



POLICY	PARENTS/CARERS COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE
STATUS/DATE OF THIS VERSION	September 2024
APPROVED BY	Approved by Trust Board
RATIFIED BY	Trust Board October 2024
REVIEW	2027

1. Statement of Intent

Unity Education Trust aims to resolve all complaints at the earliest possible stage and is dedicated to continuing to provide the highest quality of education possible throughout the procedure. There is a time limit for a person to raise a formal complaint (e.g., within 3 months of an incident). However, UET will still consider whether to accept or progress any complaint that falls outside this time limit – for example, if there are exceptional circumstances.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the UET schools. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to UET Academies about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

Anyone can complain to the Secretary of State for Education about a trust in England. The department handles complaints about academies on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education, in line with the trust's funding agreement. [Complain about a school](#) has information about the role of the Secretary of State for Education and the department in the complaints process.

Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures(please see p3), we will use this complaints procedure.

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*'.

The Complaints Policy and Procedure has been created to deal with any complaint against a member of staff, or the school as a whole relating to any aspects of the school or the

provision of facilities or services. The school intends to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage and respectfully. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed. However, some complaints are subject to separate procedures, as described in section 2 below.

Any person, including a member of the public, is able to make a complaint about the provision of facilities that the school provides. It is reasonable that any complaints made at the end of term may be postponed until the start of the next term to enable a full and thorough investigation to take place. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where the secretary of state or a body conducting a section 109 inspection requests access to them.

This policy outlines the procedure that the complainant and the school must follow. This policy is available to download from the school website or available in hard copy from the school office.

This policy is operated by all the schools in Unity Education Trust (as listed below) and complaints should be directed to the school concerned – normally to the Headteacher/Head of School. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, you will be referred to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, we 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. Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

- Beeston Primary
- Garvestone Primary
- Grove House Infant
- Kings Park Infant
- Northgate High School and Dereham Sixth Form College
- The Pinetree School
- Churchill Park
- Greyfriars Primary
- Highgate Infant School
- Kings Oak Infant School
- Wimbotsham and Stow Primary
- Magdalen Primary
- St Germans Primary
- Great Dunham Primary
- Unity Pathfinder Douglas Bader Academy
- Unity Compass Belton Academy

2. Other complaints procedures

Some complaints are subject to separate statutory procedures instead of the general complaint's procedure.

Complaint by member of school staff	School grievance procedure
Student suspension and exclusion	Right to make representations about suspensions/ exclusions to Governors' Discipline Committee. Right of appeal to independent panel for permanent exclusion
Admission to school	Norfolk County policy on school admissions with right of appeal to independent panel if admission refused
Child protection	School child protection procedures apply – contact Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection
Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)	LA statutory assessment procedures apply if parent requests an EHCP. Right of appeal to independent SEN Tribunal
Complaints about services provided by a third party who may use the school premises or facilities	Address complaints to the service provider directly.
Whistleblowing	Please see our separate policy for procedures relating to these types of complaint
Staff grievance	Please see our separate policy for procedures relating to these types of complaint
Staff discipline	Please see our separate policy for procedures relating to these types of complaint
Safeguarding matters including allegations of abuse against staff	Refer to Safeguarding policy
Statutory assessments of SEN	Refer to EHCP Co ordinator
Complaints about the content of the National Curriculum	Direct to DfE
Collective worship	Direct to Local Authority, SACRE or the relevant religious authority
School reorganisation proposals	Via response to published consultation
Complaints from people who are not parents or carers of attending pupils	Will follow this same procedure

