



DEVONPORT HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Named person: Lee Sargeant

Category: Statutory

Review: Bi-Annually or When there are significant changes

Date to be reviewed: Spring 2024

This policy has been reviewed with regard to the work/life balance of staff.

Ratified at the Governors' meeting on: 27.02.23

Introduction

The Head Teacher and Governing Body at Devonport High School for Girls value our relationship with parents, carers and our local community. We are happy to receive suggestions and comments on what goes on within school. This can help us to identify areas of success and where we can make improvements. We believe it is important that anyone who raises a concern is treated seriously and that their concerns and complaints are dealt with fairly. Usually, concerns can be dealt with informally and can be resolved satisfactorily through discussion. Occasionally, a concern cannot be resolved in this way and it may become a complaint.

The Head Teacher and Governing Body at Devonport High School for Girls is required by law (section 29 of the Education Act 2002) to establish procedures for dealing with complaints relating to the school, or to the provision of facilities or services (unless the issue is covered by other legislation – see Appendix 2). The Local Authority has no statutory authority to investigate school complaints.

What is a complaint?

The Head Teacher and Governing Body uses the Local Government Ombudsman definition of what is a complaint. A complaint is

‘an expression of dissatisfaction about a service (whether that service is provided directly, by a contractor, or by a partner) that requires a response.’

Who can make a complaint?

Any person who has a legitimate interest in the school may make a complaint. This will include students on roll at the school irrespective of their age, although normally a complaint from a student would come through a parent.

Where a person is not able to make a complaint himself or herself, a friend or other family member may do so on their behalf, but that person does not become the complainant. The Head Teacher and/or Governing Body will not accept complaints from legal representatives.

Anonymous Complaints

We will not usually investigate anonymous complaints. However, we may determine exceptionally that the complaint warrants investigation, particularly if it relates to a safeguarding concern.

Purposes of a Complaints Procedure

The purpose of a Complaints Procedure is to provide a comprehensive, open, transparent, fair and timely vehicle through which:

- something that may have gone wrong can be identified, acknowledged and, where necessary, put right;
- an apology may be made where appropriate;
- the school can, where appropriate, learn from the process, making it less likely that a similar complaint will be brought in the future.

Publicising the Complaints Procedure

The law imposes a duty on governing bodies to publicise their complaints procedure. This is done through:

- making copies of the procedure available upon request (clearly this will be easily accessible without a potential complainant being asked the reason why it is being requested);
- including the procedure on the school’s website, ensuring that it is easy to find through a link on the policies page.

Timescales for complaints

The Head Teacher and Governing Body have accepted the view of the Department for Education that a complainant should normally be expected to lodge their complaint within 90 school days of the event being complained about. The 90 day limit has been established because investigation is more difficult after a period of time: memories may not be as clear as they would have been earlier, records may not be as readily available and witnesses may not be employed at the school. A delay in making a complaint may also disadvantage any person who is the subject of it, making it more challenging for them to defend themselves for the same reasons.

In exceptional circumstances, the Head Teacher and/or Governing Body will consider complaints submitted outside this timeframe. In such instances the complainant will need to offer an explanation as to why there has been a delay in making a complaint.

Where a number of complaints are made in one letter of complaint, some of which lie outside the timeframe, the Head Teacher and/or Governing Body will determine which complaints can be considered, taking account of their relevance to the substantive complaint or complaints made within the timescale.

Preliminary stage – dealing with concerns informally

Before the formal processes are invoked, every effort will be made to resolve matters informally. This is in line with complaints policies nationally. The Head Teacher will ensure parents are made aware of how they can raise a concern through the governors' communication policy.

Some issues are likely to be best resolved through discussion with a class teacher, form tutor, Head of Department/House or other member of staff below the level of a school leader. In some cases, though, a person may feel the need to escalate the matter to a school leader.

Initially school staff below the level of Head Teacher will seek to resolve matters through provision of information and clarification. Where it is clear that there is a significant level of challenge, staff will refer the matter to the Head Teacher as a cause for concern. The Head Teacher will then seek to resolve the matter through discussion with those expressing concerns. Staff are advised not to engage in prolonged correspondence of an argumentative nature but to refer the complaint to the Head Teacher at that stage.

