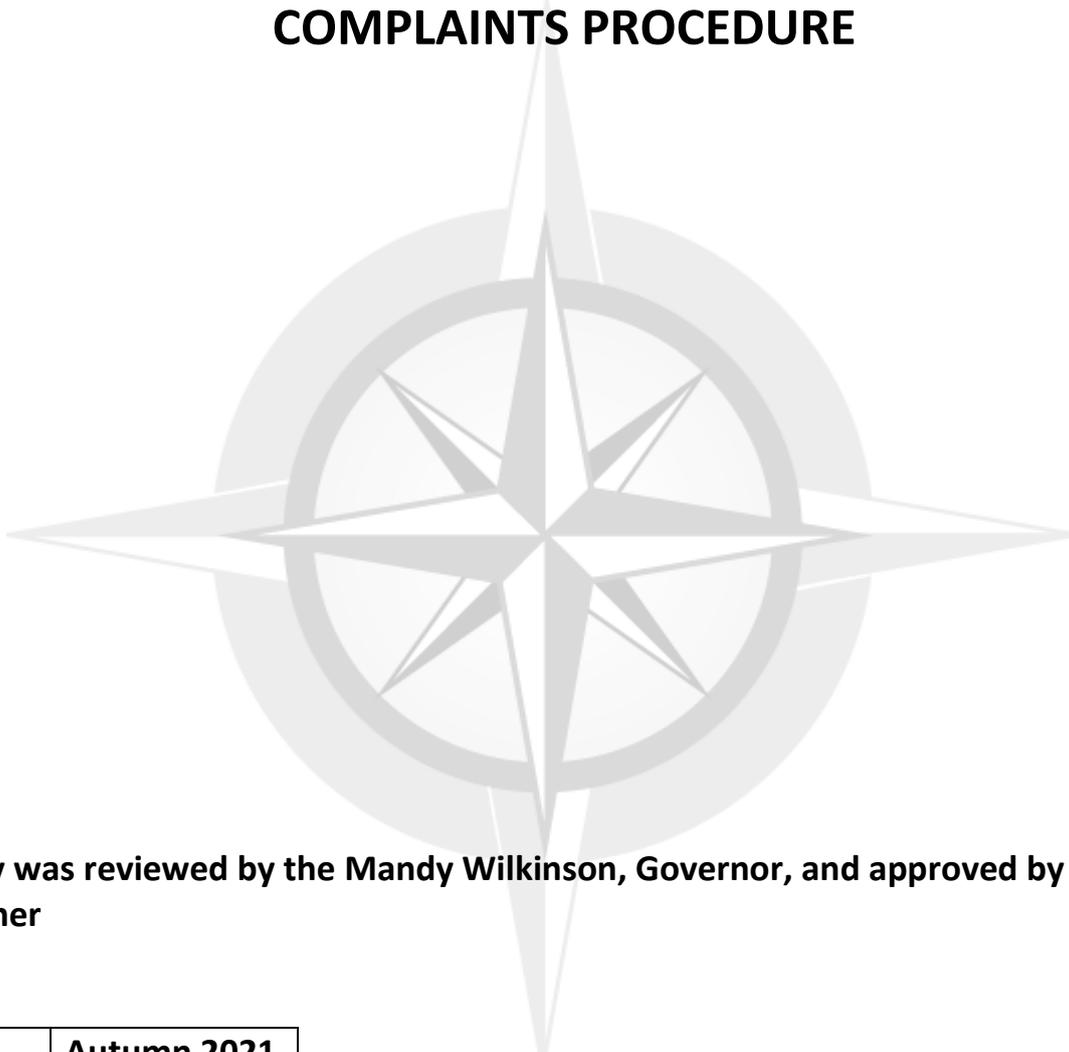




Corley Centre

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



This policy was reviewed by the Mandy Wilkinson, Governor, and approved by the Headteacher

Reviewed	Autumn 2021
Next Review	Autumn 2022

Introduction

The School's Complaints Procedure has a number of stages, and these are explained below.

However, most complaints can be dealt with satisfactorily at the first (informal) stage. This is usually by arranging to meet with the Headteacher, the School's Complaints Co-ordinator, or another relevant member of staff.

