If your complaint is about the way the School has been delivering the provision set out in Section F of your child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you may complain further to the Local Authority that maintains your child's EHCP.

If the EHCP is maintained by Hertfordshire County Council, you may complain further by setting out the detail of your complaint and sending it to:

Customer Service Team – Complaints
Postal Point: CHO118
Resources Department
County Hall
Hertford
SG13 8DF
Email: cs.complaints@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Once in receipt of your complaint, the Complaints Manager for Children's Services will ensure that the Local Authority completes a Section F Provision Checklist. This process entails a Provision Checklist being drawn up directly from Section F of the EHCP. A Senior SEND Officer will then visit the School in order to work through the checklist point by point and complete it. The Senior SEND Officer will seek the comments of the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, SENDCo and Trustees as appropriate, as well as any other information or advice that they deem necessary.

Once the Provision Checklist has been completed, the Local Authority will notify the complainant of the outcome in writing, enclosing a copy of the checklist. A copy of the outcome letter and Checklist will also be sent to the School for its information and record keeping. This process will take up to 25 working days (of the Local Authority) to conclude.

Complainants who remain dissatisfied following further investigation of their Special Educational Needs provision complaint by the Local Authority may complain to the Secretary of State who may decide to conduct an additional investigation. The contact details for the Secretary of State are set out below.

The DFE will not normally re-investigate the substance of a complaint or overturn any decisions made by the School. They will consider whether the School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies relevant to the complaint. The DFE will not substitute its decision for that of the Stage 2 Complaints Panel simply because the complainant disagrees with it.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Secretary of State at 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

SLT: Mr Morrell

Committee: C&S

Trustee Approved: September 2026

Review date: September 2028

Queens' School (Bushey) Ltd (registered number: 076506090)

Appendix A



QUEENS' SCHOOL

Dare to be Great

Complaint Form

Name	
Pupil's name (if relevant)	
Address	
Mobile	
E-mail	

Please give details of your complaint

Have you raised your complaint at Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure?			
Yes		No	
If yes, what date did you do this? What was the outcome?			

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

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

Signed	
Date	

Official Use	
Date acknowledged:	
By Who:	
Complaint referred to:	
Action Taken	
Date:	

Please return this form to:

Private & Confidential
The Office
Queens' School
Aldenham Road
Bushey
Herts
WD23 2TY

Appendix B – Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant should:

- Explain their complaint in full as swiftly as possible.
- Cooperate fully with the School to try and resolve the complaint.
- Respond promptly to requests for information or meetings.
- Agree the details of their complaint and their desired outcomes in a timely way if clarification is requested.
- Ask for assistance if or when needed.
- Treat everybody involved in their complaint and the complaints process with dignity and respect.
- Refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.
- Refrain from making allegations and threats.

If the complainant fails or refuses to follow the above, the School may have to suspend its consideration of their complaint, either temporarily or permanently, depending on the nature of the complainant's behaviour and how this affects the School's handling of the complaint. In such circumstances, the School also reserves the right to invoke its Policy and Procedure for Managing Persistent and Vexatious Behaviour and Complaints (contained in Appendix 3).

Investigator (if one is required or appointed)

The Investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- Providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
 - Sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved.
 - Interviewing any staff, children, young people or any other people relevant to the complaint.
 - Consideration of records and other relevant information.
 - Analysing information.
 - Referring to any relevant School policies and procedures that apply.
- Liaising with the complainant and the Complaints Co-ordinator as appropriate to try and identify how the complaint may best be resolved.

The Investigator should:

- Conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in their questioning if they deem this necessary.
- Keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to document the meeting.
- Ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending further consideration of the complaint.
- Be mindful of the timescales to respond.
- If the Investigator is somebody other than the Headteacher, then they should prepare a comprehensive report for the Headteacher or the Stage 3 Complaints Panel that sets out the facts, tries to identify solutions and makes recommendations to try and resolve the issues.

The Headteacher or Stage 3 Complaints Panel will then determine whether to uphold or reject the complaint in full or in part and communicate their finding(s) to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Complaints Co-ordinator

This could be the Headteacher, a Designated Complaints Trustee or other staff member providing administrative support.

