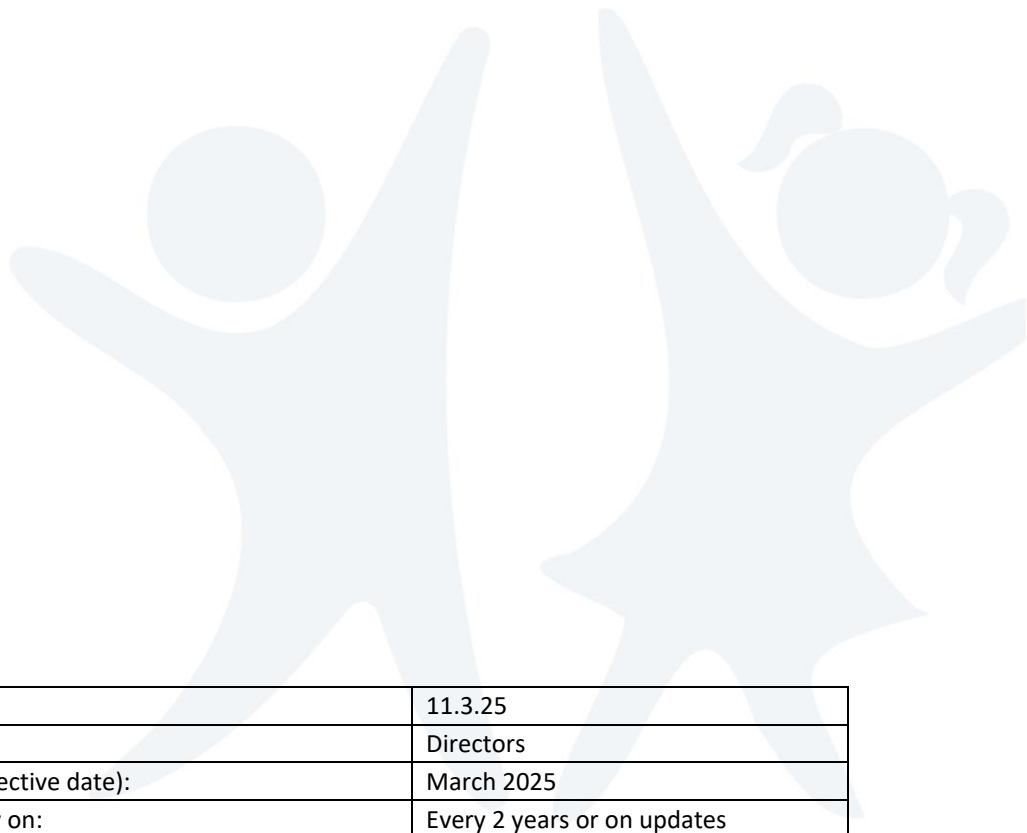


Complaints Policy 2025-27



Date approved:	11.3.25
Approved by:	Directors
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This policy is scheduled for review on:	Every 2 years or on updates

Contents

1. Policy Statement	4
2. Scope & definitions	4
Complaints from parents/carers about your child(ren)'s school or our Trust, regarding your child(ren).....	4
Complaints from non-parents/carers and/or complaints which do not relate to your child(ren).....	5
The difference between a concern and a complaint	5
Complaints not covered under these procedures	6
3. Aims & Principles.....	7
4. Principles for investigation	7
Complaints received outside of term time	8
5. Stages of complaint.....	8
Stage 1: Informal (all complainants).....	8
Who to contact when making a complaint.....	8
Stage 2: Formal (all complainants)	10
Formal Stage 2 complaint – Process.....	10
Stage 3: Complaint Panel (parents/carers only)	11
Stage 3 complaint panel – Process	11
Complaints panel make-up - requirements	12
Remit of the complaint panel.....	12
6. Referring complaints on completion of our procedure	13
Persistent complaints.....	13
Unreasonable and persistent complaints.....	14
Vexatious complaints	16
When to stop responding.....	16
Duplicate complaints.....	16
Complaint campaigns	16
Anonymous complaints.....	17
7. Withdrawal of a complaint.....	17
8. Record-keeping	17
9. Learning lessons	17
10. Monitoring arrangements	18

