



COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Our vision is to be stronger together, transforming lives and
creating memories which are celebrated for a lifetime

COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

Weydon Multi Academy Trust (WMAT) endeavours to provide the best education possible for all its students in an open and transparent environment. However, if concerns or complaints are raised, the trust and the schools/college will deal with these fairly, openly, promptly and without prejudice.

The purpose of this procedure is to clearly outline the process of dealing with concerns or complaints about a school/college, the trust or any individual connected with it and the correct procedure to be followed, in an open, honest and fair manner.

If you feel it necessary to raise a concern or complaint, we strongly encourage you to follow the process outlined in this policy and by working in partnership in a respectful manner, we will ensure that your concerns are resolved as quickly as possible.

Part 1 of this complaints policy and procedure is limited to parents or carers of children and young people that are registered at trust schools/colleges. **Part 2** refers to complaints from members of the community and persons other than parents/carers.

Key Principles & Guidance

- We have implemented a three stage process.
- This procedure does not apply to concerns or complaints relating to matters in Appendix A
- We expect the majority of complaints will be resolved at Stage 1 (informal).
- We strongly recommend that all parties make reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution in order to resolve the matter as quickly as possible at Stage 1 of the process.
- We expect all involved in the process to be addressed in a respectful manner and for communication to remain calm at all times.
- The concern or complaint should not include personal, derogatory or inappropriate threats or comments about staff members.
- We will make reasonable adjustments if required, to enable you to access and complete the complaints resolution procedure.
- Artificial Intelligence should be used with caution. See 'AI Statement' below.
- If any communication is unreasonably long in length, we may request clarification of the pertinent points or for a summary to be prepared. Please note the word count limits shown in the complaints form (Appendix C).
- You should inform the trust/school/college early in the process if you require an interpreter.
- It is important that you are clear and explicit from the outset about the required outcomes of your concern or complaint. You are not able to change the basis of your complaint once the process progresses.
- Trust/school/college staff will work with you to ensure that your required outcomes are fully understood

- Ideally, all parties should hold a face to face/Teams meeting or have a telephone conversation at Stage 1.
- A face-to-face meeting is the usual arrangement for meetings. You or the trust/school/college can request that meetings take place remotely (e.g. via Teams). Please note:
 - All attendees must be satisfied that a remote meeting can be held fairly and transparently and all parties must agree to the arrangement
 - All participants must have the necessary equipment and technology to ensure they can fully participate, including being seen and heard, with no disruption to the connection
- Where an anonymous complaint is received, the trust/school/college will use its reasonable endeavours to consider the complaint as best as it reasonably can. However the trust/school/college will not be required to consider the complaint pursuant to any specific process and will handle anonymous complaints on a case by case basis
- If you wish to withdraw your complaint at any stage of the process, you will be asked to confirm this in writing
- If complaints are received from several parents relating to the same issue, the trust/school/college may deviate from the procedure set out in this policy. Instead we will either send a template response to all complainants or publish a single response on the trust/school/college website
- If you are complaining on behalf of other or several people, about the same issue and we have received their consent to that, all communication will be with the named individual representative.
- If at any stage it is determined that staff disciplinary or capability procedures are necessary in order to resolve the issue, they will be carried out in accordance with the school/college procedure which applies. The details of this action will remain confidential to the Line Manager, Principal/Headteacher and/or CEO. You will be informed that the matter is being dealt with but you will not participate in the proceedings and will not receive details or the outcome.
- A record will be kept by the trust or school/college of all written formal complaints, including at what stage they were resolved and action taken regardless of whether they were upheld or not. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where:
 - Access is requested by the Secretary of State;
 - Disclosure is required in the course of a trust/school/college inspection;
 - An individual has a legal right to access their own personal data contained within such documentation; or
 - Under other legal authority.
 - All records will be stored electronically or in hard copy and kept for a period of time in accordance with our retention of documents schedule.
- Financial compensation will not be considered at any time during the complaints process.
- Wherever a complaint indicates that a young person/child's wellbeing or safety is at risk, the trust/school/college is under a duty to report this immediately to the local authority. Any action taken will be in accordance with the trust/school/college Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy which can be found on the trust and individual trust/school/college website.
- If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the Police, Local Authority (LA), safeguarding teams, ICO or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales shown or result in the procedure being suspended until those

investigations have been completed. If this happens, you will be informed of a proposed new timescale.