The Complaints Co-ordinator should:

- Ensure that the complainant is updated at each stage of procedure
- Liaise with staff members, Headteacher, Chair of Trustees or Trust Clerk and any other relevant sources of information or support, to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- Remain mindful of issues regarding:
 - Sharing third party information.
 - Additional support. This may be needed, for example, by complainants when making a complaint, including an Interpreter or where the complainant is a child or young person.
- Keep accurate records and store them securely.

Clerk to the Board

The Clerk is the point of contact for the complainant, the respondent on behalf of the School and the Stage 2 Complaints Panel. They should:

- Ensure that everybody involved in the complaints process is aware of their legal rights and responsibilities, including any under legislation relating to School complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- Set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties if they are invited to attend (unless three proposed dates have been declined without good reason in which case the Clerk or the Chair of Trustees will decide when the Hearing will be). They should also ensure that the venue and proceedings are accessible for all attendees.
- Collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; the Stage 2 paperwork, the respondent on behalf of the School's submission, the complainant's submission and signed, dated witness statements) and send it to all parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale (including the Panel).
- Take detailed notes of the Stage 3 Complaints Panel Hearing.
- Provide a copy of their detailed notes to either or both parties if requested to do so.
- Notify all parties of the Panel's findings

Chair of the Stage 3 Complaints Panel

The Chair of the Stage 3 Complaints Panel will be appointed in advance of the Hearing and 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 Hearing.
- The Hearing is conducted fairly and impartially, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy.
- Complainants who may not be used to attending such Hearings are put at ease insofar as possible.
- This is particularly important if the complainant is a child or young person.
- The remit of the Complaints Panel is explained to both parties.
- Written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.
- If a new issue arises, it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider it and comment upon it. This may require an adjournment of the Hearing. New issues would need to be passed back for consideration at Stage 1 first.

Both the complainant and the respondent on behalf of the School are given the opportunity to put forward their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the Hearing or verbally in the Hearing itself.

- No cross questioning is permitted. All questioning is conducted by the Panel.
- The issues are addressed.

- Key findings of fact are made.
- The Panel is open-minded and acts independently.
- No member of the Panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or has had any involvement at an earlier stage of the complaints process.
- The Clerk takes detailed notes of the Hearing.
- They liaise with the Clerk whenever the need arises (and the Complaints Co-ordinator, if the School has one).

Stage 3 Complaints Panel Member

Stage 3 Complaints Panel Members should remain mindful that:

- The Hearing must be independent and impartial and should be seen to be so.
- No Trustee may sit on the Panel if they have had prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- The aim of the Hearing should be to try and resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the School and the complainant wherever possible.
- The complainant may not be satisfied with the outcome if the Panel does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.
- Many complainants will feel nervous in a formal setting such as this.
- Parents and carers often feel emotional when discussing issues that affect their children.
- Extra care needs to be taken if the complainant is a child or young person and they are present during all or part of the Hearing.
- Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should be given to ensure that a child or young person does not feel intimidated.
- The Panel should respect the views of a child or young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
- If a child or young person is the complainant, the Panel should ask them in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint.
- Where a child or young person's parent or carer is the complainant, the Panel should give them the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child or young person would like to be present for.
- The complainant should be advised that it may not be agreed for a child or young person to attend a Hearing if the Panel considers that it is not in the child or young person's best interests.
- The welfare and best interests of the child or young person should remain at the forefront at all times.

Appendix C- Managing Persistent and Vexatious Behaviour and Complaints

The School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and in accordance with the complaints policy and procedure that the Trust Board has adopted.

The School will not normally limit the amount of contact that parents, carers or complainants have with us; however, the School does not expect its staff to tolerate unreasonable behaviour and we will take decisive action to protect staff from such behaviour, including any that the School deems to be abusive, offensive or threatening.