Whether attempts to resolve concerns at an informal stage are by telephone conversation or through meetings, school staff should take a note of any agreed action points and summarise these at the end of the conversation. The notes should be circulated promptly to those involved in the discussion.

The formal Complaints Procedure will not normally be accessed unless the Head Teacher has first been given the opportunity to discuss the matter with the complainant, either by telephone or, preferably, in person. Where the Head Teacher is unable to resolve matters through discussion, the parent will be asked if they wish to make a formal complaint to the Head Teacher. This complaint should be made in writing using the formal Devonport High School for Girls Complaints Form at the end of this document.

Stage 1 – Making a formal complaint to the Head Teacher

The procedure

- 1.1 The procedure for making a formal complaint requires a complainant to complete, and to submit, a Complaint Form and to do so within 90 school days of the issue about which they are complaining.
- 1.2 The Head Teacher will acknowledge the Complaint Form in writing within 3 school days and appoint an investigating officer (usually a member of the Senior Leadership Team) to investigate the matter so that the complainant receives a response within 10 school days. On occasion, the complaint may be too complex to investigate within this timescale and, in these circumstances, the Head Teacher will write to the complainant explaining why it is not possible to work within the timescales laid down and to advise when a response will be issued.
- 1.3 If the complaint is against the Head Teacher, the complaint form should be sent directly to the Chair of Governing Body, c/o the school. The procedures set out in Part 2 of this document should then apply.

Expected Outcomes

- 1.4 Normally there are two possible outcomes from a complaint. These are actions taken by the school to put matters right. This might involve one or more of the following:
 - a review of policy or procedure;
 - changes to routines;
 - action to remedy a health and safety concern;
 - restorative work involving a student and a member of staff ;

- risk assessment to determine the likelihood of similar problems recurring;
- an apology;
- action towards a member of staff (on the occasions that this is of a disciplinary nature, no further information can be shared as this is a matter of employment contract law for employees and a straightforward matter of privacy for volunteers.
- a decision that no action is necessary or justified.

1.5 The Head Teacher/Chair of the Governing Body will not normally award financial compensation unless required to do so by virtue of legislation.

The Complaint Form

1.6 A complainant who has first discussed the issue with the Head Teacher may make a complaint and to do so they must use the Complaint Form. The complainant is asked to be brief and clear about the issue and to state what would, for them, provide a resolution to the complaint. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the complaint form should be submitted within 90 school days of the issue causing complaint.

Arranging help for the complainant to articulate concerns and understand procedure

1.7 If a complainant wishes to seek help in explaining the issue and/or with completing the Complaint Form, then support may be available from one of the following sources:

From School Staff. The Head Teachers and Governing Body accepts that a member of the school staff may provide support unless the Head Teacher agrees that there is good reason why they should not do so. This support does not extend to support with the basis of the complaint per se, rather it is restricted to advice on how best to present the information.

From external sources. A complainant may, if they wish, seek support from any person who is not a member of staff, including legal support or from statutory and charitable organisations. A complainant may nominate a person to issue, and to receive, correspondence on their behalf. Whilst the Head Teacher and Governing Body acknowledges that, on rare occasions, parents may wish to contact solicitors, the school will not accept a complaint from a legal representative. The school will not use legal representation within the complaint resolution process but nor will parents' legal representative be permitted to attend relevant meetings.

Stage 2 – Referring a formal complaint to the Chair of Governors

- 2.1 Where the complainant considers that the Head Teacher's written response does not resolve the complaint, the complainant may ask the Chair of the Governing Body to reconsider the Head Teacher's response. This request should be made within 10 school days of receiving the Head Teacher's response.
- 2.2 If the complaint is about the Head Teacher then the complaint form will be submitted direct to the Chair of the Governing Body. Unless the complaint is about the Head Teacher, the Chair of the Governing Body will not consider the complaint unless the Head Teacher has had opportunity to seek to resolve the matter first.
- 2.3 If the complaint is about the Chair of the Governing Body then the complaint form should be sent to the Vice Chair of the Governing Body who will act in the role of Chair for this process.

The procedure

- 2.4 If emailing the complaint, care should be taken to ensure that the complainant has the official email address for the clerk to the Chair of the Governing Body, available from the reception in school, and that they use this. In the subject field of the email, the complainant should write, 'Formal Complaint'. If delivering or posting a letter, the complainant must address it to the Chair of the Governing Body at the school address and should write 'Formal Complaint' on the envelope. This will ensure that the complaint is dealt with promptly and enable the school to comply with the timescales set out in the policy.
- 2.5 The complainant should not share the complaint with other governors. A detailed knowledge of the complaint will preclude governors from serving on a review panel if the complaint is not resolved through the good offices of the Chair. Governors receiving a complaint in this way should immediately refer it back to the Chair without considering the content.
- 2.6 The Chair of the Governing Body will acknowledge the Complaint Form in writing within 3 school days of receipt and investigate the matter so that the complainant receives a response within 10 school days. On rare occasions, the complaint may be too complex to investigate within this timescale and, in these circumstances, the Chair will write to the complainant explaining why it is not possible to work within the timescales laid down and to advise when a response will be issued.
- 2.7 As part of the investigation, the Chair will make early contact with the complainant and either propose a meeting or substantial telephone call to consider the issues raised. If telephoning, the Chair should determine whether it is necessary to withhold any number that is not the school's telephone number.
- 2.8 The focus of that conversation should be to:
 - Consider any gaps on the complaint form;
 - Consider any aspects of the complaint where additional clarification is required;
 - Consider the extent to which any evidence is available that has not been mentioned on the complaint form;
 - Establish the complainant's view as to witnesses who might need to be interviewed;
 - Establish what would provide for the complainant an acceptable resolution to the complaint;

- Establish whether there is any pressing reason for the matter to be investigated more quickly than the published timescale allows for;
- Discuss with the complainant whether there is anything that might help resolve matters outside the complaints procedure, for example, alternative dispute resolution methods.

2.9 The key elements of the Chair’s investigation are likely to include:

- Achievement of a shared understanding with the complainant of the nature of the complaint and of what it is that remains unresolved;
- Establishing what has happened and who was involved;
- Interviews and/or written statements from those adults and young people whose information and views, in the opinion of the Chair of the Governing Body, need to be taken into account; although the final decision of whom to interview rests with the Chair, it is expected that the voice of affected children will be heard and be given sufficient;
- Sensitivity and thoroughness when conducting interviews;
- A detailed report that will provide a clear record that will be helpful for any subsequent review;
- A clear analysis of the information and conclusions reached;
- An authoritative outcome that is based on the evidence and does not merely state acceptance of evidence;
- Recommendations to resolve the complaint.

Expected Outcomes

2.10 The Chair will report on the extent to which s/he considers the complaint is fully, or in part:

- **Substantiated** i.e. where there is sufficient evidence to uphold the complaint;
- **Malicious** – i.e. where it is proven that the complainant has no case and where, also, there is evidence that the complainant deliberately tried to deceive the School, made the complaint as part of a deliberate attempt to cause distress or otherwise acted with malice;
- **False** – i.e. where there is sufficient evidence to prove that there was not legitimate basis to the complaint, or;
- **Unsubstantiated** – i.e. where there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion.

2.11 In terms of future actions there are two possible outcomes from a complaint. These are:

- action taken by the school to put matters right. This might involve one or more of the following:
 - a review of policy or procedure;
 - changes to routines;
 - action to remedy a health and safety concern;
 - restorative work involving a student and a member of staff;
 - risk assessment to determine the likelihood of similar problems recurring;
 - an apology;
- action towards a member of staff (on the rare occasions that this is of a disciplinary nature, no further information can be shared as this is a matter of employment contract law for employees and a straightforward matter of privacy for volunteers).
 - a decision that no action is necessary or justified.

2.12 The Chair of the Governing Body will not normally award financial compensation unless required to do so by virtue of legislation.

Role of the Clerk to the Governing Body

2.13 The Chair of Governing Body will appoint the Clerk to:

- act in a 'progress chasing' role to track the complaint and to ensure that timescales set out within the policy are being adhered to wherever possible;
- ensure that the complainant is kept up-to-date, including where timescales have not been met and the reasons why;
- receive any concerns that the complainant might have and advise the Chair of the Governing Body about the operation of the process;
- inform the Chair of the Governing Body of any shortcomings in the delivery of its complaints procedure, both during the process and subsequently;
- arrange for the outcome of the investigation to be communicated to all parties so they receive it at the same time. This will be in the form of an email or letter from the Chair of the Governing Body, depending on the style of communication that has been used by the complainant during the process.

2.14 The letter from the Chair of the Governing Body represents the conclusion of the Chair's consideration of the complaint. Neither the Chair nor any member of staff should respond to the complainant after this point. The Clerk should thereafter handle all correspondence. The complainant will be advised that the matter is closed except for the possibility of a review by a governors' panel (see Part 3).

Stage 3 – Referring a formal complaint to a governors’ panel

The procedure

- 3.1 Where the complainant considers that the Chair of the Governing Body written response does not resolve the complaint, the complainant may ask the Clerk to convene a Panel of Governors who have had no prior involvement with the complaint (or the issues which led to the complaint) to review the Chair’s response. The complainant must complete, and submit to the Clerk, a Review Request Form (see below). S/he should do this within 10 school days of the date of issue of the letter giving the decision on the complaint. This form is structured in a way that helps ensure that the reasons for requesting a review can be readily understood, and that contact information is recorded and available to those who might need it.
- 3.2 If emailing, the complainant should take care to ensure that s/he has the official email address for the Clerk and that s/he uses this. It can be obtained from the Administration office. In the subject field of the email, the complainant should write, ‘Complaint Review Request’. If delivering or posting a letter, the complainant must address it to the Clerk at the school address and write ‘Complaint Review Request’ on the envelope’. The Clerk should acknowledge the request for review within 3 school days.
- 3.3 If the complainant requires assistance in articulating the need for a review then support may be provided by those identified as able to offer help in stage 2 of the guidance (pages 5/6 above). These include school staff, LA officers and other external sources of support. Again, it is not for those supporting the complainant to comment on the merits or otherwise of review, but rather to help the complainant articulate their position to the governors’ panel through the Review Request Form.
- 3.4 The governors’ panel will only consider requests for review outside the 10 school day timeframe in exceptional circumstances. These might include:
- the reasons for a review not being known to the complainant within 10 school days;
 - the complainant needing to delay making their request for review because they needed the time to collect evidence that could not have been gathered during the first 10 school days;
 - the complainant not having been able to request a review within 10 school days because of being abroad or being incapacitated.
- 3.5 It is a matter for the governors’ panel to determine whether a review will be carried out based on the information supplied in the Review Request Form. Normally, the governors will apply the following criteria in determining whether or not to carry out a review:
- the complainant’s view that not all aspects of the complaint have been addressed;
 - the complainant’s view that not all available evidence has been considered;
 - the complainant’s view that not all relevant witnesses have been interviewed;
 - the complainant’s view that the decision has not been adequately justified in the Chair’s decision letter;
 - the complainant’s view that the decision has not been adequately explained.
- 3.6 The review process cannot be used to consider cases where the complaint was not dealt with in accordance with published time-scales. That would require a fresh complaint to be made.
- 3.7 The Governing Body has decided that any review should be conducted in writing only because

- face-to-face hearings can be emotive and stressful for complainants and staff;
- if there is a hearing, there would need to be an opportunity for cross-examination and, to be successful, this might require a level of chairing skills for which few governing bodies are trained;
- while being potentially stressful, there is nothing inherent in a face-to-face hearing that can add value to consideration of the complaint;
- there should be no new evidence in support of the complaint that cannot be aired in writing;
- the only points for consideration will be the complainant's concern about how the complaint had been handled and all such points can be written down and considered without the need for a hearing.

Composition of Review Panel

3.9 The Clerk will convene a Review Panel comprising 3 or 5 members who have had no prior involvement with the complaint or the causes of the complaint. Members of the Review Panel will elect a chair from among themselves and they will use a simple majority vote to do so.

Convening the Review Meeting

3.11 The Clerk will liaise with all the Review Panel members to propose, and to agree, a date, time and venue for the review. This is most likely to be at the school but the Clerk should ensure that the meeting will be in an appropriate environment i.e.

- there will be a sufficient number of tables and chairs;
- where governors have agreed a face-to-face review the size of the room will be conducive to constructive discussion;
- the meeting will not be disturbed;
- the confidentiality of proceedings can be protected.

3.12 The Governing Body is mindful of the challenges that volunteer governors can encounter in finding time to prepare for a review and in finding a date and time when all members are available. The Governing Body has decided that it is more preferable to allow sufficient time for the process than it is to set a deadline that may be all too easy to miss. The Governing Body therefore has decided that a Review Panel should meet within, what the Governing Body considers to be, the reasonable time frame of 20 school days, starting from the day when the request for a review was received, or the next school day if that was not a school day. If there are exceptional reasons why there is slippage to the timescales laid down the clerk will explain the reasons for this to the complainant.

Further written representations to the Review Panel

3.13 Prior to the meeting of the Review Panel, the Clerk will seek any written representations from the complainant concerning the reasons why the matter should be reviewed. The complainant will have 10 school days to provide this information on the Review Request Form. The Clerk will supply this information to the Chair of Governing Body who will have 5 school days to submit any further comments to the Panel on the reasons given for review. The Panel should have 5 clear school days to consider all the information in advance of the meeting. The information to be sent by the clerk to the Review Panel should comprise the following:

- The completed Complaints Form;
- Response to the complaint from the Chair of Governing Body;
- The completed Review Request Form;
- Any additional written representations from the Chair of Governing Body or the complainant.

The Review Panel meeting

- 3.14 The Review Panel meeting will normally be clerked by the Clerk to the Governing Body. Where this is not possible the Chair of Governing Body will ensure that an alternative suitable person is responsible for the clerking function.
- 3.15 At the start of the meeting the Panel will elect a chair who will be responsible for the conduct of the meeting and for liaising with the clerk subsequently to ensure that all parties receive timely notification of the outcome within 5 school days of the date of the review meeting.
- 3.16 The first responsibility of the Panel is to consider whether they will allow a review of the complaint considering the criteria set out at 3.5 (above). If the Panel considers there is no merit in review they will agree on the reasons for that decision and the Clerk will record these. Given that the Governing Body is committed to the principle of natural justice, and the outworking of that principle in practice, it is anticipated that most requests for review will be accepted and, where there is doubt, the balance of judgement will weigh in favour of the complainant.
- 3.17 If the Panel agrees that the review should proceed it will consider objectively the complaint, the Chair's response, the reasons set out in the Review Request Form, and any further written representations from the Chair or complainant. It will then decide whether the response to the complainant has been fair and reasonable in the circumstances. The Review Panel must take care to ensure that it does not favour one side or the other for any reasons other than those arrived at through an objective assessment of all the evidence.

Conclusions and recommendations

- 3.18 The Review Panel must come to a conclusion as to whether the request for a review was justified in identifying alleged shortcomings in the investigation of the complaint by the Chair of Governing Body. Because the review is not an appeal, the Review Panel cannot reverse the earlier decision of the Chair of Governing Body. But it can make any recommendations that it sees fit. Such recommendations might include:
- an apology;
 - a re-consideration of an earlier decision;
 - a review of a policy or a procedure, or;
 - a decision that no action is necessary or justified.

Communicating the outcome

- 3.19 The matter should remain confidential. The Clerk will communicate the outcome, and set out the reasons for it, in a letter to the complainant, the outline of which will have been formulated by the Review Panel in the meeting. The final version will be agreed and signed by the Chair of the Panel. It is essential that the review decision letter is sent to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, at the same time. This will be in the form of an email or letter, depending on the style of communication that has been used by the complainant during the process. Whilst the letter should avoid unnecessary detail, there should be sufficient information to demonstrate that the review was considered in full.
- 3.20 A written record will be kept of all complaints that are made, including the following details:
- whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing;
 - action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).
- 3.21 The issue of the review decision letter concludes the process and the school will not enter into any

further correspondence with the complainant. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a Stage 3 appeal and wishes to pursue the matter further, this should be done by following the ESFA/DfE's procedure for dealing with those complaints about schools that fall outside statutory requirements. Complaints relating to schools should be directed to the nominated officer for school complaints in writing, by fax, by email, by telephone or in person.

It must be understood, however, that it is not the ESFA/DfE's role to re-investigate and direct the Governors or Head Teacher to take a particular course of action but to help find a solution to a complaint. The ESFA/DfE will listen to the complaint, ask questions and give advice on how to break the deadlock.

Unreasonable Complainants

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

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

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the ESFA;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

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

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

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the Head Teacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the school premises.

Record of Complaints

The school will maintain a written record of all complaints that are made. This record will outline the following:

- Whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing
- What action was taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)

The school will ensure that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

APPENDIX 1: Complaint procedure (summary)

INFORMAL STAGE

School staff seek to resolve the complaint informally through discussion with the complainant. A complaint will not normally be considered unless the complainant has first raised the matter informally with the relevant school leader.

The complainant should submit a formal complaint within 90 school days of the cause for complaint.

FORMAL PROCEDURE – Stage 1* (up to 10 school days total)

Written complaint to the Head Teacher

- Received by Head Teacher
- Acknowledgement – 3 school days
- Investigation (including any discussion with the complainant)
- Formal Response (from the Head Teacher) – 10 school days from receipt

*If the complaint is about the Head Teacher then the complaint will be directed to the Chair of Governing Body and considered as a Stage 2 complaint.

FORMAL PROCEDURE – Stage 2 (up to 10 school days total)

Complaint to the Chair of Governing Body requesting review of Head's decision

- Received by Chair of Governing Body (within 10 days of the Head's response)
- Acknowledgement – 3 school days
- Investigation (including any discussion with the complainant)
- Formal Response (from the Chair of Governing Body or Clerk) – 10 school days from receipt

FORMAL PROCEDURE – Stage 3 (Final) (up to 20 school days total)

Request for Review of Chair's Decision – Governors' Complaint Panel

- Received by Clerk to the Governing Body (within 10 days of the Chair of Trust Board's response)
- Acknowledgement – 3 school days
- Meeting
- Formal Response (from the Clerk) – 20 school days from receipt

The conclusion of Stage 3 brings to an end the Governing Body's role in considering the complaint. Complainants who remain dissatisfied may wish to contact the EFSA/DfE.

APPENDIX 2: Issues outside of the scope of the complaints policy

Issue	Who to contact	Legislation, policy/procedure (references are generic and may not match the title of the school's own documents)
Complaint about an admission to school	Local Authority Admissions	Admissions and Admissions Appeal Procedure For information, view the Local Authority website
Complaint about a Pupil Exclusion	Discipline Committee c/o Clerk to the Governing Body	Rights to make representations to the Governors' Discipline Committee about a suspension vary according to the length of the exclusion. There is a right of appeal to governors if the pupil is permanently excluded with a further right of review by an Independent Panel.
Allegation that a child has been harmed	Head Teacher or Chair if the complaint relates to the Head Teacher The Chair of the Governing Body, c/o Clerk to the Governing Body	DfE procedures – 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'



DEVONPORT HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS COMPLAINT FORM

Our leaflet Guidance notes for parents/carers explains the complaints procedure followed at Devonport High School for Girls. This form is designed to help you ask the Head Teacher to arrange an investigation of your complaint or to ask the Chair of Governors to arrange further investigation if you are dissatisfied with the Head Teacher's response to your complaint.

Data Protection Act

Personal information provided by complainants will be treated as confidential. It will be kept secure in accordance with our data protection policy and not provided to anyone unless they are allowed to see it by law. Analysis will be restricted to types of complaints and individual complainants will not be identified. The analysis will be reported to the Board of Governors on an annual basis. The reporting will include identifying particular trends of complaints, which may require some change in the school's procedures.

Please complete this form and return it to the Head Teacher's PA or Clerk to Governors (as appropriate) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

If you need assistance with completing this form, please contact the main school office.

Your name:	
Pupil's name:	
Your relationship to the pupil:	
Your address (please include the postcode):	
Your telephone number (daytime):	
Your telephone number (evening):	
Please give details of your complaint:	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and when and what was the response?):	

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What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
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Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details:

Your signature:	
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Date:	
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FOR OFFICIAL USE AT DEVONPORT HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Date acknowledgement sent:	
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Acknowledgement sent by (name):	
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Complaint referred to:	
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Date of referral:	
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