- School/college days exclude weekends, school/college holidays and periods of partial or total school/ college closure. During holiday/closure periods, the timeline for actions and meetings is paused until the school/college reopens.
- Where a complaint is received outside of term time, we will consider it to have been received on the first school/college day following the school/college holiday period.
- 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 only if exceptional circumstances apply.
- The timeframes referred to in this policy are our usual timeframes and we will seek to adhere to these timeframes where possible; If it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines, you will be advised and given an explanation as to why this has been necessary. Timelines may be extended from those published to allow more time for both parties to adopt a collaborative and committed approach to resolve the matter.
- If a request for the concern or complaint to progress to the next stage of the process is not received within **10 school/college days** of receipt of the decision/outcome of the previous stage, it will not be considered unless exceptional circumstances exist.
- Please do not share your complaint with third parties not involved in the review process unless you require them to advise you or assist you with communications regarding the concern or complaint. We can only communicate with you directly.
- We request that you do not approach individual Governors or Trustees to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and contact with them may impact their ability to participate in the process.
- The Department for Education and other bodies will not review the complaints process to check that the trust/school/college has followed procedure, until the trust complaints resolution process has been completed
- If legal action against the trust or school/college in relation to your complaint is initiated, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings are concluded.
- We do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from such behaviour, including that which is persistent, unreasonable, vexatious, abusive, offensive or threatening (please see separate policy).

AI Statement

- We encourage clear, respectful and human-led communication rather than automated or highly formal AI generated text. AI generated documentation may make reference to inaccurate information and make complaints more complex than necessary.
- Complainants are reminded that publicly available Artificial Intelligence (AI) platforms and chatbots are not confidential. Complaints, and in particular those containing the personal data of students, staff and other individuals, should not therefore be uploaded to or processed via such platforms.
- Staff will not spend a disproportionate amount of time attempting to interpret and respond to communications with these characteristics: A complaint which is unclear, unduly lengthy or complex , introduces inaccurate information, overly legalistic or misstates the law.
- In those circumstances, we will pause the process until the person dealing with the complaint receives the required clarification or summary.

Process Overview

	Step 1:	Step 2:	Step 3:	Step 4:	Final stage
Informal concerns Stage 1	Communicate concern and required outcome with appropriate member/s of staff so that resolution dialogue can start	Continue discussions with staff member/s at meetings, via emails etc. as required to reach agreement to resolve the matter	Resolution of concern and actions implemented	Completion within 15 college/school days	On conclusion of the informal stage, following all attempts to resolve the concern, if it has not been addressed and informal discussions have been exhausted, a request for a formal investigation may be submitted
Formal Stage 2	Fully complete and submit a complaints template form within 10 college/school days of completion of informal stage to begin the formal process	You will receive confirmation of receipt within 5 college/school days	Principal/Headteacher or designated person investigates the complaint which will involve meetings and communications to clarify points and seek agreement for resolution	A written response will be provided within 15 college/school days of receipt of the formal request	If following all attempts to resolve the complaint formally, it has not been addressed, a request for a Panel Hearing may be submitted
Panel Hearing Stage 3	Request a panel hearing within 10 college/school days of receipt of formal outcome communication	Collation of documents for panel hearing/panel members appointed/hearing arranged	Panel hearing takes place within 30 college/school days of request	A written response will be provided within 10 college/school days of the Panel Hearing along with a copy of notes of the meeting	If following all attempts to resolve the complaint at all three stages of the process, you feel that it has not been addressed, you can refer your complaint to the DfE

Stage 1: Informal Concerns

Most enquiries and concerns can be dealt with by the person closest to your child/young person such as the class teacher/tutor, or other members of staff as necessary. We value informal meetings and discussions and encourage parents/carers to approach staff with any concerns they may have with an aim to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding. It is in everyone's interest to resolve the matter at this stage through partnership working to agree a way forward.

It is always helpful if you can fully explain the nature of your concern and identify the outcome you are looking for at the start of the process. At this stage you can communicate verbally or in writing if you prefer. A face to face or Teams meeting or telephone conversation should always take place at the informal stage.

