Thackley Primary School

Complaints Policy

Approved by Governing Board: 15.10.26

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Our school commitment to a fair school complaints process

Thackley Primary School is committed to providing the very best education and school experience. We believe that most concerns can be resolved early through clear, respectful communication and by following agreed procedures consistently. This complaints procedure encourages resolution of concerns and complaints on an informal basis without recourse to the formal stages of the procedure.

In developing this procedure, the school has taken into account the following guidance:

- School complaints procedures: guidance for maintained schools
- Parentkind: Parent guide to school complaints

Things do not always happen as you might expect. You may have a disagreement with the way your child is being educated or supervised whilst at school. This document explains how you can resolve your concerns or complaints as quickly and effectively as possible. Our shared goal with parents is always the same: supporting your child's education.

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 Thackley Primary 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 feedback, concerns and complaints

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 complaint's procedure. Thackley Primary School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

The best first step is to identify what kind of issue it is, to make sure you can get the quickest action from the school.

Is it feedback? *You need to be heard*

Sometimes you will want to share your voice with the school without needing a response, but you expect us to listen and take it on board. The school will often seek feedback to hear and adapt to parents' views.

Is it a concern? *You need an answer*

Sometimes you have a worry or doubt over an important issue, and you are looking for reassurance. Thackley Primary School will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Is it a complaint? *You need action*

Sometimes you are dissatisfied with the school's actions or lack of action. The formal complaints procedure is available to you with the steps you need to take to complain.

Who should you go to in the school?

Parentkind's guide to school complaints provides the following useful information. Often issues can be best resolved by the person closest to your child.

Issues which can be discussed with your child's teacher

Go to your child's teacher first for anything that directly involves their classroom experience. Teachers know your child best and can usually sort things quickly.
Examples include: homework, friendships, behaviour, day-to-day concerns.

Raise to a middle or senior leader

Take it here if the issue is wider than just one lesson, or if it can't be resolved by the teacher. Leaders have oversight across classes and can coordinate support.
Examples might include: bullying, additional support, repeated behaviour issues.

Escalate it with the headteacher

Go here for whole-school issues, serious concerns, or if earlier steps haven't worked. The head is responsible for the school and final decisions before governors are involved.
Examples: safeguarding, school policies, staff conduct, health and safety.

In the first instance if parents have an issue about their child, they should speak with the class teacher. If parents have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, the headteacher [or designated person] can be contacted and will either address this or refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, they 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.

Complaints made by members of the community should be made directly to the headteacher [or designated person].

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

How to raise a formal concern or complaint

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

If a formal complaint is necessary, you will then be asked to complete a complaint form -

a copy is available as:

- Annex 1 of this Complaints Policy
- from the school office; or
- online from the school website or emailed from the school Office.

Use of complaints form

Completion of the Complaints form is necessary to ensure that essential information is available to address the concerns and will include you providing a summary of the complaint including the actions taken up to that point, and the actions you feel might resolve the problem.

If the complaint received is over lengthy, generated by AI or needlessly complex, the person investigating reserves the right to ask for the complaint to be resubmitted in a more accessible format.

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.

- **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 2 of the procedure.
- **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.

Anonymous complaints

We will not respond to anonymous complaints beyond an acknowledgement that the complaint has been received. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint needs further investigation. Anonymous complainants will not be informed of any resultant action stemming from any further 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.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

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

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Bradford Council.
• 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 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
• Exclusion of children from school*	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 school's complaints procedure.*
• 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 whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. 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.
• Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
• Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.

	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 premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
• National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

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 a complainant commences legal action against Thackley Primary 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. Parents and carers should be aware that this complaints procedure ensures a process where issues can be discussed and resolved in partnership with the school.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Thackley Primary School wants to resolve the complaint and will strive to ensure that effective communication is maintained between home and school. If appropriate, the school will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, school 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, school will ask them to confirm this in writing.

After a complaint has been received: Complainants should limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint to essential information only while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay

the outcome being reached. Additions to the complaint will only be accepted in certain circumstances e.g if it is directly relevant to the initial complaint. If Correspondence is judged to be at a level that is hindering the investigations, then the process will be paused and the complainant notified.

Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the headteacher [or designated person] via the school office (unless they are about the headteacher – these would go straight to the Chair of Governors). This may be done initially in person, in writing 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 **10** school days.

Within this response, the headteacher (or designated person) will ask for the Complaint Form to be completed if not already received: this will 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 15 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 the 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 1.