If you wish to make a complaint, it is important to follow this procedure through each stage of the process. The school will not embark upon a new stage in the process until the previous stage has been completed. It is important to emphasise that there can be no exceptions. A record will be kept by the school of the process and outcome at each stage of the Procedure

Schools and their Governing Bodies are responsible for receiving, investigating, and responding to complaints. Enquiries to the Local Authority will be passed back to the school concerned.

General Note: Please be aware that the Local Authority has no role in the complaints procedure.

The person responsible for managing complaints (School's Complaints Co-ordinator) is: Ms S Rose (Deputy Headteacher)

This document meets the requirements of section 29 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

It is also based on [guidance for schools on complaints procedures](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), including the model procedure, and model procedure for dealing with unreasonable complaints.

Definitions and scope

Definitions

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint:

- A **concern** is defined as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought"
- A **complaint** is defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action"

Scope

The school intends to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage. There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.

*This policy does **not** cover complaints procedures relating to:*

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The complainant – the person raising the concern/issue/complaint

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- *Follow these procedures*
- *Co-operate with the school throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly*
- *Ask for assistance as needed*
- *Treat all those involved with respect*
- *Not publish details about the complaint on social media*

The investigator – the person looking into the issue for the complainant

An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint, and establish the facts. They will:

- *Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes*
- *Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely*
- *Prepare a comprehensive report to the headteacher or complaints committee which includes the facts and potential solutions*

Clerk to the governing board

The clerk will:

- *Be the contact point for the complainant and the complaints committee, including circulating the relevant papers and evidence before complaints committee meetings*
- *Arrange the complaints hearing*
- *Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the hearing*

Committee chair

The committee chair will:

- *Chair the meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout*
- *Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the committee, and are allowed to present their case*

5. Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

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

Time scales

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident.

We will consider exceptions to this time frame in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

When complaints are made out of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

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

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

THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

STAGE 1 - The First Contact: Dealing With Concerns and Complaints Informally

The school will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that a verbal discussion will resolve the issue.

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff. Generally, this would be your child's teacher, mentor or the Senior Leader with responsibility for your child's group. Please refer Appendix 3 – Stages of Pastoral Support. either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office either by phone on 01676540218 or by email to clerical@corley.coventry.sch.uk. Please note you do not have to disclose full details of your concern, but please be willing to provide sufficient information so that the staff can pass to the correct member of staff.

If anyone has a concern/complaint, it may be registered either verbally or in writing. Please be aware staff will only share the nature of the complaint with staff relevant to their fact finding and with Mentors, Teachers and Senior Leadership Team where appropriate. If the member of staff first contacted cannot immediately deal with the matter, they will make a clear note of the date, name, contact address, phone number and brief details of the concern/complaint to either the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher

The school will respond to informal complaints within two school days, and investigate and provide a response within eight school days.

The informal stage will involve a meeting between the complainant and the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher as appropriate.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

An opportunity will be given to the complainant to discuss the concern/complaint with an appropriate member of staff, who will clarify the nature of the concern/complaint and how the complainant wants the complaint to be resolved (for example by an apology from the school; an explanation; assurances that there won't be a re-occurrence; details of measures that will be taken to ensure that there isn't a re-occurrence).

The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will identify the appropriate procedure and either conduct the investigation or nominate an appropriate colleague to do so. They will communicate verbally with the complainant to ensure they are clear about what action or monitoring of the situation has been decided on, if appropriate by when, only putting this in writing if this seems the best way to make things clear.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally then the complaint should be submitted to the Headteacher, (unless the complaint relates to the Headteacher) preferably by completing the attached Complaint form. For informal complaints that need to be escalated, the initial investigator will complete this form, but will need verbal or emailed consent from the complainant to do so. *(The attached complaint form may be used)*

STAGE TWO - Formal Referral to the Headteacher

Formal complaints must be submitted to the Headteacher. We would encourage complainants to complete the attached Complaint Form as this gives all relevant information. The form can either be given to the school office in a sealed envelope marked Confidential For the Attention of the Headteacher, or by email to formalcomplaints@corley.coventry.sch.uk. If complainants need assistance raising a formal complaint, they can

contact the School Business Manager either by telephone 01676540218, ext or by email to mwilkinson@corley.coventry.sch.uk. This will ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or the Headteacher has been so involved as to raise questions about his/her impartiality, the complaint **MUST** be put in writing and addressed to the Chair of the Governing Body at the school, marked private and confidential. A complainant may wish to deliver the letter by hand and ask for a dated receipt.