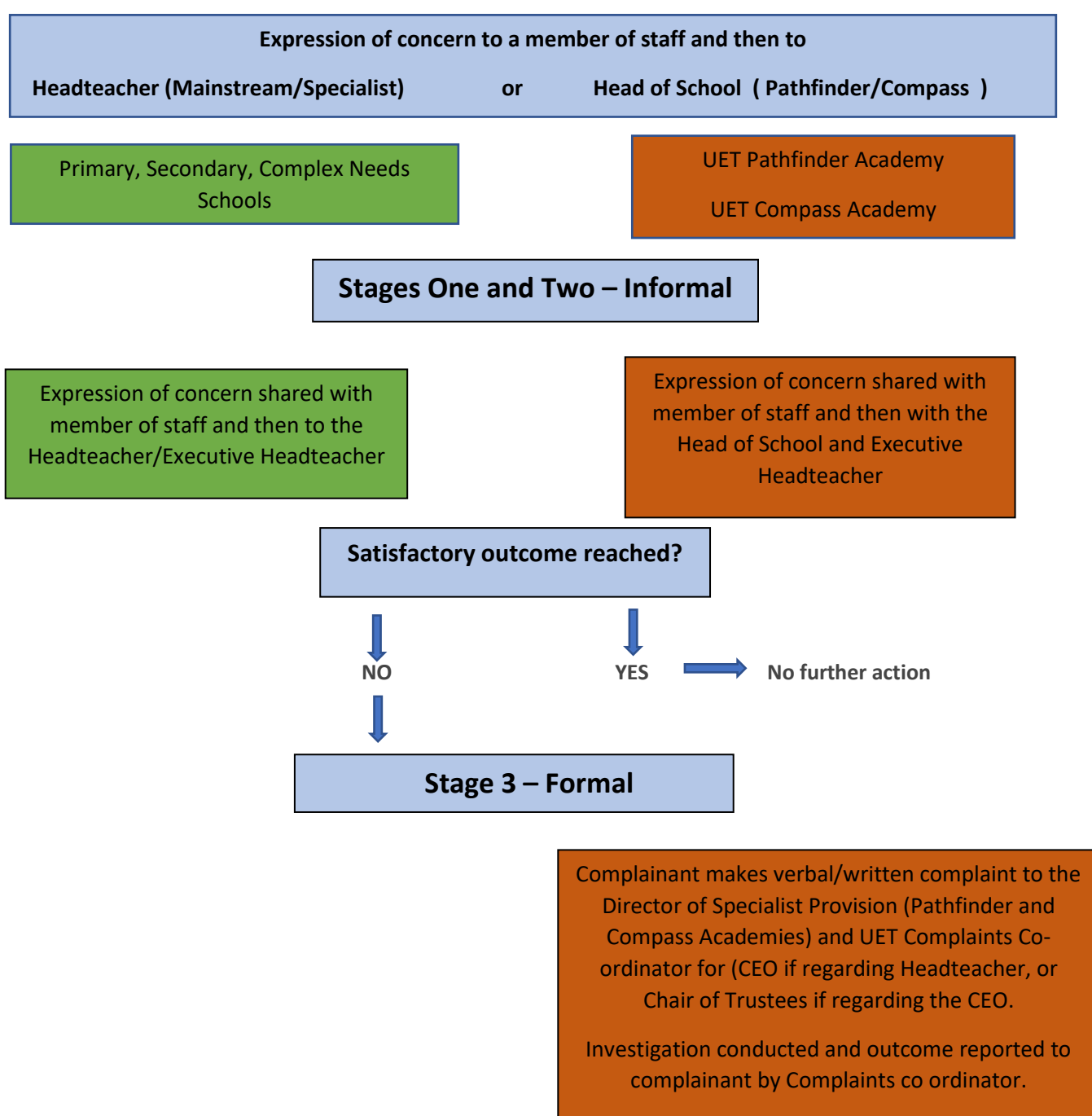
Early Years Funding

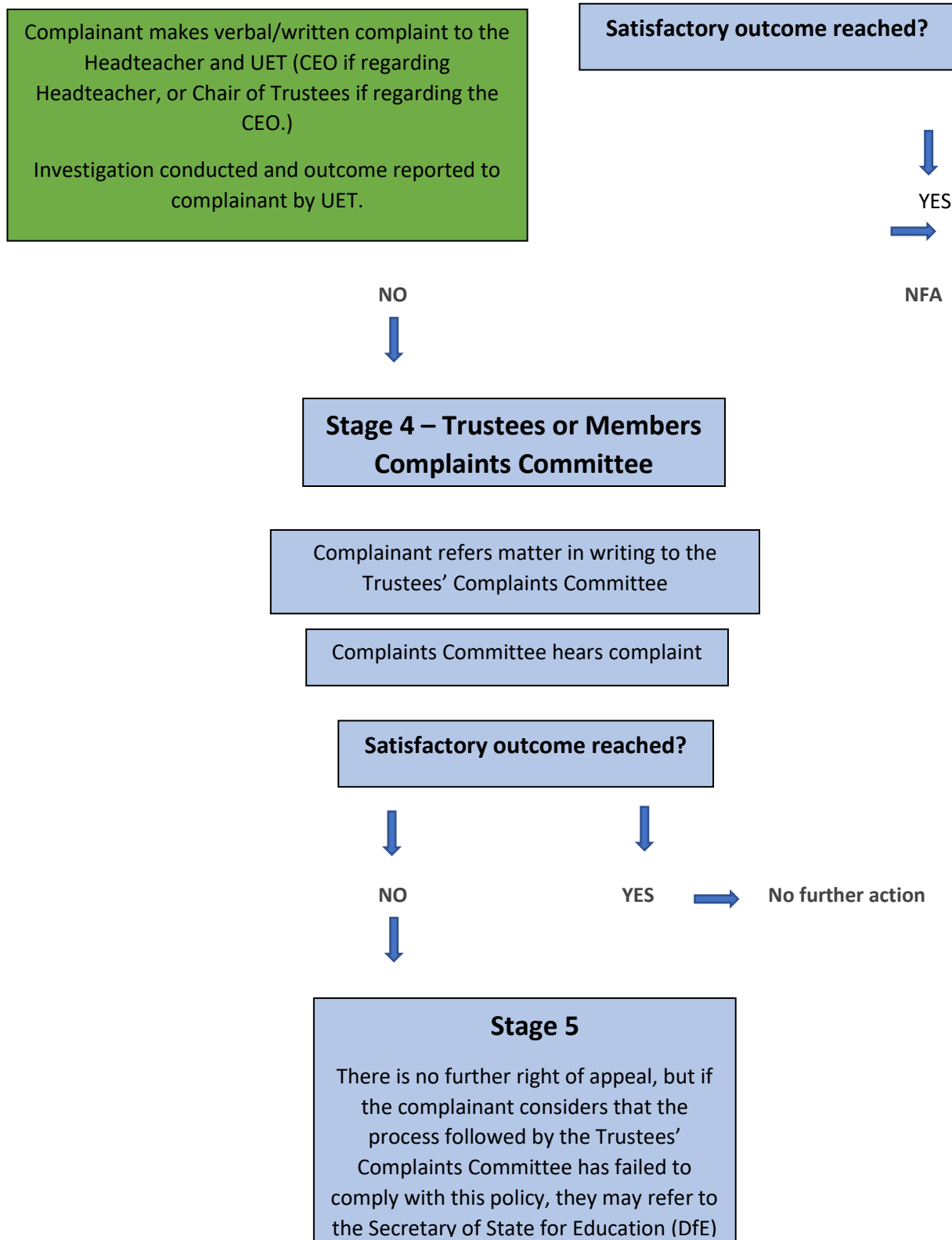
Where parents/carers are concerned that their child may not be receiving the free entitlement in the correct way (as set out in the funding agreement and in Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities), the concern can be discussed with the Headteacher.

Social Media

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, we request the complainants do not discuss complaints publicly via social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok and X. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved, and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

3. Summary of Complaints Procedure





4. General Principles

Any complaint raised needs to be treated seriously and courteously and given the time necessary for the complainant to feel that the matter has been dealt with properly. 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 of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. It is important that the complainant has confidence in these procedures and knows that the matter will be impartially investigated.

Parents of pupils with EHC plans

Where the complaint comes from the parent of a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan about the support provided by their school, an upcoming annual [EHC plan review](#) meeting could be used as an opportunity to discuss the concerns.

Members of other agencies at the meeting, such as the local authority (LA), can help explain aspects of provision to the parent. Information from multiple sources besides the school may better satisfy a parent.

However, EHC meetings won't be the appropriate place to discuss every issue and parents may have more immediate concerns to address. Where this is the case, the usual Complaints procedure will apply.

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the head teacher or CEO, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period

- The complaints procedure should be easily accessible and publicised.
- Complaints should be made as soon as possible after an incident arises. In order to address the concern in an appropriate timescale, complaints should be raised within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. Exceptional circumstances will be taken into account when deciding whether to progress a complaint outside of this timescale
- Complaints should be dealt with as quickly as possible, consistently and with fairness to all. The trust will appoint a complaints co-ordinator. The complaints co-ordinator for UET is:

➤ Head of Governance, Compliance and Corporate Support

The complaints co-ordinator will:

- Keep the complainant up to date at each stage in the procedure
- Make sure the process runs smoothly by liaising with staff members, the headteacher, CEO and chair of trustees
- Be aware of issues relating to:
 - Sharing third party information

- Additional support needed by complainants, for example interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person