Appendix A: Model Complaint Form (Stage 2: Formal)..... 19

Appendix B: Roles and Responsibilities..... 20

Appendix C: the potential impact of public complaints 22

Appendix D: template complainant statement to Complaint Panel (Stage 3 only) [optional form] 24



1. Policy Statement

This policy outlines Manor Multi Academy Trust's ('we' / 'our' / 'us') approach to complaints. This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at one of our schools within the Trust. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to us about any provision of facilities or services that we provide (including the Manor Teaching School Hub). Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as those in [Section 2](#)), we will use this complaints procedure. Such individuals will from this point be referred to in the policy as 'you' / 'your' etc.

We are committed to equality and value diversity. As such we are committed to fulfilling our Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Duty) obligations and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics, such as age, gender, race and faith, and people who do not share them.

We are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy. As part of equality monitoring we will review and monitor the operation and impact of the policy on a regular basis and in accordance with the policy review date. As part of this monitoring and review this policy will be equality impact assessed.

2. Scope & definitions

[DfE guidance](#) for academies confirms that [Part 7 of the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#) only applies to complaints from parents/carers of pupils at your school, regarding your child. Therefore, we operate different procedures depending on the circumstance as detailed below:

Complaints from parents/carers about your child(ren)'s school or our Trust, regarding your child(ren)

In this circumstance, we operate a three-stage process (further details are contained in [Section 5](#)):

- **Stage 1:** Informal (possibly verbal, but may be written e.g. email)
- **Stage 2:** Formal (written – please see suggested [template](#))
- **Stage 3:** Complaints Panel (please see [Stage 3 information](#))

Complaints from non-parents/carers and/or complaints which do not relate to your child(ren)

We operate a shorter, two-stage process (further details are contained in [Section 5](#)):

- **Stage 1:** Informal (possibly verbal, but may be written e.g. email)
- **Stage 2:** Formal (written – please see suggested [template](#))

The difference between a concern and a complaint

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”. We will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible.

A **complaint** is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”.

We intend to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage. Unless otherwise stated as “Stage 2” or “Formal complaint” in your correspondence, we will treat all initial concerns raised as being at Stage 1 of the procedure, in order to allow us the opportunity to resolve your complaint at the earliest possible stage.

There may be occasions when you would like to raise your concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.

Complaints not covered under these procedures

For the avoidance of doubt, the below matters will **not** be dealt with under this policy:

Exceptions	Who to contact
School admissions	Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process – please see our <i>Admissions Policy</i> for details of the appeals process.
Statutory assessment of special educational need/disability (SEND)	Concerns about this should be raised with the SENDCo/relevant Local Authority as per SEND Policy.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation, related to safeguarding	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our <i>Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy</i> and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you should follow local procedures for child protection referrals.
Suspension and exclusion of children from school	Concerns and complaints about the application of statutory suspensions and exclusions procedures should be made as part of those procedures, in line with our <i>Suspensions and Exclusions Policy</i> .
Examination results	Concerns about the results of examinations will be dealt with using the appropriate appeals processes.
Data protection	Any complaints relating to how a data protection matter has been handled should first be referred for internal review by our Data Protection Officer dpo@manormat.com . If you remain unhappy with our response, you may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office .
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff and former staff will be dealt with under our internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under our internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, you will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. Please refer to our <i>Whistleblowing Policy</i> . The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus
Provision of third-party services	Complaints about services which are delivered by third parties (e.g. catering) should be addressed to the appropriate organisation and dealt with under their complaints procedures. Please contact the Trust school office if you need details of who to get in touch with.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of your 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.

3. Aims & Principles

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person, where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect your desire for confidentiality
- Treat you with respect
- Ensure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- Keep you informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how your complaint can feed into our improvement evaluation processes

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

We will always aim to give you the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.

To support this, we will ensure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on our [Trust website](#), with links also contained on all of our schools' websites.

4. Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What you feel would put things right

We also intend to address complaints as quickly as possible. To achieve this, realistic and reasonable time limits will be set for each action within each stage.

Where further investigations are necessary, new time limits will be set, and you will be sent details of the new deadline with an explanation for the delay.

