



**Yardleys**  
**School**  
WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FUTURE

## SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY

Adopted by Trustees:

Signed: .....

Date: .....

This policy is reviewed annually by the Finance, Premises & Staffing Committee

Review date: .....

## POLICY INFORMATION

|                            |               |                                  |            |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| Date of last review        | November 2025 | Review period                    | Annually   |
| Date ratified by governors | December 2025 | Governors' committee responsible | FPS        |
| Policy owner               | David Pohl    | SLT member responsible           | David Pohl |
| Date of next review        | November 2026 |                                  |            |

## Reviews/revisions

| Review date   | Changes made  | By whom     |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| November 2019 | No changes  | Jill Wilson |
| February 2020 | <p>Line added to explain this policy will be applicable to anyone who wishes to pursue a complaint.</p> <p>Line added on acceptable behaviour from parties involved.</p> <p>Change to Vexatious Complaints paragraph including directing the complaint to the DfE if they wish to raise the matter further following completion of the complaints process.</p> <p>Addition of 'informal' and 'formal' to respective stage 1 and stage 2 headings.</p> <p>Section added under 'stage 1' on moving from an initial concern to this formal stage and detail added on time scales.</p> <p>Section added under 'stage 2' on moving from stage 1 to stage 2, detail on time scales and evidence that may be considered added.</p> <p>Section added on requesting a review by the Complaints Panel and the time scales expected.</p> <p>Detail added under 'stage 3' to include that one member of the panel needs to be independent of the management and running of the school.</p> <p>Line added under Stage 3 on the possibility for the complainant to be accompanied to the hearing by one other person and that legal representation is not necessary.</p> <p>Line added on the panel's decision being sent out in writing.</p> <p>Removal of a paragraph under Part 3 on recording complaints, replaced by section on written record being kept of all complaints including actions. Line added on inspection of findings by HT and governors.</p> <p>Removal of paragraph on Publicising the Procedure</p> <p>Removal of annex – The Act – detailing Section 29 of Education Act 2002</p> | Gemma Webb  |
| November 2020 | <p>DfE model policy used with adjustments made:</p> <p>Yardleys School added as school name throughout</p> <p>Page 4 Headteacher nominated as the person who will refer complaints on to other members of staff when required</p> <p>Page 4 'Class teacher' removed and replaced with 'member of staff'</p> <p>Page 5 Paragraph added on 'Duplicate Complaints'</p> <p>Page 5 Paragraph added on 'Recording of Complaints'</p> <p>Page 6 Addition of 'BCC admissions or SENAR' as contacts for admission complaints</p>   | Gemma Webb  |

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| November 2021 | <p>Page 6 Addition of line to state the behaviour policy is available on the VLE in regards to complaints in relation to exclusions</p> <p>Page 7 '2' school days added as timeframe under stage 1 for acknowledging a complaint</p> <p>Page 8 '10' school days added as a timeframe under stage 1 for a formal written response</p> <p>Page 8 '5' school days added as timeframe for request for complaint to be escalated to stage 2</p> <p>Page 8 '2' school days added as timeframe under stage 2 for acknowledging a complaint and a line added on submission of additional paperwork</p> <p>Page 8 '15' school days added as a timeframe for convening a meeting following receipt of a stage 2 request</p> <p>Page 9 additional line on the hearing not being a legal proceeding</p> <p>Page 9 '5' school days added as a timeframe under stage 2 for actions to be taken by the clerk before the meeting</p> <p>Page 9 point added on timeframe for complainant to notify the school of the name of person accompanying them to the hearing</p> <p>Page 9 removal of point listed under clerk actions 5 days before the meeting regarding requesting material to be submitted before the meeting</p> <p>Page 9 '5' school days added as a timeframe for material to be circulated before the meeting</p> <p>Page 10 '5' school days added as a timeframe for outcome of Stage 2 to be sent</p> <p>Page 12 Line altered on where the complaint form should be returned to</p> <p>Review period changed to annually in line with DfE guidance</p> <p>Updated DfE model policy:</p> <p>Under 'How to raise a concern' line on concerns should be raised with either a member of staff or Headteacher and line on complainants not approaching individual governors moved to under 'Stage 1 – formal complaints'</p> <p>Under 'Scope of complaints procedure' – wording on 'who to contact' relating to admissions updated, removal of who to contact in regards to complaints about services provided by other providers and complaints on national curriculum content</p> <p>Line added regarding complainants being informed of timescales if aspects of a complaints is being investigated by other bodies.</p> <p>Stage 1 – title added to include words 'Informal complaints'</p> <p>Stage 2 – title added to include words 'Formal complaints'</p> <p>Stage 3 – title added to include words 'Panel hearing'</p> <p>Under Stage 3 – make-up of the panel updated from 'members of the governing body's complaints committee' to 'three people – one of who is independent of the management of the school'</p> <p>Removal of paragraph on sourcing governors if there are not enough to form a committee from Yardleys governors</p> <p>Removal of line on the committee deciding whether to invite parties to a meeting or through written representation</p> <p>Section on if the complaint is about governors moved higher up under stage 3</p> <p>DfE updated to EFSA in reference to the outcome of panel hearing letter</p> <p>Line added on panel sending findings by email or otherwise and records kept confidential unless when inspected from SoS.</p> <p>Under 'Next steps' DfE address updated to EFSA</p> | Gemma Webb |
|---------------|--|------------|