➤ Keep records

- Dates and times of conversations should always be recorded and made available to investigators as necessary. The date that the complaint is received will be recorded by the Headteacher and advised to the Complaints co ordinator.
- Every effort will be made to keep to stated timescales. However, if a complaint requires additional time to investigate thoroughly, you will be notified of the change in timescales.
- A complaint is not part of any staff disciplinary process. Staff who may be questioned as part of a complaint's procedure must be treated fairly and have an opportunity to put their case. They should be offered support in dealing with any investigation into a complaint.
- Any member of staff who is complained about will have the opportunity to respond to the complaint during the investigation and will be able to see any response sent as a result of the investigation. If, however, during the course of considering a complaint, it appears that disciplinary procedures should be initiated, that will be considered as a separate action, as there is an entirely separate procedure for schools to follow in terms of dealing with staff discipline.
- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times by all parties. All conversations and correspondence must be treated with discretion. Parents must feel confident a complaint will not disadvantage their child. UET provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to 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 All parties to a complaint will need to accept that some sharing of information will be inevitable if the complaint is to be investigated fully.
- All staff and governors should have the opportunity to take part in training to raise awareness of the procedures and to develop their skills in dealing with people who wish to complain.
- All complaints should be recorded and monitored to allow any lessons to be learned by the school and the Trust.
- If a complaint is made initially to a governor, the complainant should be referred to the appropriate person as set out in this procedure. The governor concerned should not act alone on a complaint outside this procedure.
- Complaints beyond the informal stages (1 & 2) should normally be addressed to the Headteacher or Head of School or refer to the flowchart on p4 for Pathfinder and Compass academies.
- Any complaints made against a member of staff will be dealt with by the Headteacher or a designee e.g., Deputy, and follow this Complaints procedure
- Any complaint made against the Headteacher/Head of School should be addressed to the CEO and any complaint about the CEO should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees

- Any complaint made against the Chair of Trustees or the conduct of the Trust Board should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Trustees. This will be considered by the Members of UET as a Stage 4 Panel
- If there is an ongoing police investigation, we will wait until it has concluded before our own investigation begins and will co-operate fully
- AI generated complaints- where the complainant has not followed the UET Complaints process, the recipient will summarise the complaint, check this with the complainant that it is clear and correct and advise at which stage the complaint is being managed.
- If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

1. The First Informal Stage for dealing with complaints and concerns

- The complainant should discuss their concerns with the appropriate member of staff, for example, the classroom teacher, head of department, form tutor or head of year. The staff member will seek to clarify the nature of the concern and reassure you that the school wants to hear about it. The member of staff may explain to you how the situation arose. It may also be helpful at this point to identify what sort of outcome you are looking for.
- The member of staff will respond appropriately, taking into account the seriousness of the complaint. In many cases this will lead to immediate resolution of the issue.
- If the member of staff first contacted cannot deal immediately with the matter, or if they need to refer the matter to someone else, they will need to make a clear note of the date, complainant's name and contact address/phone number. In either case the member of staff will subsequently ensure that appropriate action is taken to deal with the matter speedily.
- Where the concern relates to the specific actions of the Headteacher/Head of School, you will be given the opportunity to meet with the Headteacher/Head of School to resolve the problem. In some circumstances you may prefer to contact the CEO; this will be respected.
- The staff member dealing with the complaint will make sure that you are clear what will happen next (if anything). This should be put in writing only if it seems the best way of making the outcome clear.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of stage 1 within 10 school working days of the date when they first raised their concern, they may proceed to stage 2.

2. The Second Informal Stage for dealing with complaints and concerns

- Complainants who are not satisfied with the result of the stage 1 process should ask for an appointment to meet with the Headteacher/Head of School/Exec HT(Pathfinder) or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher).

- Where the concern relates to the specific actions of the Headteacher/Head of School, complainants who are not satisfied with the result of the stage 1 process should ask for an appointment with the CEO.
- The parties involved will be encouraged to offer their view on what would be a realistic resolution to the problem.
- If resolution to the issue is proving difficult to find the Headteacher/Head of School or other person dealing with the complaint or concern may feel that input from the Trust would be helpful in finding a way forward and may, therefore, speak to CEO/Complaints coordinator about the issue who will be able to offer advice.
- The aim should be that discussions end on a positive note with no bad feeling.
- The Headteacher/Head of School or other person dealing with the complaint or concern will write to the complainant summarising what has been agreed regarding the issue.