We expect that complaints will be made as soon as possible after an incident arises and no later than **3 months** afterwards, or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 3 months of the last of these incidents.

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

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider any complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the **first working school day** after the holiday period. Similarly, we will consider complaints raised outside normal school hours to have been received on the **next working school day**.

5. Stages of complaint

At each stage in the procedure, we want to resolve your complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that your 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 that the matter complained of will not recur;
- An explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made;
- An undertaking to review our policies in light of your complaint;
- An apology.

Stage 1: Informal (all complainants)

We will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

You (or a third party acting on your behalf, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so) should raise your informal Stage 1 complaint as soon as possible as follows:

Who to contact when making a complaint

Issue relates to...	Who to contact
Class- or specialism-specific	The relevant member of staff, for example the class teacher, subject leader, DSL or SENDCo
School-wide	Headteacher (HT) / Head of School (HOS)
HT/HOS	Governance Professional governanceprofessional@manormat.com
Teaching School Hub (TSH)	Director of TSH (DTSH)
Director of TSH	Governance Professional
Trust-wide	Governance Professional
CEO/CEA, Director(s), PCAF	Governance Professional
Chair of the Trust	Governance Professional
Governance Professional	CFO via info@manormat.com

For concerns relayed to our Governance Professional, they will in turn liaise with the appropriate Executive Leader/Director for your concern to be investigated and responded to. Your response may not come from one individual; for example, complaints referred to the Headteacher may receive a joint response from the Headteacher and the CEO/CEA where deemed appropriate.

If you are unclear who to contact, please contact our Governance Professional.

Your informal concern will be acknowledged within **5 school days**.

Complaints which appear to state an issue against the CEO/CEA/MAT simply to bypass appropriate staff and reach the Chair of the Trust will not necessarily be directed to the Chair of the Trust. Similarly, complaints about a school cannot be escalated to the CEO/CEA where the complaint relates to a decision made by the Headteacher. In each case, an assessment will be made as to the appropriate individual(s) to whom the complaint should be directed, in consultation with Executive Leaders.

If you have difficulty discussing your concern with a particular member of staff, or if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with your concern, the relevant leader will refer you to another staff member. The alternative member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider your concern objectively and impartially is more important. There is no suggested timescale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion. However, it would be expected that most issues will be resolved in around **15 school days**. If this deadline is unable to be met, you will be provided with an update and revised response date; this may come directly from the HT/HOS/DTSH or via the Governance Professional.

The informal stage may involve a meeting between you and the HT/HOS/DTSH and/or the subject of your concern, if appropriate.

*If your informal complaint is not resolved informally under Stage 1, please write to our Governance Professional under Stage 2 of this procedure within **15 school days**.*

Stage 2: Formal (all complainants)

The Formal stage of this procedure involves you submitting your formal complaint **in writing**:

Formal Stage 2 complaint – Process			
Step 1:	<p>Submit your formal Stage 2 complaint <u>in writing</u></p> <p>Refer to the Stage 1 table above; provide details of the nature of your complaint and the relevant dates, times and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of all relevant documents. You should also state what you feel would resolve your complaint.</p> <p>To assist you, a model template is included in Appendix A.</p> <p>If you need assistance raising your formal complaint, you can contact our Governance Professional.</p>		
Step 2:	<p>Complaint normally acknowledged within <u>5 school days</u></p> <p>This will include a target date for providing a response to your complaint (usually 20 school days).</p>		
Step 3:	<p>Investigating officer conducts <u>investigation</u></p> <p>This may include interviewing relevant staff and consulting relevant documents</p>		
Step 4:	<p>Formal Stage 2 written response from investigating officer provided within <u>20 school days</u></p> <p>Should it not prove possible for this timescale to be met (for example, due to the complexity of your complaint), you will be informed.</p> <p>The response will detail any actions taken to investigate your complaint and provide an explanation of the decision made by the relevant investigating officer and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions we will take to resolve your complaint.</p>		
Step 5 (final step in Stage 2)	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p><u>Complaints from non-parents/carers and/or complaints which do not relate to your child(ren):</u> This concludes the complaints process. If you are not satisfied with the Stage 2 response, please refer to section 6.</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p><u>Complaints from parents/carers about your child(ren)'s school or our Trust, regarding your child(ren):</u> If you are not satisfied with the Stage 2 response and wish to proceed to Stage 3, you should inform our Governance Professional in writing within <u>14 school days</u> of receipt of the Stage 2 response. They will record the date received and acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing within <u>5 school days</u>. Requests received outside of this timeframe will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><u>Complaints from non-parents/carers and/or complaints which do not relate to your child(ren):</u> This concludes the complaints process. If you are not satisfied with the Stage 2 response, please refer to section 6.</p>	<p><u>Complaints from parents/carers about your child(ren)'s school or our Trust, regarding your child(ren):</u> If you are not satisfied with the Stage 2 response and wish to proceed to Stage 3, you should inform our Governance Professional in writing within <u>14 school days</u> of receipt of the Stage 2 response. They will record the date received and acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing within <u>5 school days</u>. Requests received outside of this timeframe will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.</p>
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Stage 3: Complaint Panel (parents/carers only)