|               |  |            |
|---------------|--|------------|
| November 2022 | No changes   | Gemma Webb |
| November 2023 | Policy owner and 'SLT member responsible' changed from Gemma Webb to David Pohl (Deputy Head).<br>With reference to dealing with 'Informal Complaints', the wording has been changed from '...the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide an informal written response within 10 school days...' to '...the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide a written response within 10 school days...' | David Pohl |
| November 2024 | No changes   | David Pohl |
| November 2025 | The 'Next Steps' of 'Resolving a Complaint' have been updated to include how a complainant may contact the DfE.  | David Pohl |

#### Dates of linked staff training (if applicable)

| Date | Course title | Led by |
|------|--------------|--------|
|      |              |        |

#### EQUALITY AND GDPR

All Yardleys' policies should be read in conjunction with our Equal Opportunities and GDPR policies.

##### Equality:

We ensure this policy does not discriminate directly or indirectly. The policy is reviewed considering the Equality Act 2010.

##### GDPR:

Yardleys School is committed to protecting personal and sensitive data. All data is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018) and GDPR principles.

##### Statement of principle – Yardleys Way

Yardleys School treats everyone equally and we value everyone the same irrespective of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy or maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

## Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Yardleys School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

## The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Yardleys School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Yardleys School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

## How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in

alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

## Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

## Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

## Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## Duplicate Complaints

Where a complainant raises an issue that has already been dealt with via the complaints process in this policy, and the procedure has been completed, the issue will not be reinvestigated unless in exceptional circumstances, such as where new and relevant evidence has been provided.

If a complainant persists in raising the same, or substantially similar, issue the Chair of Governors will confirm in writing that their complaint has been dealt with fully in line with this policy and the matter is now closed. They will also provide details of how to raise the issue with the Department for Education if they wish to take the matter further.

## Recording of Complaints

A written record will be kept of all complaints, including recording the final outcome and action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether they are upheld). Records will be held centrally in the Business Manager's office.

## Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Yardleys School, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

| Exceptions  | Who to contact  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Admissions to schools</li></ul> | Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process – either through the appeals process or via the local authority. |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul> | <p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of children from school*</li> </ul>                         | <p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p> <p>The school behaviour policy is available on our VLE.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> </ul>   | <p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>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: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances</li> </ul>   | <p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff conduct</li> </ul>  | <p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>   |

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the 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. If this happens, the complainant will be informed of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against Yardleys School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

## Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Yardleys School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the 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 the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

## Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

## Stage 1 – Informal Complaints

It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis.

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, year head/subject head or head teacher. Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 3 of the procedure.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide a written response within 10 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

## Stage 2 – Formal complaints

Formal complaints must be made to the headteacher (unless they are about the headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone.

The headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 2 school days.

Within this response, the headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The headteacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

*Note: The headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.*

During the investigation, the headteacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish

- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the headteacher will provide a formal written response within 10 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Yardleys School will take to resolve the complaint.

The headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.

If the complaint is about the headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2.

Complaints about the headteacher or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 2 will be considered by an independent investigator. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

## **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3 – a panel hearing consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within 5 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 2 school days and request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee within 5 school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 15 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 3 will be heard by a committee of independent governors.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. The hearing is not a legal proceeding and so it is not necessary for either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

*Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.*

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 5 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- Request that the complainant notify the school at least 3 school days before the meeting of the name of the person who will be accompanying them, and in what capacity.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Yardleys School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Yardleys School.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Yardleys School will take to resolve the complaint.

The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher.

All 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.

## Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education (DfE) after they have completed Stage 3. Complaints to the DfE must be made within 12 months of the incident or the last action taken by the academy.

To make a complaint to the DfE, use their customer help portal - <https://customerhelpportal.education.gov.uk/>

# Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the school office, marked for the attention of either the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or Clerk to Governors who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

|  |
|--|
| <b>Your name:</b>  |
| <b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>   |
| <b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>   |
| <b>Address:</b>  |
| <b>Postcode:</b>   |
| <b>Day time telephone number:</b>  |
| <b>Evening telephone number:</b>   |
| <b>Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.</b> |

**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:**

# Roles and Responsibilities

## Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

## Investigator

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

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
  - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
  - consideration of records and other relevant information
  - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator 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
- prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

**Complaints Co-ordinator** (this could be the headteacher / designated complaints governor or other staff member providing administrative support)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure

- liaise with staff members, headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
  - sharing third party information
  - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records.

## Clerk to the Governing Body

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the committee's decision.

## Committee Chair

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.

If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting

- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself

- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the committee is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one).

## Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so

No governor may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.

- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant

We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting

Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.

- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting

Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.

The committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.

If the child/young person is the complainant, the committee should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.

However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.