The Third Stage – Formal consideration by the Headteacher/Head of School (or other appropriate senior leader in the absence of the Head)

- Stage three complaints should be in writing, preferably using the complaints form attached, unless you are unable to express the complaint in written form (advice and support is available from the LA's Equalities and SEN teams as appropriate). Your complaint should be addressed to the Headteacher/Head of School /Exec HT(Pathfinder) or to the CEO if your complaint relates to the Headteacher/Head of School.
- Your letter should be acknowledged in writing within five working days of receiving the stage three complaint. The acknowledgement will give you a brief explanation of the Trust's complaint procedure and a target date for providing a response. If a response cannot be given by the target date, a letter will be sent to you explaining the reasons for the delay and giving a revised target date.
- It should be possible even at this stage to reach an agreed solution to the problem. It needs to be considered that the aim is to progress the matter for the good of the child, their parents/carers and the school. Prolonging a complaint longer than is necessary may be harmful to any or all parties involved
- The Headteacher/Head of School (or designated senior member of staff) will need to provide an opportunity for the complainant to meet with them to supplement any of the information provided previously at the informal stages. It will be made clear to the complainant that they can, if they wish, be accompanied to any meeting by a friend, relative, representative or advocate who can speak on their behalf. In some circumstances we will also provide interpreting facilities if so required.
- Where required, the school will interview witnesses and take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres on a student, they will also be interviewed. A member of staff who is known and trusted by the student should be invited to attend wherever possible.
- Once all relevant facts have been established, the Headteacher/Head of School will produce a written response to the complainant and may wish to meet with the

complainant to discuss/resolve the matter directly. A written response will include a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, this will include what action the school will take to resolve the complaint.

- Where the complaint at stage three is against the Headteacher/Head of School, arrangements will be made for the proceedings under this stage to be conducted by CEO.

3. The Fourth Stage – Consideration by a Committee appointed by the Board of Trustees

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response given under stage 3 they may refer the matter to the Trustees' Complaints Committee. They should set out their complaint in writing within ten school days of receiving the stage 3 outcome. The complaint should be addressed to the Clerk of the Trustees' Complaints Committee, c/o Unity Education Trust, Crown Road, Dereham, NR20 4AG preferably using the complaints form attached and marked for Urgent Attention.

Following receipt of a stage four appeal the procedures outlined below will be followed:

- The Clerk to the Trustees' Complaints Committee will write to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the written request within five school days. The acknowledgement will inform the complainant that the complaint will be considered by the Trustees' Complaints Committee, within 20 school days of receiving the request.
- The complainant must have reasonable notice of the date of the review panel.
- If the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, the clerk will set a date. The hearing will go ahead using written submissions from both parties.
- The letter will also explain that the complainant and the Headteacher/Head of School/DoSp have the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. Both parties should send further documentation to the Clerk at least eight school days before the meeting. All concerned, including the complainant should receive any relevant documents at least five school days prior to the meeting. The notification to the complainant will also inform them of their right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/advocate/interpreter. The letter will also explain how the meeting will be conducted. Legal representation by either party is not encouraged, but will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- The Clerk to the Trustees' Complaints Committee will convene the meeting of the committee which will comprise three persons with no prior involvement of the complaint, or the circumstances surrounding it. One member of the committee will be independent of the management and running of the school and this could be a governor from a different school within UET who has no conflict of interest or prior knowledge of the complaint. The committee will elect a chair for the hearing. The Headteacher/Head of School or other senior member of staff will not be a member of the Complaints Committee. The Trust will have regard to the need for ethnic, gender or other mix of members as appropriate. The meeting will be held in private

- The Committee may invite members of staff and other witnesses directly involved in matters raised by the complainant to produce a written report, or to attend the meeting. If a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by their union.
- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted.
- An officer from Children Services or other professional adviser may attend the meeting to advise the Committee (at the request of the committee).
- 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 will be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.
- Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- A model procedure for conduct of the meeting is attached as Appendix 1.
- The aim of the meeting will be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised that sometimes it may only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations as to future action that will satisfy the complainant that their complaint has been taken seriously.
- The Committee should remember that some parents/carers are unused to dealing with groups of people in formal situations and may feel inhibited when speaking to the committee. It is therefore recommended that the Chair of the Complaints committee ensures that the proceedings are as informal as the situation allows. Similarly, when a child is present at the hearing extra care needs to be taken to ensure that the child does not feel intimidated, as well as ensuring the child's view is represented equally.
- At the conclusion of the meeting the chair should explain that the committee will consider its decision and write to both parties with the outcome within 15 school days. A copy of the meeting Minutes will also be provided.
- All except the members of the Complaints Committee and any advisers should then withdraw to allow the committee to reach its decision. The committee can:
 - Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
 - Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part

If the complaint is upheld, the committee will:

- Decide the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future
- A report and any recommendations should be reported to the Trust Board at the next full meeting, with the identity of all those taking part kept confidential.
- A written statement outlining the decision of the Committee must be sent to the Trust, the complainant, the Headteacher/Head of School and, where relevant, the person complained about. If any disciplinary action is to be taken against a member

of staff then, to protect their rights, only the phrase “appropriate action has or will be taken” will be used.

- The Trust will ensure that a copy of all correspondence, statements and records relating to the complaints is kept in a confidential file in the Trust’s records. These records should be kept separately from the student’s personal records.
- Complainants are entitled to a fair meeting or review and can request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. They should provide evidence of bias in support of their request, If the appearance of bias is sufficient to taint the decision reached, then such requests can be granted.
- Persons who have a conflict of interest should not take part in the complaints process, If there's any reasonable doubt as to a person's ability to act impartially, they should withdraw from considering the complaint. Where a governor / trustee has a financial interest in any related matter, they should also withdraw to satisfy the principle that justice must not only be done, but be seen to be done.

4. Further action

- Except in the circumstances outlined in the Complaints Policy overview (stage 4) there is no further right of appeal for complainants.
- Complainants may refer to the Education and Skills Funding Agency who will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the academy and whether the complaint falls within the remit of the ESFA to investigate further. The ESFA will not overturn the academy’s decision about a complaint, but will intervene if a school or trust 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

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

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

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

We will include this information in the outcome letter to complainants.

Unreasonably persistent complainants

The great majority of people with complaints or concerns about the school behave reasonably in pursuing their complaint. This means that they:

- a) treat all school staff with courtesy and respect
- b) respect the needs of students and staff within the school;
- c) avoid the use of violence (including threats of violence) towards people and property;

- d) recognise the time constraints under which members of staff work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond to a complaint;
- e) recognise that resolving a specific problem can sometimes take some time;
- f) follow the school's complaints procedures

However, a small number of complainants may be deemed “unreasonably persistent complainants”. This means that, in complaining about issues, either formally or informally, they behave unreasonably, for example by:

- a) making the same complaint which has already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure
- b) actions which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory, repetitious; and/or
- c) prolific correspondence or excessive e-mail or telephone contact about a concern or complaint; and/or
- d) an insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic and/or unreasonable outcomes; and/or
- e) an insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner. e.g., refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the time frames it sets out
- f) Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- g) Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value

Our procedure for identifying and responding to each complaint is attached as Appendix 2.

Duplicate complaints

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

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

- Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and that the local process is complete and the matter is now closed.
- Choose not to respond. The decision to stop responding will never be taken lightly. You need to be able to say yes to all of the following:
 - you have taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns
 - the complainant has been given a clear statement of your position and their options
 - the complainant contacts you repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time.

The case to stop responding is stronger if you agree with one or more of these statements:

- their letters, emails, or telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive
- they make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff
- you have reason to believe the individual is contacting you with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience

You should not stop responding just because an individual is difficult to deal with or asks complex questions.

➤ Direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint
If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again

Complaint campaigns

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

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

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

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

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

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

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy notices and records management policy/record retention schedule.

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

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

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

Learning lessons

The Trust will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Head teacher/Head of School [headteacher/senior leadership team/job title of appropriate staff member], where

appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

Monitoring arrangements

The PPP Committee of the Trust Board will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in making sure that complaints are handled properly. The Committee will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues.

The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the Committee or Trust Board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point

Record keeping and Data management

The complaints records are logged and managed by Head of Services.

The Trust will record the progress of all complaints, including information about:

- Actions taken at all stages
- The stage at which the complaint was resolved
- The final outcome

The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes related to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and stored securely in the Trust office, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

In the case of complaints about the trust or CEO, these records will be managed by the Clerk to the Board of Trustees], and will be stored securely in the trust's offices under restricted access.

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 under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy notices and record retention schedule.