Where the Headteacher has acted as School's Complaint Co-ordinator at Stage One, another senior member of staff may be designated to collect some of the information from the parties involved, or another senior member of staff may be nominated to be the Investigator.

The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within **five school days**, giving the name of the person who will conduct the investigation and a target date for providing a response, usually within **10 school days**.

The investigator may ask the complainant to meet with him/her to provide extra information or to explain any information provided previously.

Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Headteacher or designate will provide a written response. Whilst every effort will be made to complete investigations promptly, in some cases, requiring detailed investigations, and/or where a number of witnesses may need to be interviewed, it will take longer to produce a written response. Where this is the case the complainant will be advised of any revised timescale for production of the written response.

The written response will include:

- details of the agreed subject matter of the complaint
- details of who was contacted in connection with the subject matter of the complaint (and in brief) the evidence that was obtained
- a full explanation of the decision reached and the reasons for it.
- where applicable, what action the school will take to address the complaint and prevent recurrence.
- what to do if the complainant is not satisfied, information on how to request a review by the governing body and the timescale.

STAGE THREE - Governing Body Review Of Headteacher's Or Chair's Investigation

A request to review a complaint investigation should be made in writing to the Chair of the Governing Body within **20 school days of the date of the outcome letter** and should **give the reasons** for requesting a review. The circumstances under which a review would be conducted include those where there is:-

- a claim that material information was not taken into account in investigating the complaint
- a claim that procedures have not been properly applied in handling the complaint
- a claim that there has been an incorrect interpretation of Council or school policy

Disagreeing with the outcome at Stage Two **IS NOT** sufficient grounds for undertaking a review under this part of the procedure.

As much detail as possible should be provided when requesting a review. Where insufficient detail is given this may result in a delay, or a request being made for further clarification.

The Governing Body will nominate three members to form a Complaint Panel to review the complaint and any further documents submitted by the complainant. These **WILL** be governors who have had no prior involvement with the complaint.

The Clerk to the Governing Body will convene the Complaints Panel hearing within **20 school days of receipt of the review request** and at the same time provide panel members and the complainant with copies of all relevant correspondence and documentation.

The Complaints Panel can set time limits for both sides to present their case and for the length of the hearing overall (see Appendix 1). These will be communicated to everyone involved by the Clerk in advance of the hearing.

The complainant, the Headteacher and other witnesses will be given a minimum of **5 school days** notice of the hearing. The complainant will be advised of the right to bring a friend, or to be represented by someone of their choice (at their own expense). Where possible the clerk will seek to arrange a convenient time and date for the review hearing. However, where 2 attempts have been made to schedule a convenient hearing and it has not been possible to accommodate the complainant, the Complaints Panel reserves the right to conduct the hearing in the absence of the complainant and on the basis of the written evidence submitted by him/her. This is intended to ensure that complaints are considered promptly and to avoid unnecessary delays.

All parties should be notified of the proposed witnesses. Parties are requested to notify the clerk of the name of any witness who they intend to bring to the hearing at the earliest opportunity.

The Outcome of a Review may include:

- upholding the result of the original investigation.
- upholding the result of the original investigation, but making recommendations for improving practices.
- finding the complaint was justified and overturning the original decision.

The Chair of the Panel will notify the complainant in writing of the outcome of the review and of any action to be taken, within **7 school days** after concluding the review.

The complainant will also be advised of their right of further appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

The Chair will ensure that any required action is put in place.

Unreasonable Behaviour by Complainants

If a complainant acts in an unreasonable manner, for example:

- by insisting on moving to later stages of the procedure before earlier stages have been completed
- taking actions that are out of proportion to the nature of the complaint
- pursuing a complaint in an unacceptable manner by using threatening, intimidating or abusive language behaviour
- continuing to pursue a complaint once the complaints procedure has been exhausted

The Headteacher/ Chair of the Governing Body may inform the complainant that their behaviour is unacceptable and take any action appropriate to limit the impact of the complainant's behaviour on the School, its staff and its representatives. This could ultimately include limiting the complainant's contact with the School to written communication with a named individual unless in an emergency.

10. Record keeping

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 Corley Centre Record retention schedule.

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

Where the governing 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 governing board, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

11. Learning lessons

The governing board will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the headteacher/; 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.

12. Monitoring arrangements

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly. The governing board will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in section 11.