You may be invited to attend a meeting with the member/s of staff dealing with your concern although a Teams meeting or telephone conversation can be arranged instead. It is important that these discussions take place to ensure that the scope of the complaint and proposed resolution is understood. If you choose not to attend to expand on your complaint, the school may not be able to fully investigate. Staff members will make sure that everyone is clear on what action (if any) has been agreed and this may be confirmed in writing if appropriate.

All concerns will be dealt with confidentially, although the staff members may need to take notes. Any such notes will be kept in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018. However, such notes may be used as evidence if further investigation is required.

There is no suggested timescale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussions and meetings, although it would be expected that most issues will be resolved within **15 school/college days**. This timescale may be extended.

We anticipate that it will be possible to resolve the matter at Stage 1. However, despite best efforts to do so by both parties, if you wish your concern to be considered further you should write to the Principal/Headteacher under Stage 2 of this procedure within **10 school/college days**. You will need to outline the reasons why you are dissatisfied and the grounds for progressing to the next stage.

If the concern is about the Principal/Headteacher, and you have been unable to resolve this informally with them, you should refer the issue to the Chair of the Local Governing Board (LGB) to follow the formal process.

Complaints about governors or trustees should be directed to the Chair of Governors or Trustees as appropriate. Complaints about the CEO should be directed to the Chair of Trustees. Complaints about the Chair of Governors or Chair of Trustees should be directed to the CEO. They will make arrangements for the complaint to be investigated at an appropriate stage.

Stage 2: Formal written complaints

If, despite best efforts, your concern has not been resolved through the informal process, please complete the template complaint form included at the end of this document and send this to the Principal/ Headteacher of the school/college. Please ensure to include details of your desired outcome.

The complaint should ideally be written in your own words and should not exceed the word count shown on the form. You will have the opportunity to explain your complaint in more detail as part of the procedure.

Those considering raising a complaint are reminded that the trust's core purpose is to educate and safeguard students. It has a responsibility, as a publicly funded body, to allocate its resources proportionately and fairly.

Complainants are therefore requested to cooperate with this process, and to be mindful of the length and volume of correspondence. This will also assist with ensuring a prompt and effective resolution. Clarification will be sought through open dialogue and face to face meetings.

If you require help in completing the form or in making a complaint, please contact the trust/school/college office. A member of staff will arrange to record the details of your complaint with you, for example over the telephone or in person, and will share the written record with you for confirmation. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In all cases your written complaint must include:

- The nature of the complaint;
- Details of how the matter has been dealt with so far;
- The names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of all relevant documents; and
- A clear statement of how to resolve your complaint and your desired outcome

If the information provided is incomplete, we will not be able to progress with the investigation until it is made available, which may impact the timescales shown.

Following submission of your fully completed form, the Principal/Headteacher will record the date of receipt and acknowledge receipt in writing (either by letter or email) within **5 school/college days**.

Within this response, the Principal/Headteacher may seek to clarify some aspects of the complaint through communication with you and/or meetings and confirm a target date for providing a response. This will normally be within **15 school/college days**.

The Principal/Headteacher may appoint a designated senior member of staff to investigate the complaint on their behalf but the Principal/Headteacher will make the final decision and provide a response.

Where the Principal/Headteacher has had substantial prior involvement in the matters giving rise to the complaint, has expressed a view on the issues under consideration, or is the subject of all or part of the complaint, arrangements will be made for the complaint to be investigated and, where appropriate, determined by an alternative senior leader or other suitably independent person. In such circumstances, the Trust and/or Chair of the Local Governing Body may appoint an investigator to ensure that the complaint is considered fairly, objectively and without any actual or perceived conflict of interest.

You may be invited to meet with the person investigating the complaint to enable the member of staff to ensure that they fully understand the scope of the complaint and to explore possible resolutions and desired outcomes, prior to commencing their investigation. You may be accompanied by one other person, such as a supportive companion, advocate or interpreter, to assist you.

You will need to inform the school/college if you require them to arrange for an interpreter to be present. You may arrange for your own interpreter if you prefer. Please note, if the interpreter is independent and not known to you, you can in addition be accompanied by one other person, such as a supportive companion or advocate.

The person investigating may be accompanied by another member of staff. A written record will be kept of any meetings/interviews in relation to the investigation.

Where possible, this meeting or meetings will take place as soon as possible following receipt of the written complaint but the aim would be for an initial meeting to take place **within 10 school/college days**.

