



Bright Fields School
Complaints Policy and Procedures
(BFS-010)

A part of SofiNo Education Limited

Version 2

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Three-stage entitlement

The full three-stage procedure applies to parents and carers of current pupils complaining about education provided or another matter affecting their child. Other concerns may be considered proportionately at the School's discretion.

1. Definitions and Aims

1.1 Concern and complaint

A concern is an expression of worry or doubt about an issue considered important, for which reassurance or clarification is sought. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about action taken or a lack of action by the School.

The School will not insist that a concern is dealt with informally before accepting a formal complaint where the matter is serious, urgent, sensitive, has already been raised without resolution, or informal handling would be inappropriate.

1.2 Aims

Bright Fields School aims to respond to concerns and complaints fairly, impartially, respectfully and without unreasonable delay. The School will seek early resolution where appropriate while ensuring that formal complaints receive a full and fair consideration.

- address all material points raised and explain decisions clearly;
- use proportionate, evidence-based and non-adversarial processes;
- keep complainants reasonably informed;
- respect confidentiality while recognising that information may need to be shared for fairness, safeguarding or legal compliance;
- make reasonable adjustments and communicate accessibly;
- protect pupil welfare and take safeguarding action immediately where required;
- identify learning and improvements to practice, policy or systems.

2. Legal and regulatory framework

This policy is designed to meet Part 7 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. It is also informed by the Department for Education Independent School Standards guidance, the Equality Act 2010, the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, current statutory safeguarding guidance, and the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework where applicable.

Part 7 requires a written procedure available to parents, clear timescales, an informal stage, a formal written stage, and a panel hearing before at least three people not directly involved in the complaint, including at least one person independent of the management and running of the School. It also requires parental attendance and accompaniment at the panel, written findings and recommendations, formal complaint records, and confidentiality subject to inspection or Secretary of State access.

SofiNo Education Limited is the proprietor and operator of Bright Fields School and is accountable for ensuring that this policy is drawn up and effectively implemented.

3. Scope and who may complain

3.1 Parents and carers of current pupils

The full three-stage procedure applies to a parent or carer of a pupil currently attending Bright Fields School who complains about the education provided or another matter affecting their child. The complainant should be allowed to complete the School's procedure, subject to proportionate arrangements for unreasonable conduct and any lawful need to adapt or pause the process.

3.2 Representatives

A parent or carer may authorise another person to act on their behalf. The School will require written or otherwise verifiable consent and may communicate directly with the parent or carer where needed to confirm authority, protect personal information or clarify instructions.

3.3 Other complainants

The School may consider concerns from prospective or former parents, members of the public and other people respectfully and proportionately. Those complainants do not automatically have an entitlement to every stage of this policy, including a Stage 3 panel. The School will explain the route it proposes to use.

3.4 Matters outside this policy

The following are normally managed under a separate statutory or School procedure:

- admissions decisions;
- statutory special educational needs and disability assessment, plan or local authority decisions;
- suspension and permanent exclusion decisions;
- child protection and safeguarding referrals;
- allegations against adults working with children;
- staff grievances, disciplinary, capability or other confidential employment matters;
- protected disclosures under the Whistleblowing or Speak Up Policy;
- data protection rights requests and complaints to the Information Commissioner;
- services delivered by a separate third-party provider using School premises.

A complaint may contain issues falling under more than one procedure. The School will explain how the issues will be routed and may run processes concurrently, adapt them or pause parts where fairness, safeguarding or an external investigation requires it.

4. How to raise a concern or complaint

4.1 School or staff complaints

Concerns should normally be raised with the relevant member of staff, Headteacher or another appropriate senior leader. Formal complaints should preferably be in writing and marked Private and Confidential.

Bright Fields School, Station Road, South Leverton, Retford, Nottinghamshire, DN22 0DJ

Telephone: 0331 630 9044

School Office: office@brightfieldsschool.com

Formal complaints about the School or staff: complaints@brightfieldsschool.com

The Bright Fields School complaints inbox is monitored by the School Administrator and Headteacher.

4.2 Headteacher and SofiNo-level Complaints

Complaints about the Headteacher, and general complaints requiring consideration at SofiNo Education Limited level, should be sent to complaints@sofinoeducation.com and marked Private and Confidential. This inbox is monitored by the Business Operations Manager.

