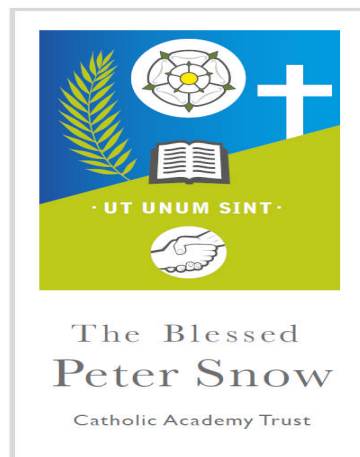


BLESSED PETER SNOW CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE ACTIONS OF TRUST STAFF

May 2015

The Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust

The Catholic Voluntary Academies which form the Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust are distinctive as we provide grounding in the Catholic Faith for all our children. The special character of our Catholic academies is the quality of the religious teaching, integrated into the overall education of our children. Our beliefs, which are Gospel centred, affect the way we live, making our academies living examples of Christ and His teachings.

“Education is not and must never be considered as purely utilitarian. It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full – in short it is about imparting wisdom. And true wisdom is inseparable from knowledge of the Creator.” (Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Teachers and Religious, Twickenham, September 2010).

Our Academies therefore operate and are informed by the following four key principles of Christian formation:

- **Places of Discipleship**
- **Places where Communities are created**
- **Places of Learning**
- **Places where we treasure God’s World**

In light of the above principles, the Trust aims to:

- ensure secure, welcoming and engaging environments in which all individuals learn to value and respect both themselves and others
- provide all individuals with the opportunities to achieve excellence, to develop their full potential as human beings and to encourage and challenge them to do so
- uphold the unshakable belief in the unique potential of each child, student and member of staff
- provide a curriculum that initiates students into the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills they need to become mature Christian adults in their personal, social, family and working lives.

PROCEDURE FOR EXTERNAL CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS **ABOUT THE ACTIONS OF TRUST STAFF**

1. GENERAL

This procedure applies to **general** concerns or complaints that are received by the any of the academies within the **Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust**. The Trust has separate procedures for complaints or appeals about the curriculum, special educational needs provision, exclusions, and admissions. Disciplinary action, grievances, capability issues, child protection or criminal investigations are also dealt with through separate specific procedures.

Anonymous concerns or complaints cannot be dealt with under this procedure.

Every effort should be made to resolve concerns or complaints informally through discussions with the member of staff concerned or the Headteacher.

If the complaint is about the way in which the academy has dealt with a complaint or the complaint is about the Headteacher the matter should be referred to the Academy Council or a Panel set up by the Academy Council. See 'Management of Stages' for guidance.

Each stage of the procedure should normally be exhausted before a complaint is referred to the next stage.

Any complaint raised more than 3 months after any linked decision, outcome or action will not be considered. The only exception will be if the delay in submitting the complaint was unavoidable.

The timescales in this procedure are those expected in normal circumstances, these may be increased if the complaint is detailed and/or requires an extensive investigation. If a complaint is made on the last day of term prior to a school holiday period the timelines indicated will not be followed. The complainant will be informed in writing of any variations to the timescales and given a revised timetable for resolving their complaint.

Where complainants or members of staff are invited to a planned meeting either as part of the investigation or of the Complaints Panel they may be accompanied by a friend or representative.

Unreasonable behaviour and managing vexatious complaints

The Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust is committed to providing the highest quality education, care and guidance for all pupils in any of the academies in the Trust and will consider feedback, constructive criticism and complaints. However, the Trust does not tolerate behaviour that is abusive or threatening. If behaviour is unacceptable, action will be taken to restrict the individuals contact with pupils, members of staff, governors and directors.

If a complainant is considered by the Trust to be acting unreasonably the Trust will write to the complainant to explain the way that any future complaints from that person will be dealt with. Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate.

2. PROCEDURE

Stage 1 – Informal concerns/complaints

Concerns or complaints should initially be directed to the appropriate academy staff member.

The complainant and member of staff should discuss the concern/complaint with the aim of resolving it informally. The member of staff will record details of the concern/complaint and try to identify what action/outcome the parent/carer is looking for using the form at Annex A.

Or

If the complainant has already discussed their complaint with the member of staff, or that would be inappropriate, a senior manager in the academy (normally the Headteacher) will discuss the complaint with the complainant again seeking to resolve it informally.

Where appropriate the academy Chair of Council will be informed that an informal complaint has been received without discussing the nature of the complaint at this stage.