The Principal/Headteacher or investigating member of staff will consider all relevant evidence; this may include but is not limited to:

- Evidence and outcome from the informal stage if applicable
- A statement from you as the parent/carer
- Where relevant a meeting with/statement from an individual who is the subject of the complaint, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Any previous correspondence regarding the complaint
- Any supporting documents from all parties
- Interviews /statements from anyone related to the complaint
- Relevant policies and whether they were followed

After considering the available evidence, the investigating person will inform the Principal/Headteacher of their findings.

Once the relevant facts have been established as far as possible, the Principal/Headteacher will provide you with a written response to the complaint, including an explanation of the decision, the reasons for and what action will be taken to resolve the complaint (if any), within **15 school/college days** of receipt of the formal request or by the target date provided.

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

On conclusion of the investigation, the Principal/Headteacher may:

- Uphold the complaint and direct that certain action be taken to resolve it;
- Not uphold the complaint and provide you with details of the Panel Hearing process
- Uphold the complaint in part: e.g. the Principal/Headteacher may find one or more aspects of the complaint to be valid, but not other aspects. They may recommend certain action to be taken to resolve any aspect that they find in favour of the complainant.

You will be provided with details of how to progress the complaint to the Panel Hearing stage if you believe the complaint has not been fully addressed at Stage 2 despite best efforts to do so.

Should the complaint not be resolved at the formal stage, mediation may be considered. This can be arranged through the Area Schools Support Service (schools only) and will be impartial and objective.

Stage 3: Referral to a Panel Hearing

It is expected that the majority of complaints will not reach this stage as partnership working relationships will have been established during the first two stages which will already have resulted in a satisfactory conclusion.

This is the final stage of the complaints resolution process and its purpose is to support all involved to find an acceptable resolution.

If you are dissatisfied with the decision under the formal process at Stage 2, you may request that a panel hearing be convened to consider your complaint. The panel hearing will only consider the complaint as it was submitted at the informal and formal stages or aspects of the original complaint which you believe have not been fully addressed.

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

The aim of the meeting is to fully resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the parties. We appreciate that you might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not uphold your complaint or elements of it. However, it is only possible to establish the facts and make recommendations. Financial compensation is not a possible outcome of the process.

To request a hearing before a panel, you should write to the school/college Clerk within **10 school/college days** of receiving notice of the outcome at the formal stage. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

You should ensure that you provide copies of all relevant documents and state all the grounds for your complaint and the outcome that you are looking for.

Your written request will be acknowledged by the Clerk within **5 school/college days** of receipt.

The Clerk will arrange for a panel hearing to be convened, made up of at least three people, who may include members of school/college Local Governing Body (governors) and/or Board of Trustees with no prior involvement in the matter and one person who is independent of the management and running of the Academy.

A governor at another trust school/college may act as the independent person if they have no conflict of interest or prior knowledge of the complaint. The panel members will appoint the Chair.

Every effort will be made to enable the panel hearing to take place within **30 school/college days** of receipt of your request. If the date of the meeting is not convenient for you, the Clerk will provide a second proposed date. If the second proposed date is not convenient, a third and final date will be offered. If, despite the Academy's best efforts, it is not possible to find a mutually convenient date and time for a hearing within a reasonable timeframe, the panel may determine that the hearing proceeds on the basis of written submissions from both parties. In this case the panel will meet with the Clerk and Area Schools Officer in attendance and consider your complaint on the basis of written submissions from both parties (e.g. you and the Principal/ Headteacher), with neither party being present. The Area Schools Officer will not attend College meetings.

If you fail to attend the Complaints Panel Meeting on the day without compelling reasons, the Complaints Panel will still proceed in your absence and the process will continue to its conclusion. Any further attempt to re-open the matter will be considered to be 'persistent' (see separate section below).

As soon as reasonably practicable and in any event at least **10 school/college days** before the hearing, you will be sent written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the panel members who will be present.

You will also be informed of the name of the person who will be presenting on behalf of the trust/school/college. The person who undertook the investigation at the formal stage or another person with sufficient knowledge of the matter may also be invited.

Both parties will be informed that copies of any further written material should be submitted to the Clerk at least **10 school/college days** before the meeting. Any material submitted after this, including on the day of the hearing, will only be considered in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the panel, whose decision is final.

You have the right to be accompanied at the hearing. You should notify the Clerk in advance of the hearing if you require an interpreter and the name of the person accompanying you.

If the additional person is presenting your case and speaking on your behalf, you will not be able to address the panel directly. If the additional person is attending as your supportive companion, they will not be able to address the panel directly.

As this is not a legal process, neither party may bring legal representation with them except in exceptional circumstances, by prior agreement of the panel whose decision will be final. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

If a school/college or trust employee is a witness in a complaint, they may be entitled to bring a union representative or legal advisor to the panel hearing. The union representative or legal advisor cannot address the panel directly.

Any written material will be collated and circulated by the Clerk to all parties so that it is received at least **5 school/college days** before the date of the meeting.

A summary overview of the complaint may be requested if the documentation provided by the complainant for inclusion in the meeting pack is multiple pages.

The following parties will be invited to attend the panel hearing:

- Panel members
- You as the parent/carer
- Someone to accompany you
- The Principal/Headteacher
- The investigating member of staff who dealt with the complaint at the formal stage
- Relevant witnesses
- Area Schools Support Service representative for procedural advice (not for the College)

The hearing will be held in private and the discussions are confidential. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not permitted unless a complainant's own disability or additional needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations are recorded by way of a reasonable adjustment required by the Equality Act 2010. If given, consent will be recorded in the minutes taken.

Technology with recording capability is not to be used in the meeting unless the panel agree that it is required for meeting purposes – e.g. laptop and similar devices. If permission is given for such technology to be used and it is found that covert recording is taking place, the meeting will be stopped immediately. In these circumstances, the panel may decide to reconvene the meeting at a later date without the school/college and complainant being present.

The panel is under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and/or may take written statements into account. The panel will not accept recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The hearing will be conducted to ensure that each party has the opportunity to address the panel. The hearing may be held via an online meeting, if agreed by all parties. The Clerk will ensure that sufficient notes are taken to record an accurate reflection of the points considered and any decisions taken or actions agreed.

The parent and the trust/school/college will have the opportunity to put forward their respective version and views of events and each side, and the Complaints Panel members will be able to ask questions. The parent will have the opportunity to make final comments to the Complaints Panel.

After the hearing, the panel will consider their decision and inform you and, where relevant, the person complained about, of their decision in writing within **10 school/college days**. The

response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide an explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the trust/school/college will take to resolve the complaint.

The committee can (by a majority if necessary):

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- Determine that all or part of the complaint is out of their scope to consider;
- Recommend changes to the school/college and/or trust systems or procedures to ensure any problems identified are addressed appropriately

The letter will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if you believe that your complaint has been handled unreasonably or unlawfully by the trust/school/college.

A copy of the minutes of the panel hearing will be provided to all parties at the same time as the outcome letter is sent.

The panel will ensure that the outcome letter and minutes are sent by post, electronic mail or otherwise given to you and, where relevant, the person complained about, with a copy to the Principal/Headteacher, Chair of Governors/Chair of Trustees (as appropriate). All other copy documentation prepared for use during the complaint's procedure will be destroyed.

The Chair of the panel will ensure that a copy of all relevant information relating to the complaint is kept at the school/college in a secure, confidential file, separate from staff and student records. This information will be retained for six years from the date of the complaint, in line with guidance from the Information and Records Management Society (www.irms.org.uk) and in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Referral of complaint to Department for Education (DfE)

We anticipate that the majority of concerns/complaints will be resolved at the informal stage with only a few progressing to the formal stage. The panel hearing stage should only be necessary in exceptional circumstances.

Once the complaints process is concluded (or a complaint has been terminated due to undue delay or failure to lodge a request for a Stage 3 Complaints Panel Meeting within the time stated in the policy) the matter is closed. If the Complainant is still not satisfied, then they may contact the Department for Education (DfE). There is an online procedure at:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-to-dfe>

The Complainant may also write to the DfE at:

Ministerial and Public Communication Division
Department for Education
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Manchester M1 2WD

The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the trust/school/college. They will only investigate whether the complaint was handled properly and in accordance with education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

If after the completion of the complaints process, you believe the school/nursery is not meeting the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, you are entitled to contact Ofsted: email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or call 0300 123 4666.

Part 2: Concerns or complaints from other persons

The trust wishes to work closely with members of the local community or persons other than parents/carers to deal with their concerns and complaints as efficiently as possible. The Key Principles and Guidance section above would apply. We have adopted a one stage process for such complaints.