SofiNo Education Limited

128 City Road, London, EC1V 2NX

Telephone: 0331 630 9055

General Enquiries: enquiries@sofinoeducation.com

Formal complaints: complaints@sofinoeducation.com

4.3 Formats and assistance

A complaint may be made by email, letter, telephone, in person or through an authorised representative. Written submission is preferred because it helps identify the issues, evidence and desired outcome. The School will assist a person who needs help to record a verbal complaint and will provide reasonable adjustments, accessible formats or interpretation where required.

4.4 Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints will not normally proceed through the full procedure because they may be difficult to investigate fairly. The Headteacher or proprietor's representative may nevertheless arrange appropriate enquiries where the information indicates a safeguarding, pupil welfare, health and safety, compliance or other serious concern.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Complainant

- raise the concern promptly and explain the material issues, dates, evidence and outcome sought;
- cooperate with reasonable enquiries and respond to communications;
- treat those involved respectfully and avoid intimidation, harassment or interference with witnesses;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality and avoid publishing complaint material that could identify pupils, disclose personal information or undermine a fair process;
- identify any adjustment, communication or accessibility need.

5.2 Complaints Coordinator

The Headteacher is the Complaints Coordinator and has operational responsibility for ensuring that complaints are routed, managed and concluded appropriately, except where the Headteacher is involved or another arrangement is required for impartiality.

5.3 Human Resources and administration

Human Resources will coordinate formal correspondence, records, deadlines and panel administration, provide procedural advice and support the appointment of suitably impartial investigators and decision-makers. HR advice does not replace the responsibility of the appointed decision-maker or panel.

5.4 Business Operations Manager

The Business Operations Manager within SofiNo Education Limited will maintain the central complaints register in a dedicated, restricted-access complaints folder within Bright Fields School's OneDrive and provide the annual formal complaint figure. The Business Operations Manager also monitors complaints@sofinoeducation.com.

5.5 Investigator

The investigator will establish relevant facts, pursue reasonable lines of enquiry, consider evidence supporting and undermining the complaint, keep appropriate notes and prepare a balanced report. The investigator may identify possible remedies or improvements but will not decide the complaint where a separate decision-maker has been appointed.

5.6 Stage 2 decision-maker

The Headteacher will normally make the Stage 2 decision. A different suitably authorised internal or external person will be appointed where the Headteacher is the subject of the complaint, has had material prior involvement, or fairness otherwise requires it.

5.7 Panel clerk and chair

The panel clerk will arrange the Stage 3 hearing, circulate papers, support accessible arrangements, record proceedings and issue documents on the panel's authority. The panel chair will ensure a fair, respectful and non-adversarial hearing, clarify the issues, allow each party a reasonable opportunity to be heard and lead the panel's private deliberations.

6. Principles for handling and investigating complaints

6.1 Fairness and evidence

The School will clarify what happened, who was involved, what remains unresolved and what the complainant believes may put matters right. Decisions will be based on the available evidence and the civil standard of the balance of probabilities. No person will be treated as at fault merely because a complaint has been made.

Relevant persons criticised in a complaint will normally be told the substance of the concern and given a fair opportunity to respond, subject to safeguarding, confidentiality and external-agency restrictions.

6.2 Time limit for raising complaints

A complaint should normally be raised within three months of the incident or, for a series of related incidents, within three months of the most recent incident. The School may accept a later complaint where there is a valid reason for delay and it remains possible to investigate fairly, including where there is an ongoing issue, disability, trauma, safeguarding context or another exceptional circumstance.

6.3 School days and holidays

A school day means a day on which the School is open to pupils, excluding weekends, bank holidays and School holidays. A complaint received during a School holiday will normally be treated as received on the first following school day. Urgent safeguarding, welfare or safety information will be routed immediately and will not be held until term resumes.

6.4 Delays and external processes

If the School cannot meet a stated timescale, it will explain the reason and provide a revised date. Police, local authority safeguarding, regulatory, tribunal or legal proceedings may require the School to adapt, limit or temporarily pause part of the complaint investigation. The School will not suspend its process automatically merely because legal action is mentioned or commenced; it will assess what is necessary and fair.

6.5 Confidentiality and recordings

Information will be shared only where reasonably necessary for investigation, response, safeguarding, advice, inspection or legal compliance. Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Covert recording is not permitted and will not normally be accepted as evidence. Recording may be agreed in advance as a reasonable adjustment or where all relevant parties give informed consent. Any agreed recording will form part of the complaint record, be stored securely with the relevant complaint file, accessed only by those with a legitimate need to know and retained in accordance with the School's Records Retention Schedule.

