

Spring 2026  
Next Review Date: Spring 2027

# Complaints Procedure For QUEST Schools

Company Number 09306360

Hindley Green Community Primary School  
St. Peter's C. of E. Primary School  
St. John's C. of E. Primary School Abram  
St. John's C. of E. Primary School Hindley Green  
University Collegiate School



# Complaints Flowchart

## STAGE 1

### INFORMAL

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, head of year / subject lead or Headteacher/Head of School.

Informal written response within ten school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

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

## STAGE 2

### FORMAL

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

Acknowledge receipt with 5 school days.

Formal written response within 15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint (If unable to meet this deadline, complainant will be provided with an update and revised response date)

## STAGE 3

### PANEL HEARING

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 meeting with the Trustee Complaints committee within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response.

Acknowledge receipt with 5 school days.

Aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 request

Chair will respond in writing, within 15 school days of the meeting.

This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

# QUEST Complaints Procedure

## 1. Policy Statement

### 1.1 Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that any complaint, including a complaint against a member of staff, is handled by QUEST appropriately, efficiently and at the appropriate level, and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is:

- Good for relationships.
- Good education practice.
- Good business practice.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial.
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response.
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality.
- Treat complainants with respect.
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process.
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes.

In conducting this process with dignity, the Trust expects dignity to be shown by the complainant. The Trust will not tolerate any abusive or threatening language/behaviour towards any staff members and will take appropriate action in accordance with the Parental Behaviour Policy and, if necessary, refer to the appropriate authorities.

This policy can be made available in larger print or more accessible format if required.

### **Who can make a complaint?**

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school/Trust. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to a QUEST school or QUEST 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.

### **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. QUEST takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, Headteacher, will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, 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.

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

## **Procedures**

QUEST is clear about the difference between a concern and complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints

### **How to raise a concern or make a complaint**

A concern or complaint can be made in person or in writing. 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 either the class teacher, head of year, subject lead or headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complainants should not approach individual executive members of the Trust, governors or 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.

Complaints against school staff (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the 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 Executive Team (CEO/DCEO/CFO), via the QUEST Main Office (682 Atherton Road Hindley Green Wigan WN2 4SQ). Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In 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 Executive Team, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Managing and Recording Complaints**

The Academy Trust and its schools will keep a written record of all complaints (including whether resolved at the informal stage or proceeded to a panel hearing), the date on which they were received and their final outcome. Written records will be kept for at least three years. Brief notes of meetings and telephone calls should be recorded and a copy of any

written response added to the record.

All correspondence and statements and records of complaint will be kept confidential and viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the Complaints 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 request or under the terms of GDPR, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

The Academy Trust will monitor the effectiveness of the Trust Complaints Procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly. The Academy Trust will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis.

### **Serial, Persistent or Vexatious Complaints**

Whilst the Trust/School will endeavour to assist a person who wishes to make a complaint, raise a concern or request information, however, there may be instances when a complainant repeatedly raises a complaint that has already been dealt with at all stages of the complaint's procedure. The process that the Trust/School will follow upon consideration of complaints that could be defined as serial, persistent or vexatious are outlined within the Trust's Managing serial and unreasonable complaints policy.

### **Complaint campaigns**

If the Trust/schools become the focus of a campaign and receive large volumes of complaints:

- all based on the same subject.
- from complainants unconnected with the school we will either:  
send a template response to all complainants or  
publish a single response on the school's website.

### **Scope of this Complaints Procedure**

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

<b>Exceptions</b>	<b>Who to contact</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Admissions to schools</li><li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li><li>• School re-organisation proposals</li></ul>	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with the local authority.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li></ul>	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).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exclusion of children from school*</li> </ul>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the Trust's complaints procedure. A copy of the behaviours policy is available on the Trust website</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>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: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>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 depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff grievances</li> </ul>	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Trust's internal grievance procedures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff conduct</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Trust's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>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.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</li> </ul>	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Curriculum - content</li> </ul>	Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>

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 the Trust/Schools 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.