A concern regarding a trust/school/college or its operations may be made verbally or in writing to a member of staff at the school/college to which the concern/complaint is directed or directly to the Principal/Headteacher. The member of staff will attempt to resolve the matter immediately or may, if appropriate, refer the matter to the person who is best placed to deal with the concern or complaint.

It is expected that most concerns/complaints will be responded to orally or in writing within **15 school/college days**. If a longer period is required, you will be kept informed.

Appendix A

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools/college	Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process – either through the appeals process or via the local authority. Admissions to the college are governed solely by the College Admissions Policy
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) on 0300 470 9100.
Exclusion of children/young people from schools/college*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions . *Complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the complaints procedure. <i>Note: this does not apply to the College, where exclusions and appeals are governed by the Student Code of Conduct</i>
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistle-blowers in education who do not want to raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus . Volunteer staff who have concerns about our schools/college should complain through the trust'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.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the trust's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff should follow the complaints policy. If deemed appropriate, following completion of the complaints process, staff complaints will be dealt with under the trust's internal disciplinary procedures, 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.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school/college premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.

Appendix B – Contact Details

Weydon Multi-Academy Trust, Weydon School, Weydon Lane, Farnham, Surrey GU9 8UG
Registered company no. 07552535
Telephone: 01252 900550
Email: info@wmat.org.uk

Who should I approach to raise my informal concern/complaint?

Educational matters: Your child's tutor, teacher, Head of Department/Faculty for the subject, Head of Year or Progress Achievement Leader (PAL), Curriculum Manager

Pastoral care: Your child's tutor, teacher, Head of Year or Progress Achievement Leader (PAL), Pastoral Lead, Support Manager.

Disciplinary matters: Your child's tutor, teacher, Head of Department, Head/Director of Faculty for the subject, Head of Year or Progress Achievement Leader (PAL), Pastoral Lead/Director or member of the Leadership Team

Financial/Administration matters: School Business Manager/COO/Principal/Headteacher or WMAT COO

Complaint about a staff member's conduct: direct approach to the staff member themselves, or where this is thought inappropriate/ does not resolve the situation, their Line Manager should be approached.

Complaints about the:

- **Principal/Headteacher:** Principal/Headteacher or Chair of the Local Governing Body
- **Trustees:** Chair of Trustees
- **Chair of Trustees:** CEO
- **Governors:** Chair of Governors
- **Chair of Governors:** Chair of Trustees
- **CEO:** Chair of Trustees

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, your views will be respected. In these cases, you will be referred to an appropriate alternative staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, you will be referred to another staff member. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is important.

If you are not sure who to contact to raise an informal complaint, you should contact the school/college Principal/Headteacher or a member of their senior leadership team or trust executive office to request clarification.

School/College Clerk contact details:

adudley.gov@abbey.surrey.sch.uk (Abbey School)
clerk@beacon-hill.surrey.sch.uk (Beacon Hill School)
Nicole.galea@brooklands.surrey.sch.uk (Brooklands School)
clerk@clifton-hill.surrey.sch.uk (Clifton Hill School)
clerk@crondall.hants.sch.uk (Crondall School)
jwoolman@eggars.hants.sch.uk (Eggar's School)
adudley@fhes.org.uk (Farnham Heath End School)
clerk@frimley.surrey.sch.uk (Frimley Church of England School)
clerk@frogmorecollege.co.uk (Frogmore College)
clerk@thepark.surrey.sch.uk (The Park School)
clerk@ridgeway.surrey.sch.uk (Ridgeway School)
clerk@rodboroughschool.surrey.sch.uk (Rodborough School)
clerk@farnborough.ac.uk (Sixth Form College Farnborough)
clerk@st-marks.hants.sch.uk (St. Mark's Church of England School)
clerk@tomlinscoteschool.com (Tomlinscote School)
clerk@weydonschool.surrey.sch.uk (Weydon School)
clerk@william-cobbett.surrey.sch.uk (William Cobbett)
clerk@woolmerhill.surrey.sch.uk (Woolmer Hill)
efelton@wmat.org.uk (WMAT/Board of Trustees)
info@wmat.org.uk (Trust executive office)

Surrey Area Schools Support Service

The role of the Area Schools Support Service in Surrey is to provide impartial advice and guidance to school staff, governors, trustees, panel members and complainants at all stages of the complaints process. Their contact details are below.