The complaints records are logged and managed by Mandy Wilkinson, School Business Manager

This policy will be reviewed annually by a member of SLT and approved by the Headteacher.

13. Links with other policies

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures
- Admissions policy
- Exclusions policy
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- SEN policy and information report
- Privacy notices

Guidelines for Conducting Formal Appeal Hearings

- 1 The chair conducting the complaint hearing will introduce all present and will seek confirmation from both parties that they understand that the status of the hearing is at STAGE 3 in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.
- 2 Any documentation provided in evidence must be provided in advance to all parties and sufficient time given for it to be considered.
- 3 Each party may request adjournments during the hearing. No reasonable request for an adjournment will be refused.
- 4 No witness will be permitted to be present in the hearing until they have given evidence. The panel will decide whether the witness(es) should remain after giving evidence and responding to questions.
- 5 The complainant will present the facts supporting the complaint and will call any witnesses in support. A time limit of 1 hour will apply for the complainant to put his/her case.
- 6 The subject of the complaint and his/her representative will have the opportunity to question the complainant and any witnesses called. A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
- 7 The complaints panel and the Clerk supporting the panel, may ask questions (for the purpose of ensuring that the panel has all the information that it will require to determine the outcome of the review). A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
- 8 The subject of the complaint and/or his/her representative may present their case in defence of the complaint and may call witnesses. A time limit of 1 hour will apply.
- 9 The complainant will have the opportunity to question the subject of the complaint and any witnesses called. A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
- 10 The complaints panel and the Clerk (for the purpose of ensuring that the panel has all the information that it will require to determine the outcome of the review) may ask questions of the subject of the complaint and any witnesses called. A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
- 11 The complainant may sum up his/her case. A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
- 12 The subject of the complaint and/or his/her representative may sum up the case in defence. A time limit of 15 minutes will apply.
- 13 Both parties and any witnesses will be asked to withdraw. The panel members will remain to determine the review. The Clerk will remain to record the panel's decision
- 14 If for any reason the panel need to recall any of the witnesses or either party to ask further questions, or seek clarification before reaching a decision, both parties will be recalled and then asked to leave.
- 15 The decision of the Panel will be notified in writing within 7 school days of the panel's determination of the review. The complainant will be notified of his/her right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

Appendix 2

**School Complaints Procedure
Complaint Form**

Data Protection Act 1998

The personal data that you provide will be used for the purposes of investigating your complaint and for producing statistical data to enable the school's management to monitor the effectiveness of the school's complaint procedure. The information you give will be held securely and in confidence.

Please complete and return to Ms S Rose Deputy Headteacher srose@corley.coventry.sch.uk or Mr M White Headteacher Headteacher@coprley.coventry.sch.uk who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/ Ms/Other)

First Name:

Last Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

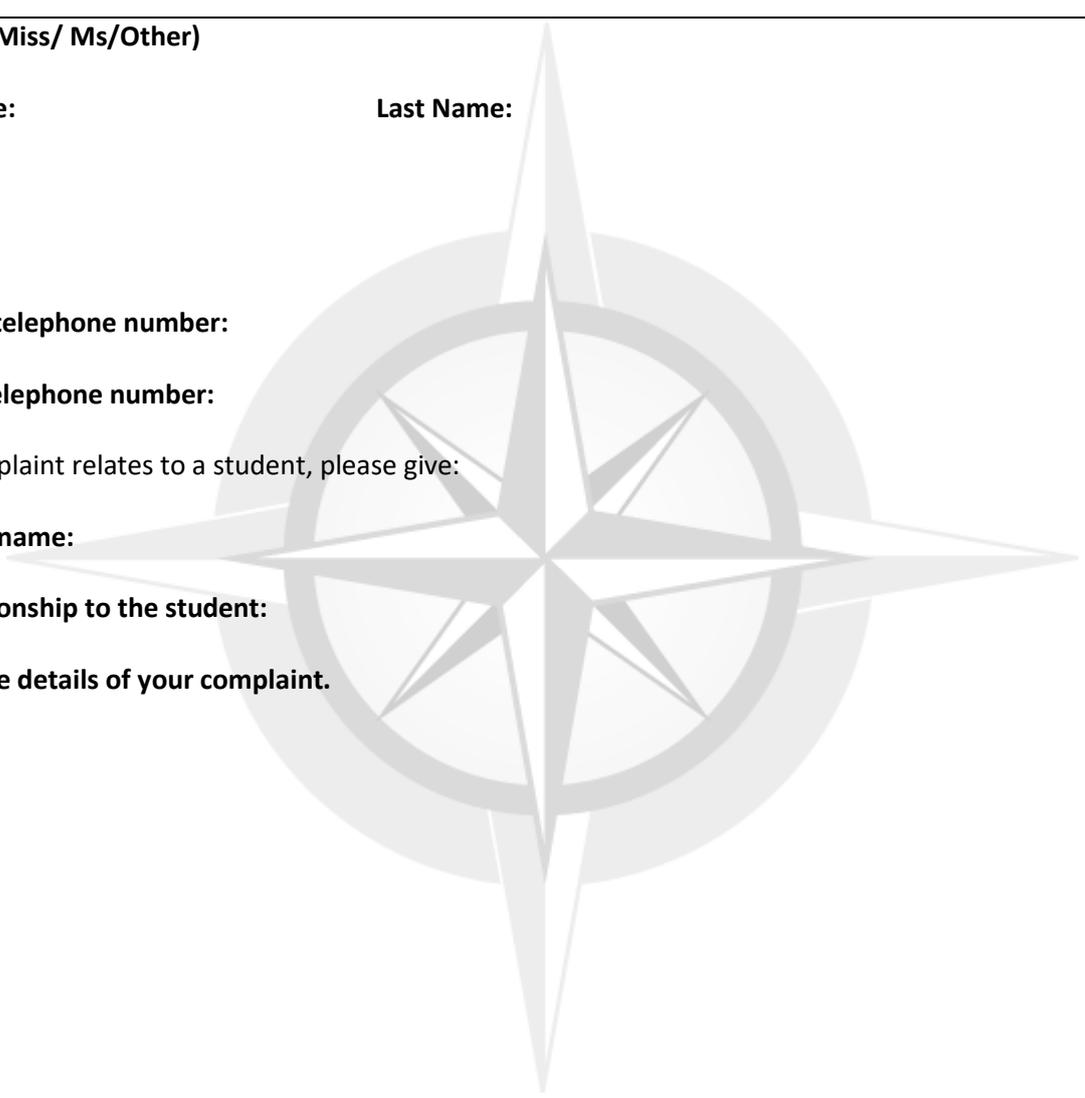
Evening telephone number:

If the complaint relates to a student, please give:

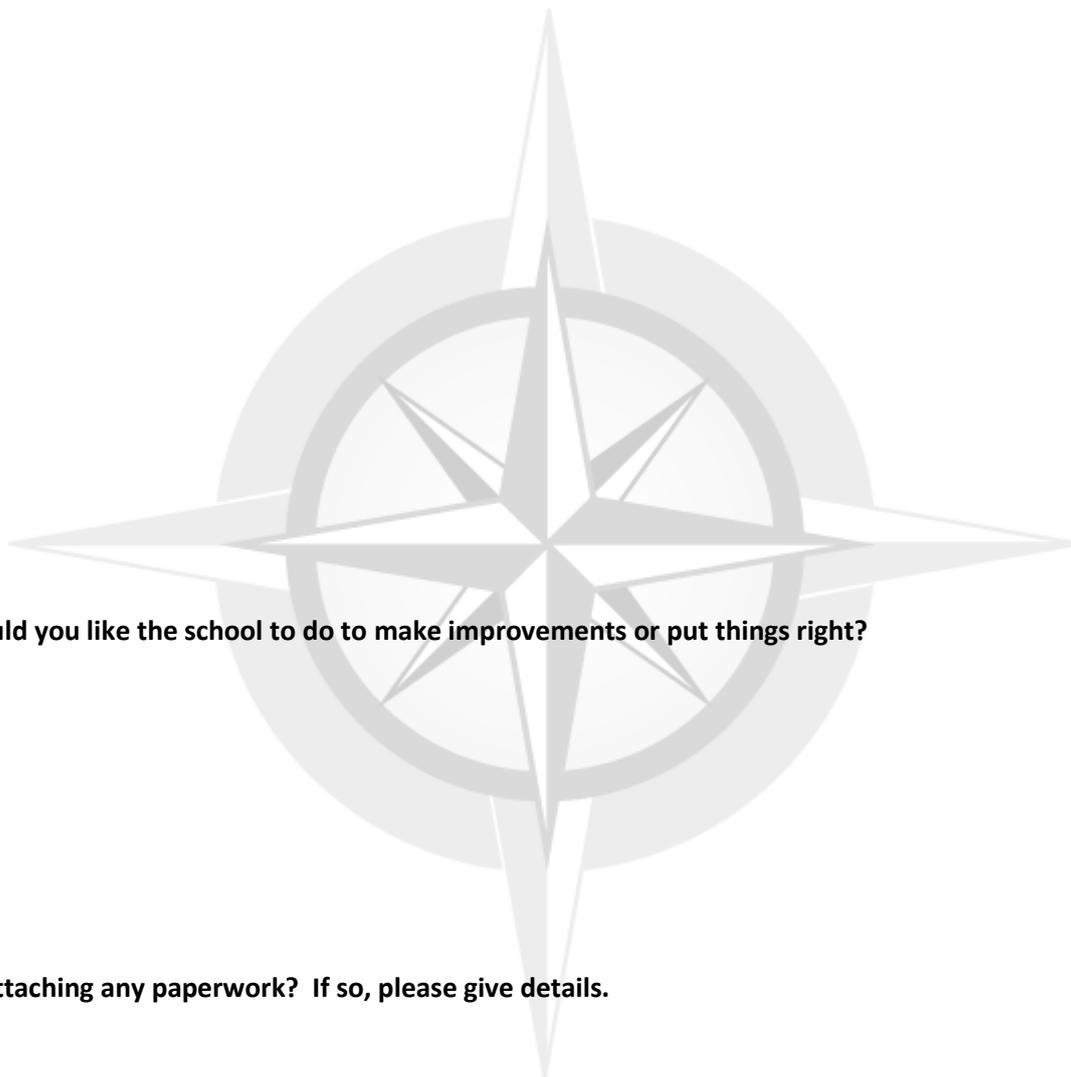
Student's name:

And relationship to the student:

Please give details of your complaint.



**What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint?
(Who did you speak to and what was the response?)**



What would you like the school to do to make improvements or put things right?

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

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX 3



Behaviour and Well-Being: Stages of Pastoral Support 2021-2022

All staff are responsible for student behaviour and well-being. All events should be dealt with as they occur or are brought to staff attention.
 All appropriate actions should be taken in line with school procedures and recorded.



STUDENTS		STAGE 1		STAGE 2		STAGE 3		STAGE 4		
		STAFF	SUPPORT	STAFF	SUPPORT	STAFF	SUPPORT	STAFF	SUPPORT	
FOUNDATION 1		ZW	Praise/rewards. Discussion with individual, group, whole class. Developing strategies in liaison with TA. Card system. Monitoring cards. Weekly targets. Blue Forms. Disseminating information to staff. Reviewing week's behaviour/setting targets for improvement. Home/schoolbook if required.	LK/EM	Discussion with student(s), Key Stage Leaders Senior Support Team, Parental contact / Involvement. Report card. Collecting evidence from staff on strategies attempted. Pastoral Meetings and BTSS referrals. Disseminating info to staff. Review weekly behaviour watch data and follow up with mentor/TA/ Pastoral Leaders, Senior Support Team if necessary. Overview of Blue Forms.	SR	Parental meeting. Involvement of the Attendance and Inclusion Manager. Referral to Additional Support. Outside agencies including Social Care. Early Help. Exclusion. Post exclusion meetings. Whole school behaviour monitoring. Reporting to Governors. Discussions with LA.	MW SR	Exclusion. Post exclusion meetings. Discussion with student(s), staff, parents, outside agencies, LA. Instigate Annual Review. Report to Governors.	
FOUNDATION 2		EM		LK/EM						KF
FOUNDATION 3		SC		LK/EM						
CLASS 4		ES		PZ/LA		JW/JC				NB
CLASS 10		AK		JW/JC						
N1	YEAR 11	JC		JW/JC		MW				
N2		JW		JW/JC						
E1	YEARS 8,9,10	CB		PZ/LA		NB				
E2		AL		PZ/LA						
S1	YEARS 8,9,10	PZ		JW/JC		NB				
S2		LA		PZ/LA						
W1	YEARS 8,9,10	BB		JW/JC		NB				
W2		WG		PZ/LA						
Yr12	YPOST 16	JD	JW/JC	NB						
Yr13		JD	JW/JC							

ALL CONCERNS OF A CHILD PROTECTION NATURE SHOULD BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