Appendix 1

A Model Procedure for the Conduct of a

Complaint Hearing at Stage Three

1. The chair of the committee should invite everybody into the room, introduce them and explain the role of each person.
2. The chair should explain to all present that the purpose of the meeting is to review the complaint, resolve any differences and achieve a reconciliation between the school and the complainant.
3. The chair should then outline the proposed procedure for the meeting. S/he should listen to any concerns about the procedure but has the final decision about the arrangements:
 - a. The complainant will outline the complaint and may call witnesses.
 - b. The Headteacher/Head of School (or senior member of staff) will be given the opportunity to seek clarification from the complainant and/or witnesses.
 - c. The committee may seek clarification from the complainant and/or witnesses.
 - d. The Headteacher/Head of School (or Senior member of staff) will be given the opportunity to respond and call witnesses.
 - e. The complainant will be given the opportunity to seek clarification from the Head of School (or senior member of staff) and/or witnesses.
 - f. The committee may seek clarification from the complainant and/or witnesses.
 - g. The complainant will be given the opportunity to sum up.
 - h. The Headteacher/Head of School (or senior member of staff) will be given the opportunity to sum up.
 - i. Both parties will then leave the room to allow the committee to deliberate.
4. The committee will then arrive at its decision. This will cover:
 - a) Findings on the complaint.
 - b) Appropriate action to be taken by the Trust or school.

c) Any recommended changes to the Trust or school's systems or procedures.

5. The decision will be notified to all parties, in writing, within 15 school day

Appendix 2

Procedure for Dealing with Unreasonably Persistent Complainants

The Trust 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 the 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.

The Trust defines unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- 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 while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or 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;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;

- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a 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.

Deciding whether a complainant should be deemed an unreasonably persistent complainant

Only the Headteacher/Head of School, with the agreement of the CEO, may deem a complainant an unreasonably persistent complainant.

The Headteacher/Head of School will ensure that there is sufficient evidence available to justify the decision. They will consult staff to confirm that the evidence is sufficient.

Action to be taken where a complainant is deemed an “unreasonably persistent complainant”

The Headteacher/Head of School will write to the complainant to explain the decision and the way that future complaints will be dealt with. Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate.

Some or all of the following actions may be taken, depending on the particular circumstances of the case:

- insisting that no member of staff should meet the complainant on his/her own;
- restricting telephone calls from the complainant to specified days and times;
- requiring that all future contacts with the school are in writing, except in emergencies; this includes contacts with members of the governing body, who should only be contacted at the school address;
- merely acknowledging correspondence from the complainant that raises issues that have already been dealt with;
- ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as [Citizens Advice](#)
- choose not to respond
- after consulting the CEO, banning the complainant from the school premises where the complainant’s behaviour constitutes a nuisance or disturbance, with any appointments with staff to be agreed in writing via the Headteacher/Head of School.
- In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our school site.

However, all correspondence from the complainant will be considered and any new and substantive issues will be addressed and a reply sent to the complainant. New complaints from people who have been deemed unreasonably persistent complainants will be treated on their merits.

COMPLAINT FORM

If you are not satisfied or feel that you have been unfairly treated, we would like you to indicate the problem.

It is however important that you attempt to resolve any difficulties in the first instance by discussing your concerns/complaint with a member of staff at the school.

If you have tried this and are still not satisfied with the response then please fill in all the sections of this form and return it to the Headteacher/Head of School, or, if your complaint relates to the Headteacher/Head of School, return the form to the CEO in an envelope marked URGENT.

Please note that should the complaint refer to more than one incident, you should complete a separate form for each incident; this is to clarify individual responsibility and maintain confidentiality, should the case result in a formal hearing.

Your Name:

Your Address:

Your Tel. No:	(Home)	(Work)
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Child's Name and D.O.B:	Your relationship to child:
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Please give a brief description of your concerns/complaint (continue on additional sheets, if necessary)

When did you report the problem to the school?

To whom at the school did you report the problem?

What was the response?

Have you complained to the school about this before?

YES/NO *

If so, to whom and when?

What steps do you feel should have been taken by the school to resolve the matter?

What steps do you feel should now be taken by the school to resolve the matter?

Many complaints can be settled on an informal basis over the telephone by speaking directly with a member of staff or the Headteacher.

The School is collecting this data in order to meet its statutory responsibilities regarding the school's complaint procedures which have been set up in accordance with Section 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. This data may be shared with other agencies. Please sign below to give approval for this data to be shared as mentioned.

I do/do not* wish my details to be shared with other agencies (* please delete as appropriate).

Signature of Parent/Carer: _____

Date: _____