7. Three-stage complaints procedure

7.1 Stage 1: informal resolution

The complainant should raise the concern with the person best placed to resolve it, such as the relevant teacher, Headteacher or another senior leader. The School will normally acknowledge the concern within two school days and aim to resolve it within ten school days.

Informal resolution may include discussion, clarification, a meeting, an explanation, an apology, practical action, a review of arrangements or an agreed facilitated conversation. The outcome will be confirmed in writing where the matter is significant, cannot be resolved immediately, the complainant requests it, or formal escalation is reasonably foreseeable.

If the concern is not resolved, the complainant may move to Stage 2. Serious or sensitive matters may proceed directly to Stage 2.

7.2 Stage 2: formal written complaint

A formal complaint should be submitted to the Headteacher through complaints@brightfieldsschool.com or the School Office. It should identify the issues, relevant facts and dates, previous steps, supporting information and the outcome sought. A complaint about the Headteacher must follow section 8.

The School will normally acknowledge the complaint within five school days. The acknowledgement will confirm the person responsible, clarify the issues where necessary, identify any immediate action or adjustment, and provide the anticipated timetable.

The Headteacher may investigate personally or appoint an impartial investigator. A separate investigator will normally be used where the matter is complex, involves several staff, raises safeguarding or regulatory issues, or the Headteacher has material prior involvement. The decision remains with the appointed Stage 2 decision-maker.

The investigation may include reviewing records, meeting the complainant, speaking to staff, pupils or other witnesses, and seeking further information. Any pupil involvement will be handled under section 9 and safeguarding requirements.

The written Stage 2 outcome will normally be issued within 15 school days of receipt. It will summarise the issues considered, explain the investigation and conclusions, state whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld, not upheld or cannot reliably be determined, identify action that can appropriately be shared, and explain how to request Stage 3. If more time is required, the complainant will receive the reason and a revised date.

7.3 Requesting Stage 3

A parent or carer entitled to the full procedure may request a Stage 3 panel hearing within ten school days of the Stage 2 outcome. The request must set out the grounds for remaining dissatisfied and the outcome sought. Stage 3 is the final internal stage.

8. Complaints about Senior Postholders

8.1 Headteacher

A complaint about the Headteacher must be sent to complaints@sofinoeducation.com. The Proprietor's nominated representative will arrange appropriately impartial Stage 1 and Stage 2 handling. The Head of HR, Chief Operating Officer, CEO/Founder, Proprietor or an external person may be appointed according to prior involvement and the nature of the complaint.

8.2 Head of HR, Chief Operating Officer and CEO/Founder

- A complaint about the Head of HR will normally be commissioned by the Chief Operating Officer.
- A complaint about the Chief Operating Officer will normally be commissioned by the CEO/Founder or Proprietor.
- A complaint about the CEO/Founder or Proprietor will be assigned to an appropriately independent external investigator or decision-maker.
- A complaint involving several senior postholders will be commissioned by the most senior uninvolved person, with external support where required.

No person will investigate or decide a complaint where there is a material conflict of interest. Where internal independence is not reasonably available, SofiNo Education Limited will appoint a suitable external person.

9. Concerns and Complaints raised by Pupils

A pupil may raise a concern with any trusted adult at School and is not required to approach the person involved. The pupil may communicate verbally, in writing, through drawing, symbols, assistive communication, an agreed communication system, or with support from a parent, carer, advocate or trusted adult.

Children may also raise a concern or complaint by placing a written note, drawing or other suitable communication in the worry box located in the School's pastoral room. The worry box is accessible to pupils and is checked by the Headteacher every school day. Matters raised through the box will be considered promptly and handled under the appropriate School procedure. Any information indicating that a child may be at risk of harm will be referred immediately to the DSL or DDSL in accordance with the School's safeguarding procedures.

The receiving adult will listen carefully, take the pupil seriously, avoid leading questions, make an accurate factual record and explain what will happen next. The adult must not promise secrecy. Information indicating possible harm or risk must be reported immediately to the DSL or DDSL.

The School will determine the correct route, which may include informal resolution, safeguarding action, the Behaviour or Anti-Bullying Policy, the Managing Allegations Against Adults Procedure or this complaints policy. The pupil will not be expected to identify the procedure.

The response will reflect the pupil's age, understanding, SEN, disability, neurodivergence, communication method, sensory needs and welfare. A trusted adult may support the pupil. Parents or carers will normally be informed where appropriate, but safeguarding advice will be taken before contact where this could place a child at risk or compromise an enquiry.

The pupil will receive an accessible explanation of what the School has done, whether the concern has been addressed, who can provide further support and who the pupil may speak to if still worried. Confidential employment or personal information about another person will not normally be shared.

10. EYFS Complaints

Where Bright Fields School is responsible for providing the Early Years Foundation Stage to an eligible child, written complaints concerning the School's fulfilment of EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant will be notified of the outcome within 28 days of receipt.

EYFS complaints should be submitted through complaints@brightfieldsschool.com. The EYFS Lead is Kelly Hyland. A paper copy of each EYFS complaint record will be available from the School Office, and the electronic record will be stored in a dedicated, restricted-access folder within Bright Fields School's OneDrive. Records will be retained in accordance with applicable requirements and made available to Ofsted on request.

If a parent or carer remains dissatisfied about the School's fulfilment of EYFS requirements, the parent or carer may contact Ofsted on 0300 123 4666 or at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. Ofsted's role is regulatory and Ofsted does not resolve private disputes between a complainant and provider.

11. Safeguarding, Staff Conduct and Overlapping Procedures

11.1 Safeguarding and allegations against adults

Safeguarding takes priority. A concern indicating that a child may be at risk, or an allegation about an adult working with children, must be reported immediately under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Managing Allegations Against Adults Procedure. The complaints process may continue alongside safeguarding action, be adapted, or be temporarily paused following advice from the DSL, DDSL, local authority designated officer, police or another relevant agency. Urgent protective action will not be delayed.

11.2 Staff conduct and confidential employment action

A parent's complaint about an event or the School's response may be considered under this policy. Any employment action concerning a staff member will be handled confidentially under the appropriate HR procedure. The complainant will be told the conclusion and any action that can lawfully and appropriately be shared, but will not normally receive confidential disciplinary, capability or personnel information.

11.3 Data protection and information rights

A subject access request, freedom of information request where applicable, or data protection complaint is a separate process and does not automatically suspend this complaints procedure. The School will coordinate the processes where they overlap and protect third-party personal information.

12. Stage 3 panel procedure

12.1 Composition and independence

The panel will be appointed by or on behalf of the Proprietor and will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one member will be independent of the management and running of Bright Fields School. The Proprietor or nominated representative may appoint senior persons from SofiNo Education Limited and suitable external education, safeguarding, HR or governance professionals, provided the independence and prior-involvement requirements are met.

12.2 Arranging the hearing

The panel clerk will seek to arrange the hearing within 15 school days of receiving the Stage 3 request. The complainant will normally be offered three reasonable dates. If three dates are rejected without good reason, the clerk may set a date and the panel may proceed on written submissions if the complainant does not attend.

The hearing may be in person, remote or hybrid where arrangements are fair, private and accessible. Papers will normally be circulated at least five school days before the hearing. Late material may be accepted where fairness requires; the panel may adjourn so that everyone has a reasonable opportunity to consider it.

12.3 Nature and scope

Stage 3 will normally review the Stage 2 investigation and decision rather than repeat the whole process. The panel may receive new evidence, direct further enquiries, or conduct a fuller rehearing where a material procedural defect, important new evidence or fairness requires it.

12.4 Attendance and accompaniment

The parent or carer may attend and be accompanied. A companion may provide support, take notes and, with the chair's permission, assist in presenting the complaint, but will not ordinarily answer factual questions on the complainant's behalf. Legal representation is not normally necessary and will be considered case by case, including for reasonable adjustments or fairness. Media representatives may not attend.

12.5 Hearing process

The hearing will be private and conducted fairly and non-adversarially. The chair will confirm the issues, procedure, confidentiality and adjustments. The complainant and School representative will each have a reasonable opportunity to present relevant evidence, respond and ask or answer questions through the chair. Relevant witnesses may be heard where the panel considers this necessary. The parties will withdraw while the panel deliberates.

12.6 Findings, recommendations and outcome

The panel may uphold, partially uphold or not uphold the complaint; conclude that an issue cannot reliably be determined; recommend further investigation; direct appropriate action to resolve an upheld complaint; and recommend changes to systems, policies or practice.

The panel's written findings and recommendations will normally be issued within ten school days of the hearing to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy will be available for inspection on the School premises by the Proprietor and Headteacher. The decision is final under the School's internal procedure.

13. External escalation after the School procedure

After completing the School's procedure, a parent may contact the Department for Education where the concern is that the School is not meeting the Independent School Standards. The Department for Education does not investigate individual disputes about private schools but may consider reports of a major failure to meet standards relating to education, pupil welfare and health and safety, premises, staff suitability, information for parents, or pupils' spiritual, moral, social or cultural development.

Where applicable, EYFS concerns may be raised with Ofsted as stated in section 10. Data protection concerns may be raised with the Information Commissioner's Office after giving the School an opportunity to respond. Statutory SEND or local authority matters should use the relevant statutory review, appeal or complaint route.

A Stage 3 outcome letter will identify the external route relevant to the subject matter. An urgent safeguarding concern should be reported immediately to children's social care or the police and should not wait for completion of this procedure.

14. Unreasonable, persistent, duplicate and campaign complaints

14.1 Principles

The School will distinguish between the substance of a complaint and the way a complainant communicates or behaves. A complaint will not be labelled unreasonable merely because it is persistent, strongly expressed or not upheld. Restrictions will be proportionate, focused on identified behaviour or contact, and will not prevent materially new concerns or safeguarding information from being considered.

14.2 Unreasonable conduct or contact

Conduct may be unreasonable where, for example, a person refuses to identify the complaint despite support, refuses to cooperate, repeatedly changes the basis without good reason, makes excessive or repetitive demands that materially obstruct the process, seeks outcomes the School has no power to provide, knowingly supplies false information, intimidates or threatens participants, uses abusive or discriminatory language, interferes with evidence, or publishes personal or confidential information in a way that risks harm or unfairness.

The Headteacher, with HR advice, may implement a written communication-management plan. If the Headteacher is involved, the Proprietor's representative will decide. Measures may include a single point of contact, agreed communication method, reasonable limits on frequency, consolidated responses, meeting boundaries or use of a representative. The notice will explain the reasons, duration or review arrangements, what will still receive a response and how genuinely new matters may be raised.

14.3 Persistent or serial correspondence

The School may stop providing substantive responses about an issue when the full procedure has been completed, every reasonable step has been taken, the School's position and external options have been explained, and further contact repeats substantially the same points without materially new information. The School will give written notice before doing so.

14.4 Duplicate complaints

Where another person raises a duplicate complaint about the same subject, the School will consider whether there is new information or a distinct personal issue. If not, the School may explain that the matter has already been investigated and the local process is complete, while protecting confidential information and not sharing another complainant's correspondence without authority.

14.5 Complaint campaigns

Where the School receives a high volume of substantially identical complaints, it may issue a single published response or a standard response while still identifying any complaint that contains materially different, personal, safeguarding or confidential information requiring separate attention.

14.6 Aggression and safety

Threats, violence, harassment or serious aggression may result in immediate safety measures, police contact or restrictions on access to School premises. Such measures do not remove the person's ability to submit a complaint through safe and proportionate communication arrangements.

15. Records, confidentiality and complaint numbers

The School will keep a written record of every Stage 2 formal complaint, whether it is resolved at Stage 2 or proceeds to Stage 3, and the action taken regardless of outcome. Records will include relevant correspondence, evidence, meeting notes, investigation material, decisions, panel findings and recommendations, accessibility arrangements and learning actions. The person responsible for the relevant stage will ensure that the record is complete before the complaint is marked as closed and transferred to the central complaint file.

The central complaints register and electronic complaint files will be maintained by the Business Operations Manager in a dedicated, restricted-access complaints folder within Bright Fields School's OneDrive. Where a paper EYFS complaint record is required, it will be held securely in the School Office. Access to electronic and paper records will be limited to those with a legitimate need to know.

The complaint file will identify the complaint reference, date received, stage reached, responsible decision-maker, outcome, actions agreed, date closed and applicable disposal date. Material additions or corrections will be dated and attributable so that the integrity and history of the record can be demonstrated.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is lawfully requested by the Secretary of State, Ofsted or another body conducting an inspection or exercising lawful authority, or where disclosure is otherwise required by law or safeguarding duties.