The School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which affects the smooth and efficient running of the School on a daily basis, or that which hinders the School 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 cooperate with the complaints process at any stage.
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints process.
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints process or with good practice, or only in a way that suits themselves.
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information that they expect to be taken into account and commented upon.
- Raises detailed but unimportant questions and insists they are answered fully, often immediately and to their own timescales.
- Makes unfounded complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeks to have them replaced.
- Seeks to change the basis of some or all of the complaint as the complaints process proceeds.
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint(s) (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is unfounded or has been fully addressed).
- Refuses to accept the outcome of the complaints process despite the fact that the process has been exhausted and correctly implemented, including signposting the complainant to the Department for Education (DFE).
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- Makes excessive demands on School time by way of frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact(s) with staff regarding the complaint, in person, in writing, by email and by telephone whilst the complaint is being dealt with.
- Uses threats to intimidate.
- Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence.
- Makes and breaks contact with the School on an ongoing basis with varying time delays in between.
- Knowingly provides false information.
- Persistently approaches various individuals at the School, as well as the Local Authority, Ofsted and the Department for Education, etc, through different routes about the same issue(s) in the hope of eliciting different responses.
- Publishes what the School deems to be inappropriate or unacceptable information on social media or other platforms.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the School where it relates to their complaint, whilst the complaint is being progressed through the complaints process. It is unhelpful and unnecessary if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome(s) being finalised.

Wherever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Trustees will discuss any concerns with the Complainant/Parent/Carer about their behaviour informally before deciding to invoke this policy and procedure for managing persistent and vexatious behaviour and complaints.

If any unreasonable behaviour continues after the Headteacher or Chair of Trustees has spoken informally with the Complainant/Parent/Carer, the Headteacher will write to them. The Headteacher will confirm that the School deems their behaviour to be persistent and/or vexatious and will ask them to stop behaving in this way.

Wherever Complainants/Parents/Carers continue to contact the School excessively, causing a significant level of disruption, the School will consider whether to impose some or all of the following communication restrictions and confirm this in writing accordingly:

- Requesting that contact only takes place in a particular form (e.g. letters only).
- Requiring contact to take place with a designated member of Staff (e.g. the Headteacher).
- Restricting telephone calls to specified days and times.
- Asking the complainant to enter into an agreement about their future contact with the School.
- Informing the complainant that if they do not follow this advice (as stated above), any further communication/correspondence that does not present significant new matters or new information will only be kept on file and will not be acknowledged or responded to
- If the complainant tries to re-open an issue that has already been considered through the complaints process, the Chair of Trustees will inform them in writing that the process has been exhausted, that the matter is now closed, and that the School will not enter into any further correspondence about it.

The decision of the Headteacher or Chair of Trustees to invoke this policy and procedure (and any communication restrictions imposed as a result) is final and cannot be challenged or overturned through the complaints process. This is because the decision will be reviewed by the Headteacher or Chair of Trustees after six months.

If the Complainant/Parent/Carer's behaviour has remained the same or worsened, the Headteacher or Chair of Trustees reserves the right to extend the communication restrictions for a further six months each time they review the situation. If the Complainant/Parent/Carer's behaviour has improved to a level that the School deems acceptable, then communication restrictions will be lifted on the proviso that should matters regress, the School reserves the right to reinstate the communication restrictions that previously applied.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence the School will immediately inform the Police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring the individual(s) from the School premises. Should the School deem this necessary, it will ensure that it adheres to the guidance issued by the Department for Education (DFE) entitled Controlling access to School premises.

The School also reserves the right to use and adapt this policy and procedure whenever it deems it appropriate to manage unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints.



QUEENS' SCHOOL
Dare to be Great

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

Aim and Objectives	
Queens' School is committed to promoting fairness in opportunity. We therefore conduct Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments on policies to understand their potential effects on different groups of people.	

Policy Assessment				
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Findings
Race			✓	
Religion and/or belief			✓	
Sex (Gender)			✓	
Gender Identity			✓	
Disability			✓	
Age			✓	
Sexual orientation			✓	
Marriage and/or civil partnership			✓	
Pregnancy and/or maternity (including surrogacy and			✓	

adoption)				
Other identified group (e.g. carers)			✓	

Action Planning		
How do you intend to mitigate or eliminate any negative impact identified?	If a positive impact is identified, how do you intend to promote or develop this opportunity?	Where negative impact has been identified, can it be justified? If so, explain how.

Monitor and Review
The policy will be monitored through feedback from stakeholders