### **Resolving complaints**

At each stage in the procedure, QUEST and its schools want 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/trust 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 – 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, head of year / subject lead or Headteacher/Head of School. Complainants should not approach individual governors/trustees/executive members 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 ten school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

### **Stage 2 – formal complaint**

Formal complaints must be made to the headteacher (unless they are about the headteacher) *in some circumstances the complaint will be passed to the Trust Executive Leadership Team*, via the school office or school enquiries email. This may be done in person or in writing (on the Complaint Form).

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 15 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 the school will take to resolve the complaint.

In their response, the headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.

### ***For complaints that are about the Headteacher or a member of the Local Governing Body***

*If the complaint is about the headteacher, or a member of the local governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a member of the Executive Leadership Team or Central Senior Leadership team will be appointed to complete all the actions.*

*Complaints about the headteacher or member of the local governing body must be made to the Executive Leadership Team, via the QUEST Main Office (682 Atherton Road WN2 4SQ / enquiries@quest-trust.org.uk)*

*If the complaint is:*

- *Jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair; or*
  - *The entire local governing body; or*
  - *The majority of the local governing body*
- Stage 2 will be escalated to the Board of Trustees.*

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response and wishes to proceed to the next stage of this procedure, they should inform the Clerk of the Board of Trustees in writing within 10 school days (QUEST Training Centre, 682 Atherton Road Hindley Green Wigan WN2 4SQ / enquiries@quest-trust.org.uk)

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

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 meeting with the Trustee Complaints committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, trustees/governors available.

This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Clerk, via the QUEST Head Office, within 10 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 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 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.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three trustees/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 trustees/governors available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors/trustees through another through their Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 3.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along 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 7 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 school/trust with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 15 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.

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 the 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.

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.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire Board of Trustees or
- the majority of the Board of Trustees

Stage 3 will be heard by a committee of independent governors/trustees.

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 the school/trust will take to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

### **Complaints escalated to / about the Trust, CEO or Trustee**

If a complaint is escalated to QUEST "the trust" or if a complainant wishes to complain directly about the trust, then the complaint should be sent to the CEO to be investigated. The CEO will follow the process as above.

If the complaint concerns the CEO or a Trustee, the complaint should be investigated by the Chair of the Trust Board. If a formal complaint form is received about the Chair, the complaint will be referred to the Vice Chair for investigation.

*NB. Where the Chair of the Trust Board has investigated the complaint, they will write the letter of outcome to the Complainant and provide a copy to the CEO.*

### **Learning lessons**

The Local Governing Body will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Head Teacher/SLT 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.

### **Policy circulation**

This policy will be included on the Academy Trust's website and will be made available to the public.

### **Next Steps**

If the complainant believes the school/Trust 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 3.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by [the school or Trust](#). They will consider whether [the school/Trust](#) 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](http://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.

This policy was presented to and approved by Trustees during the Spring Term 2026 and will be reviewed annually.

Signed

C. Pailing

Chair of Trustees



**Complaint Form for Stage 2**

*Please complete this form and return it, via the school office, addressed to the Headteacher of the school, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.*

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b> <b>Day time telephone number:</b> <b>Evening telephone number:</b>
<b>Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.</b>

**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:**



**Complaint Form for Stage 3**

*Please complete this form and return it, via the QUEST Head Office, addressed to The Clerk*

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b> <b>Day time telephone number:</b> <b>Evening telephone number:</b>
Dear Sir or Madam,  I submitted a formal complaint to the school on .....and I received a response from the Headteacher on .....
I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school. I remain dissatisfied and believe the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2 because:

**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:**

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

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

### 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 through:
  - 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.

### *Complaints Co-ordinator (this could be the headteacher / designated complaints officer or other staff member providing administrative support)*

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- 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
- keep records.

### Clerk to the Board

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the committee's decision.

### 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
  - the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
  - complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
  - the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
  - 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 and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting
- both the complainant and the school/trust are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
  - 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 (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one).

## Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so  
No trustee may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant  
We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.
- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting  
Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting

Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.

The committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.

If the child/young person is the complainant, the committee should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.

However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.