West Surrey Area School Officers	Kate Charles – kate.charles@surreycc.gov.uk Cara Harding – cara.harding@surreycc.gov.uk
East Surrey Area School Officers	Ann Panton – ann.panton@surreycc.gov.uk Adelina Mason - adelina.mason@surreycc.gov.uk
Countywide School Support Officer	Natalie Cull – natalie.cull@surreycc.gov.uk
Team Email	school.relationships@surreycc.gov.uk

Appendix C - Formal Complaints Form

The Complaints Form is designed to help capture all relevant information about your complaint and is provided to help ensure that the process can be followed effectively. You will note that the expectation is that the vast majority of complaints can be expressed in 3 pages or 750 words. Where that is not the case this may result in the Academy / Trust needing to seek further clarification from you which may unavoidably delay the process. Please consider the length of your complaint carefully.

Name	
Name of student, year group and your relationship to them (where applicable)	
Contact address	
Day time contact telephone number	
Mobile contact telephone number	
Contact email address	
Details of the complaint	
Summary of action taken so far at the informal stage (including staff members who have dealt with it) or solutions offered.	
The reason that this was not a satisfactory resolution for you	

What action would you like to be taken to resolve the problem? Confirmation of the outcome you want

I understand that disclosure of this document will be limited to those who need the information to investigate and consider the complaint.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix D – Glossary of terms

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action
Concern	An expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought
Meeting	An in person or virtual meeting (e.g. Teams or other alternative technology)
Parent	A parent or carer or anyone with legal responsibility for the child/young person
Complainant	The person/s raising the concern or complaint
Governor	A volunteer who is a member of the Local Governing Body (LGB) to challenge the support the school/college leadership, holding the Principal/Headteacher to account and ensuring the best possible education for students
Trustee	A volunteer who is a member of the Board of Trustees. They are responsible for setting the strategic direction for all schools/college within the trust and ensuring financial probity, safeguarding, compliance etc.
Local Governing Body (LGB)	The group of governors who support the governance function of the school/college
Board of Trustees	The group of trustees with overall responsibility for all schools/college within the trust
Department for Education	The Government's Department for Education responsible for children's services and education
Local Authority (LA)	The local authority is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the provision of education for children and young people within its geographical area
Area Schools Officer	A professional who provides a point of contact for schools and parents, offering support and guidance on a range of issues
Not fully addressed	The issue has been partially or insufficiently dealt with
School/college days	The days during which the schools/college are open for students to attend during term time
School/college Clerk	Clerk to the LGB who administers the complaints process
Vexatious	Obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious designed to cause disruption or annoyance
Frivolous	Trivial, not serious or lack any serious purpose or value
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Computer aided generation of information

Appendix E – Summary roles & responsibilities

Complainant

The person raising a concern or complaint will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- Explain the complaint in full as early as possible including their required outcome, in their own words (not using AI technology)
- Co-operate with the trust/school/college 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.

The Complaints Co-ordinator in each school/college should:

- Ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- Liaise with staff members, Principal/Headteacher, CEO, Chair of Governors, Chair of Trust or the Clerk to ensure the smooth running of the complaint's resolution procedure
- Be aware of issues regarding:
 - sharing of 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 separate from staff or student files

Complaint Investigator

The person investigating the concern or complaint will provide a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:

- Sensitive and thorough discussion with the complainant to establish their perspective and desired outcomes
- Interviewing staff and other people relevant to the complaint
- Consideration of records and other relevant information
- Analysing information
- Liaising with all parties to determine what an acceptable outcome would be based on the information available
- Preparation of a report detailing their investigations

Clerk to the Panel Hearing

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the panel 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/college 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 panel hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties invited to attend and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- Collate any written material relevant to the complaint and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- Take written notes of the proceedings and circulate minutes within 10 days

- Notify all parties of the panel's decision.

Panel Chair

The panel's Chair, who is nominated in advance of the meeting, will ensure that the meeting is conducted in line with the complaint's resolution policy and procedure and best practice principles.

Panel Members

Panel members should be aware that:

- The meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so
- No governor / trustee may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it
- They should read all documentation and understand the aims and purpose of the meeting

Disclaimer

This policy is continually reviewed to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and ensure that all aspects of the complaints process is covered. The policy may be amended at any point during the approval/review cycle shown.