The School will make available to parents of current and prospective pupils, on request, the number of complaints registered under the Stage 2 formal procedure during the preceding School year. The Business Operations Manager will produce this figure and the Headteacher will approve its release.

Complaint records will be retained in accordance with the School's Records Retention Schedule, data protection law, safeguarding requirements and the workforce and parent privacy notices. The policy does not create a right to receive another person's personal or confidential employment information.

The School will avoid retaining unnecessary duplicate complaint records. Working copies will be securely deleted or destroyed when they are no longer required, and the authoritative complaint file will be disposed of securely at the end of the applicable retention period. Disposal will be suspended where a record remains relevant to safeguarding, litigation, an investigation, an information-rights request or another legal or regulatory requirement.

16. Learning, monitoring and review

The Headteacher and HR will review complaints to identify operational learning, recurring themes, equality or accessibility issues, safeguarding links, timeliness and improvement actions. Anonymised themes, formal complaint numbers and significant actions will be reported to the Proprietor at least annually without compromising the independence of any future panel.

Where appropriate and lawful, a complainant will be told about improvements arising directly from an upheld complaint. The School will monitor completion and effectiveness of agreed actions.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where legislation, the Independent School Standards, EYFS requirements, Ofsted or Department for Education guidance, organisational arrangements or learning from complaints requires revision.

17. Related policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Managing Allegations Against Adults Procedure;
- Admissions Policy;
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report;
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy;
- Whistleblowing or Speak Up Policy;
- Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure HR044;
- Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure HR002;
- Data Protection Policy and privacy notices;
- Records Retention Schedule;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Accessibility Plan;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- EYFS policies and procedures where applicable.

Appendix 1: Stage 2 Formal Complaint Form

Return to the Headteacher through the School Office or complaints@brightfieldsschool.com. A complaint about the Headteacher should be sent to complaints@sofinoeducation.com. Mark the complaint Private and Confidential.

Complainant name	
Relationship to pupil	
Pupil name and class/year	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
Preferred contact method	
Submission date	

1. Details of complaint

Explain what happened, when and where, who was involved, any previous contact and the effect on the pupil.

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2. Evidence and witnesses

List or attach relevant documents, messages, records, images or potential witnesses. Identify any third-party personal information.

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3. Informal resolution

Explain what has already been tried, the response, or why informal resolution is inappropriate.

4. Outcome sought

Explain what you would like the School to consider doing to resolve the complaint.

5. Urgent safeguarding, welfare or safety concern

Identify anything requiring immediate attention. Do not use this form instead of reporting an immediate risk.

6. Accessibility and support

State any communication support, interpretation, accessible format, meeting adjustment or representative required.

7. Representative authority

If someone is acting for a parent or carer, provide the representative's details and attach or describe verifiable consent.

Signed	Date
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Appendix 2: Complaint process flowchart

Step	Stage	Action
1	Raise concern	Speak to the relevant member of staff or another appropriate person. Urgent safeguarding concerns are reported immediately.
2	Stage 1 informal	Acknowledged normally within 2 school days; resolution aimed for within 10 school days.
3	Stage 2 formal	Submit in writing where possible. Acknowledged within 5 school days.
4	Investigation	Proportionate enquiries, records, meetings and witness evidence. Pupil needs and safeguarding considered.
5	Stage 2 outcome	Normally within 15 school days. Reasons, conclusion, appropriate action and Stage 3 route.
6	Stage 3 request	Parent/carer of current pupil requests within 10 school days and explains grounds.
7	Panel hearing	At least 3 uninvolved people, including 1 independent member. Aim to convene within 15 school days.
8	Final outcome	Findings and recommendations normally issued within 10 school days. Final internal stage.
9	External route	DfE for major ISS failure; Ofsted for applicable EYFS regulatory concerns; other specialist routes as relevant.

Appendix 3: Stage 3 panel request form

Complainant name	
Pupil name	
Stage 2 outcome date	
Request date	
Preferred contact details	

1. Grounds for Stage 3

Identify the specific parts of the Stage 2 investigation, findings, process or action with which you remain dissatisfied.

2. New information

Identify any new evidence and explain why it was not reasonably available at Stage 2.

3. Outcome sought

Explain what you would like the panel to decide or recommend.

4. Attendance, companion and adjustments

State who will attend with you and any accessibility, communication, remote attendance or other adjustment required.

Signed	Date
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