Stage 3 **only** applies to complaints from parents/carers about your child(ren)'s school or our Trust, regarding your child(ren):

Stage 3 complaint panel – Process	
Step 1:	<p>Submit your formal Stage 3 request in writing</p> <p><u>Option 1:</u> email governanceprofessional@manormat.com</p> <p><u>Option 2:</u> submit a sealed letter to your school office marked for the attention of the Governance Professional. It will be helpful if you can include "Stage 3 complaint" on the envelope.</p>
Step 2:	<p>Stage 3 request normally acknowledged within 5 school days</p> <p>This will normally be completed by our Governance Professional.</p>
Step 3:	<p>Governance Professional convenes a Complaints Panel meeting, to take place within 20 school days of receipt of your Stage 3 request</p> <p>If this is not possible, our Governance Professional will provide an anticipated date and keep you informed. If you reject the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, our Governance Professional will decide when to hold the meeting (for example, based on panel availability). The meeting will then proceed in your absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.</p> <p>We will give you reasonable notice of the date of the complaint panel; however, the panel reserves the right to convene at their convenience rather than that of you as the complainant.</p>
Step 4:	<p>Papers circulated at least 5 school days before the meeting by our Governance Professional</p> <p>These will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda/date/time/venue • Panel make-up – including name of Chair (Should it not prove possible for this deadline to be met, the TGP will notify the complainant as soon as possible. Failure to meet this deadline will not preclude the meeting from taking place.) • Accessibility requirements (if any, e.g. interpreter) • Existing record of the complaint's progress (see Record-keeping) • Governance Professional to request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the panel e.g. a statement from you and the subject of the complaint, alongside any evidence/witness statements. You may present your case orally in the meeting if you prefer.
Step 5:	<p>Complaint panel takes place within 20 school days</p> <p>The agenda will detail the order of the meeting, allowing all parties opportunity to put forward their case and ask/answer questions. The meeting will be minuted by our Governance Professional; minutes are confidential, do not form part of the public record and will be provided to you after approval from the Chair, upon request.</p> <p>The panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. Any new complaints must be dealt with from stage 1 of procedure.</p> <p>Once you and School/Trust representative(s) have presented your cases, all parties beyond the panel members and our Governance Professional will be asked to leave and evidence will then be considered by the panel.</p>
Step 6: [final step]	<p>Panel outcome confirmed in writing within 5 school days</p> <p>This will be completed by the Governance Professional.</p> <p>Should you be dissatisfied with the panel outcome please refer to section 6.</p>

Complaints panel make-up - requirements

The panel will be appointed by or on behalf of our Trust and must consist of at least **3 people** who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

*At least 1 panel member **must** be independent of the management and running of the School/Trust.*

“Independent” for the purposes of this policy means:

- People who are **not** Directors of Manor MAT
- **For school complaints:**
 - HT/HOS from other schools in the Trust
 - Senior Leaders from the Central Trust e.g. CFO
 - PCAF representatives from elsewhere in the Trust
 - People external to the Trust
- **For complaints against the MAT central team/CEO/CEA:**
 - Any HT/HOS from within the Trust (except where the complaint is about the CEO/CEA)
 - PCAF representatives from across the Trust

Alternatively, an entirely independent panel may be convened to hear the complaint at this stage.

Remit of the complaint panel

The purpose of the panel is to consider the investigating officer’s response(s) to your complaint, and whether or not they consider the response(s) to have adequately addressed your concerns.

The panel will consider your complaint and all the evidence presented. Following deliberations, the panel can:

- **Uphold*** your complaint in whole or in part; or
- **Dismiss** your complaint in whole or in part.

*If your complaint is **upheld** by the panel in whole or in part, the panel will:

- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve your complaint; and
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the School/Trust’s systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

6. Referring complaints on completion of our procedure

If you believe we did not handle your complaint in accordance with this procedure or you believe we acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of our duties under education law, you can contact the Department for Education (DfE) after you have completed Stage 2 of this procedure.

The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn decisions made by us. They may consider whether we have adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with your complaint and whether we have followed the 2014 legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/schedule/made>

You can refer your complaint to the DfE online at:

[https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact the Department for Education](https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact%20the%20Department%20for%20Education)

The DfE will only consider your complaint if you can provide evidence that we:

- do not have a complaints procedure
- did not provide a copy of our complaints procedure when requested
- do not have a procedure that complies with statutory regulations
- have not followed our published complaints procedure
- have not allowed our complaints procedure to be completed

The DfE will inform you that they are **not** able to:

- overturn our decision
- re-investigate your original complaint
- review the accuracy of minutes taken or documents provided
- order that compensation is paid
- direct us to discipline/exclude pupils
- force us to discipline/dismiss staff
- instruct us to apologise

Persistent complaints

Where you try to re-open the issue with us after our complaints procedure has been fully exhausted and we have done everything we reasonably can in response to your complaint, the Chair of the Trust (or other appropriate person in the case of a complaint about the Chair, for example, the Vice-Chair of the Trust) will inform you that the matter is closed. This may be in the form of a letter sent via our Governance Professional.

Unreasonable behaviour which is abusive, offensive or threatening may constitute an unreasonably persistent complaint.

Once we have decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, you will be informed in writing, either by letter or email.

We will ensure when making this decision that complainants making any new complaints are heard, and that we act reasonably.

For further details, please refer to [When to stop responding](#) below.

Unreasonable and persistent complaints

We are 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 us.

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.

We define unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of your contact with us, such as, if you:

- refuse to articulate your complaint or specify the grounds of your complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuse to cooperate with our complaints investigation process;
- refuse to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of our complaints procedure;
- insist on your complaint being dealt with in ways that are incompatible with our complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduce trivial or irrelevant information that you expect to be taken into account and commented on;
- raise large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insist they are fully answered, often immediately and to your own timescales;
- make unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seek to have them replaced;
- change the basis of your complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly make the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that your complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuse to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where our complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the DfE;
- seek an unrealistic outcome, such as the inappropriate dismissal of staff;
- make excessive demands on our time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding your complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while your complaint is being dealt with;
- use threats to intimidate;
- use abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence;
- knowingly provide falsified information; and/or
- Publish unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

You should try to limit your communication with us in relation to your complaint, while your complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached. Whenever possible and when considered appropriate, the investigating officer will aim to discuss any concerns with you informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the investigating officer or other appropriate individual will write to you explaining that your behaviour is unreasonable and ask you to change it. If you excessively contact us, causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a personalised communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

If your behaviour is causing a significant level of disruption, regardless of whether or not you have raised a complaint, we can implement a tailored communication strategy. For example, we can:

- restrict you to a single point of contact via an email address
- limit the number of times you can make contact, such as a fixed number of contacts per term

Different procedures apply to freedom of information (FOI) and data protection (DP) correspondence, as detailed in our Data Protection Policy. All requests for FOI and DP information should be sent via email to our Data Protection Officer: dpo@manormat.com.

We will act reasonably and consider any new complaint. Anyone has the right to raise a genuine new complaint at any time.

We may also suggest that you ask a third party to act on your behalf, such as the local Citizen's Advice Bureau.

If you persist to the point that may constitute harassment, we will seek legal advice. In some cases, injunctions and other court orders may be requested.

Once we have decided that it's appropriate to stop responding, you will be informed.

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 you from our premises.

Vexatious complaints

The DfE defines vexatious complaints as:

- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
- insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value

When to stop responding

The decision to stop responding should never be taken lightly.

We will stop responding to complaints if we can demonstrate:

- We have taken every reasonable step to address your concerns
- You have been given a clear statement of our position and your options
- You contact us repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time

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

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

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

Duplicate complaints

If, after closing a complaint at the end of our complaints procedure, we receive a duplicate complaint from a spouse, a partner, a grandparent or a child not attending this School/Trust, we will remind them that we have already considered the complaint and that the process is complete. Complainants will be advised to contact the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our handling of the complaint.

Complaint campaigns

Where we receive a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, we may respond to these complaints by:

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

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

Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints will not usually be investigated. However, the investigating officer (as relevant to the subject of the complaint, as detailed earlier in this policy) will determine whether or not the complaint warrants investigation. The investigating officer will attempt to adhere to the timescales set out in this policy but will be unable to respond to the complainant if no contact information is provided.

7. Withdrawal of a complaint

If you want to withdraw your complaint, we will ask you to confirm this in writing.

8. Record-keeping

We will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which your 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 where relevant.

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, except where:

- they are requested by the Secretary of State (or someone acting on their behalf); or
- you request access to records of a complaint through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request under the terms of the Data Protection Act; or
- you request access to the records of your complaint through a Subject Access Request under the terms of the Data Protection Act; or
- the material must be made available during a school inspection; or
- under other legal authority.

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 and Retention Policy.

9. Learning lessons

We will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with Executive Leaders, where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to our procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

10. Monitoring arrangements

Our Directors will monitor the effectiveness of this complaints procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly. Directors will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in this policy. The complaints records are logged and managed by the HT/HOS in each school (and by our Governance Professional at MAT-level).

If you commence legal action against us in relation to your complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to your complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.



Appendix A: Model Complaint Form (Stage 2: Formal)

Your name:	
Email:	
Telephone:	
Address:	
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the School/Trust about it:	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Appendix B: Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant ('you')

You will receive a more effective response to your complaint if you:

- explain your complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with us in seeking a solution to your complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of your complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in your complaint with respect
- refrain from unreasonable behaviour (see [unreasonable and persistent complaints](#))
- Refrain from publicising the details of your complaint on social media or elsewhere publicly and respect confidentiality. Further details are contained in [Appendix C](#).

Investigating Officer (IO)

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

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of your complaint through:
 - sensitive and thorough interviewing of you to establish what has happened and who has been involved
 - interviewing staff and children and other people relevant to your complaint
 - consideration of records and other relevant information
 - analysing information
- Liaising with you and the complaints co-ordinator (e.g. Governance Professional) as appropriate to clarify what you feel would put things right.

The IO 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 within
- Prepare a comprehensive report for the HT/HOS/CEO/CEA/Chair of the Trust that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.
- The relevant senior officer will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to you.

Complaints Co-ordinator

(This could be the HT/HOS or other staff member providing administrative support e.g. our Governance Professional)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that you are fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members/Directors as appropriate to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- Keep records and be aware of issues regarding:
 - sharing third party information
 - additional support which may be needed by you when making a complaint e.g. interpretation support
- Ensure that the correct procedure has been followed.
- meet with you, if appropriate

Governance Professional

Our Governance Professional is the main contact point for you to reach the Chair of the Trust in relation to complaints against the CEO/CEA/MAT and should:

- share information with the Chair of the Trust without delay e.g. within **2 school days**
- prompt the Chair of the Trust to respond to you to acknowledge receipt within **5 school days**

Complaints which appear to state an issue against the CEO/CEA/MAT simply to bypass appropriate staff and reach the Chair of the Trust will not necessarily be directed to the Chair of the Trust. Similarly, complaints about a school cannot be escalated to the CEO/CEA where the complaint relates to a decision made by the Headteacher. In each case, an assessment will be made as to the appropriate individual(s) to whom the complaint should be directed, in consultation with Executive Leaders.

Appendix C: the potential impact of public complaints

When a complainant publicly raises concerns – such as by discussing issues with other parents, conducting surveys, or distributing critical pamphlets – several detrimental impacts can emerge in the complaint investigation process and the school community as a whole.

Here are some key potential impacts:

1. Bias and Distortion of Facts

- Publicly discussing a complaint before the formal investigation is complete can lead to a "trial by public opinion," where perspectives are formed based on incomplete or biased information.
- The complainant may unintentionally or intentionally share information that is incomplete, subjective, or potentially misleading. This can make it harder for the School/Trust to conduct an objective investigation and reach a fair conclusion.

2. Increased Tension and Distrust within the School Community

- The public nature of the complaint can create a divisive atmosphere among parents, pupils, and staff. Other parents may feel pressured to take sides or form opinions without understanding the full context.
- This situation can erode trust in the School/Trust's leadership and lead to tensions between the School/Trust and parents, as well as between parents who may hold differing views on the complaint.

3. Impact on Staff Morale and Well-being

- When complaints are publicised and critical of the School/Trust, staff may feel demoralised, scrutinised, or unfairly judged. This can lead to increased stress, absenteeism, or even turnover among staff members, particularly if the pamphlet or survey is critical of specific individuals.
- Staff may feel reluctant to participate openly in the investigation process due to concerns about their words being misconstrued, which could compromise the thoroughness and transparency of the investigation.

4. Compromised Investigation Integrity

- An investigation is ideally conducted in a neutral and confidential environment to allow for impartial evidence gathering. When information about the complaint is shared publicly, witnesses or other participants in the investigation may be influenced by public sentiment, reducing the reliability of their input.
- This public influence could lead to additional grievances or complaints that complicate the original investigation, creating a snowball effect and increasing the difficulty of concluding the original complaint.

5. Damage to School/Trust Reputation

- Publicly airing complaints, particularly if critical pamphlets are involved, can harm the reputation of the School/Trust, especially if the issues become known beyond the immediate school community.
- This can impact enrolment, relationships with local authorities or partners, and the overall perception of the School/Trust's integrity, potentially leading to long-term repercussions.

6. Legal and Compliance Risks

- When parents or community members engage in public criticism, especially if defamatory statements are involved, this could expose both the complainant and the School/Trust to legal risks. The School/Trust may need to respond legally to protect its reputation or prevent the spread of misinformation, which could detract from the primary goal of resolving the original complaint.
- Additionally, if the survey or pamphlet breaches confidentiality, it could potentially violate data protection laws, especially if sensitive information or identifiable details about staff or pupils are shared.

7. Diversion of School Resources and Focus

- The School/Trust may need to allocate extra resources to manage the fallout from the public campaign – responding to inquiries from concerned parents, preparing communications, or addressing media interest – rather than focusing resources on investigating the complaint itself.
- This diversion of time, attention, and resources can disrupt regular operations and diminish the School/Trust's ability to focus on educational goals, affecting the broader school community.

8. Escalation of Grievances and Potential for Ongoing Conflict

- The complainant's public actions can lead other parents to submit complaints or grievances, which could intensify and prolong conflict rather than fostering a constructive resolution.
- Such escalation can create a pattern of frequent and ongoing complaints, making it difficult for the School/Trust to bring closure to the issue and creating an adversarial dynamic with its community.

Appendix D: template complainant statement to Complaint Panel (Stage 3 only) [optional form]

In order to assist the panel in their deliberations, you are asked to expand on the points raised in your formal complaint [please note that whilst you may add further detail to your complaint about the same issue, the panel meeting is **not** an opportunity to raise a new complaint. Any new complaints must be raised as separate complaints in line with the complaints policy.].

This form is **optional**, but if you do choose to submit it then please note it will be shared with the panel and the Headteacher/Executive Leader/investigating officer as part of the meeting pack.

Please send your statement to: governanceprofessional@manormat.com

Or

Hand a written statement in to the school office marked **“Private & Confidential – for the attention of the Governance Professional, Manor MAT”**

Stage 3 complaint: complaint panel – complainant statement	
Your name:	<input type="text"/>
Please provide a statement to the complaints panel explaining why you are dissatisfied with the Headteacher/Executive Leader’s response to your formal complaint.	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details:	
Date:	<input type="text"/>