Stage 1 - Complaints about the Headteacher, Chair or Governing Board

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

If the complaint is about the headteacher the Chair or a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1. The Chair should approach the HR provider for advice on addressing complaints against the Headteacher

If the complaint is:

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

this will be considered by a suitably skilled governor or an independent investigator as appropriate, appointed by the governing body. The LA can be approached for advice on this. At the conclusion of their investigation, a formal written response will be provided as above.

Stage 2 – Complaints Panel Hearing

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a hearing held by members of the governing body's complaints committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, governors available. This is the final stage of the complaint's procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 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 5 school days.
Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Complaints Committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs and the need to ensure that a robust but fair process takes place.

If the complainant is to be invited to the meeting, the Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 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.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from the school available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through their LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2.

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 complainant must inform the clerk if they intend to bring a person to provide support, providing the name of the person accompanying them.

In order for the complainants' views to be fully heard, this person should not speak or present on behalf of

the complainant, unless this has been agreed by the panel in advance - the friend or relative is there in a supportive role only. However, in accordance with equality law, the Complaints Committee will make reasonable adjustments if appropriate, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. In certain circumstances, the panel may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the complainant will be notified as soon as possible, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange alternative accompaniment.

The aim of the governors committee will be:

- seek reconciliation
- to put right things that may have gone wrong

These committees are not a form of legal proceedings therefore neither the complainant nor the school will be invited to bring legal representation. However, we recognise there may be occasions where 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 complaint's procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staffing procedures and following regulations, if appropriate, and outcomes will not be shared with them.* Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

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. A timetable for the meeting will be provided, including the times at which each party should attend and the intended length of time for each interview.
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee before the meeting. The clerk will confirm with all parties the timescales for receiving any further written material.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties before the meeting. The committee will not 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 will be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure unless the Complaints Committee deem it to be beneficial to include with an ongoing complaint.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not 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 are recorded. 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 Thackley Primary School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 15 school days. If they are unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.
The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Thackley Primary School.

If the Stage 2 complaint is:

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

the complaints hearing will either be heard by a committee of independent governors, have independent governors in the majority and with an independent Chair with a casting vote.
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 that will be taken to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint - see **Next Steps** below.

This ends the final stage of the Schools Complaints Process.

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 after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made Thackley Primary School. They will consider whether Thackley Primary School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD.

Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

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

Thackley Primary School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

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

- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before deeming the complaint to have become '*unreasonable'.*

If the '*unreasonable'* behaviour continues, the headteacher/Chair of committee will write to the complainant explaining which elements of the complaint/behaviour have become unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, the school may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the police will be informed and actions communicated in writing. This may include barring an individual from the school.

Misuse of Social Media Statement: Local Authority Social Media advice:

'Parents of children in Bradford schools are increasingly using social networking sites such as Facebook or WhatsApp group forums and artificial intelligence to make complaints. Sometimes parents have used these sites to criticise or make inappropriate comments about schools or even individual teachers instead of using school complaints procedures or normal channels of communication.
Making defamatory or offensive comments on the internet can have exactly the same serious legal consequences including malicious falsehood, breach of confidence, misuse of private information, harassment and breach of data protection laws as if they are made directly to anyone in person or appear in written form. Legal action could be taken against the person who has made the online comment.
Making comments that could be construed as threats of violence or are grossly offensive or indecent may also constitute is a criminal offence and such matters will be reported to the police. which can lead to court action under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and/or the Communications Act 2003.
Department for Education guidance on parental complaints has urged families to ensure "clear, respectful communication" with schools and to avoid social media and to use AI with "caution". If you have concerns about anything which happens in school, please follow speak to a member of staff, who will do their best to resolve things. If you are still unhappy then please use the school complaints form and follow the complaints procedure which will ensure that your concerns are investigated thoroughly and appropriate action taken'.

Annex 1 - Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the School Office at Thackley Primary School who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name and year group (if applicable):
Your relationship to the pupil (if applicable):
Address: **Postcode:** **Telephone number:** **Email:**
Nature of concern/complaint (please select from the following options): Classroom experience — Friendships Behaviour — Communication Health & Safety — Staff Conduct Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities — Child Protection* Other (please specify):
Please give details of your concern/complaint:

Actions already taken including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it:
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:
If the complaint received is over lengthy, generated by AI or needlessly complex, the person investigating reserves the right to ask for the complaint to be resubmitted in a more accessible format.

Annex 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

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

- follow the designated process
- seek support if needed
- explain the complaint as clearly 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
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from discussing the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality. [legal advice will be taken if the rights of individuals are compromised]

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 – [The Headteacher or other member staff]

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
- minute 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. The committee may decide to meet parties separately.
- 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, in the circumstances surrounding it or there is a relationships conflict.
- 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.