Stage 2 - Investigation

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally the complaint should be put in writing using the form at Annex B and sent to the Headteacher (or Chair of Academy Council) **within 10 days** of the conclusion of Stage 1.

An Investigating Officer will be appointed who will:

- Acknowledge the complaint within **5 working days**.
- Investigate the complaint and then decide how best to resolve it within a further **10 working days**.
- Provide a written response outlining how the investigation was conducted and the outcome of the complaint, as well as offering the complainant the opportunity to discuss the outcome if appropriate. This should be within **5 working days** of completing the investigation.
- Advise the complainant that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint they can ask for this to be considered by a Stage 3 panel.

If the Investigating Officer is not able to resolve the complaint and/or the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome from the investigation the complaint should be dealt with under Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Panel

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome they should write within 10 days of the notification of the Stage 2 outcome to the Academy Chair of Academy

Council stating why and requesting that their complaint is referred to a Panel. The complainant should complete the reporting form at Annex C.

The Chair of the Academy Council or the Clerk to the Academy Council will acknowledge receipt of the request within 5 working days.

A meeting of the Panel will be convened **within 20 working days** of the request.

The Panel will consist of at least 3 members who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and of whom at least **one** member is not concerned in the management or running of the academy i.e. not a Trust Director or Academy Council Member.

The Panel will consider whether to:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The Panel will take into account whether the complaint has been handled properly and reasonably in accordance with this procedure and whether the Stage 2 outcome was reasonable and appropriate

The complainant should be informed of the Panel decision in writing **within 7 working days**.

The decision of the Panel is Final.

The role of the Local Authority

The Local Authority has no statutory role in resolving external complaints about the actions of Trust staff. **There is no further or wider appeal to the Local Authority.**

Secretary of State

A complaint may be made to the Secretary of State for Education on the grounds that an Academy Council has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably, or that the Academy Council has failed to discharge its duties under legislation.

The complaint should set out fully the concerns and reasons why the complaint is being submitted, enclosing all previous correspondence relevant to the complaint. Complaints to the Secretary of State should be made in writing via the Education Funding Agency. The EFA's procedure for handling complaints can be accessed at:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/school-complaints-form>

Records of complaints and confidentiality

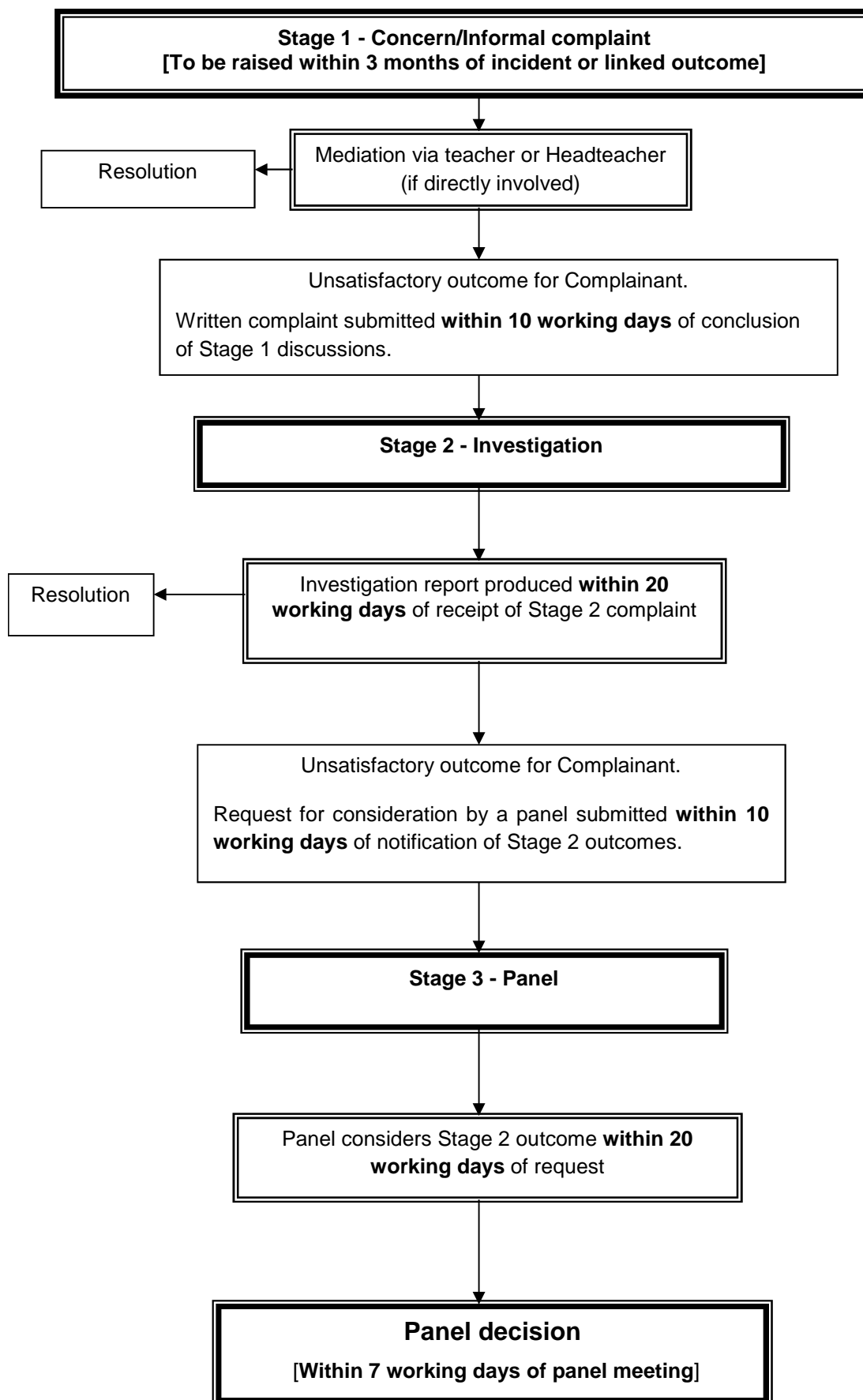
A written record will be kept at the Academy concerned of all complaints which reach **Stage 2**. This record will include whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or a panel hearing, and the action taken as a result (regardless of whether they are upheld).

A written record will be kept of all complaints at **stage 3**, including whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or a panel hearing, and the action taken as a result (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Any complaint which reaches **Stage 3** will also be reported to the Chair of the Trust Board before a panel hearing takes place so that the Chair of the Trust Board can decide whether to nominate a member of the Trust Board as a panel member. The outcome must also be so reported.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints shall be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting a statutory inspection requests access to them.

COMPLAINTS PROCESS



Complaints Procedure: Management of stages

Complaint relates to	Stage 1: Informal	Stage 2: Investigation Investigating Officer	Stage 3: Panel
Pupils, parents or staff (other than the Headteacher)	The appropriate member of staff	The Headteacher	Panel appointed by the Chair of Academy Council and including one member independent from the running and management of the academy.
The Headteacher	The Headteacher	The Chair of Academy Council or another nominated non- staff Governor	Panel appointed by the Vice Chair of Academy Council. Panel to include the Chair of Academy Council or other Trust Director and one member independent from the running and management of the academy.
A Governor or Governors (other than the Chair of Academy Council)	The Chair of Academy Council	Another nominated non- staff Governor	Panel appointed by the Vice Chair of Academy Council. Panel to include the academy Chair of Academy Council or other Trust Director and one member independent from the running and management of the academy.
The Chair of Academy Council (or a group of Governors including the Chair of Academy Council)	The Vice Chair of Academy Council	Another nominated non- staff Governor	Panel appointed by the Chair of the Trust. Panel to include one member independent from the running and management of the academy.
The whole body of Academy Council		Chair or Vice Chair of the Trust	A panel Trust Directors appointed by the Vice Chair of the Trust to include one member independent from the running and management of the academy.

Stage 1 - Initial School Record of concern/complaint

Academy	
Name of Complainant	
Name of Child	
Date of Contact with the Academy	
Nature of concern	
Actions Taken	
<i>Signature</i>	Date

Stage 2 - Complainant Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name:
Your relationship to the pupil:
Address: Postcode: Telephone number: Email:
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 what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

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

Signature:
Date:

Official use
Date acknowledgement sent:
By who:
Complaint referred to:
Date:

Stage 3 - Complainant Form

Please complete and return to the Chair of Academy Council who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name:
Your relationship to the pupil:
Address:
Postcode:
Telephone number:
Email:
Please confirm that you are requesting that your complaint be taken to a panel for consideration.
Please provide details of why you were dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation.
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.

Signature:
Date:

Official use
Date acknowledgement sent:
By who:
Complaint referred to:
Date: