Complaints Policy

Approved by:	Paul West CEO	**Date:** 1st May 2024
Last reviewed on:	May 2024	
Next review due by:	31st August 2026	

Under Review

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Revision Date	Description of Change	Author
Version 2.0	Paul West	1st May 2024	Addition of flow process flow-charts Addition of contents page Change to reporting process for complaints. General re-organisation of document architecture Additions to managing unreasonable complaints	Andrew Adams

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Introduction

The Complaints Policy applies to all academies within the Spencer Academies Trust, the central team, and Board of Directors.

Spencer Academies Trust is committed to working in close partnership with parents and the community. However, we recognise that, from time to time, concerns or complaints may arise, and it is our aim to work with all parties involved to resolve these as quickly and efficiently as possible. Usually, concerns can be resolved quickly through day-to-day communication between parents and academy staff.

The responsibility to consider complaints has been delegated to the Principal in collaboration with the Chief Executive. Throughout this policy, "Principal" refers to the person outlined in the table of delegated authority as set out in the Trust Scheme of Delegation applicable at the adoption date of this policy. The Principal or their appointed representative will be responsible for managing the procedures and will appoint appropriate managers to undertake the investigation. This policy requires that every effort is made to resolve a concern/complaint at academy level.

This policy has been developed considering the requirements of the DfE guidance last updated 12 March 2021, ESFA Guidance March 2021 and the Equality Act 2010. Guidance on managing the procedures is available from senior leaders within the SAT leadership team.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use.
- Attempt to resolve concerns through informal discussions at the earliest stage.
- Provide clarity of who will be coordinating the process in school.
- Give clear timelines for resolution.
- Encourage resolving the issues and finding a way to move forwards.
- Demonstrate a fair approach to managing complaints and concerns.
- Explain how vexatious and unreasonable behaviour by complainants is dealt with.

Complaints will be managed in line with the complaints process set out within this policy. For those situations where an informal resolution is not reached, there is a formal process to investigate and deal with complaints. Our aim is to address all concerns/complaints as soon as possible after they arise and to resolve matters amicably at an early stage. With that in mind, complainants will be asked at the outset what they think might resolve the issue.

The SAT Complaints Policy is a four-stage process:

Stage 1 (informal): Concern/complaint heard by staff member or Principal.
Stage 2 (formal): Concern/complaint heard by the Principal or designated investigation officer.
Stage 3 (formal): Complaint heard by an appointed panel.
Stage 4: Complaint referred to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

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Trust and Academy Policies

When the Trust adopts or approves a policy, and the academy puts the policy into operation, it becomes part of the day-to-day running of the academy. If there is an objection to a policy, this is a matter that needs to be referred to the Trust or Principal. It is separate to the complaint process.

Day-to-day operational decisions about curriculum and timetabling should be referred to the Principal for review. They are operational decisions that are expected of Principals and senior leaders by virtue of the contract of employment and expectations set out by the Department for Education.

Scope of the complaints policy

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by the Academy/Trust, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed at the end of the policy.

Data Protection

Prior to commencing an investigation, it is necessary for the complainant to consider what personal data that they are content to have shared with an investigating officer. Attached to the complaint form is a consent to share material to enable an investigation to be undertaken.

If the complainant does not give consent to share information, it is important to note that the scope of the complaint, and therefore the actions available to conclude the complaints process, may be limited. In some instances, the complaint may not be able to proceed. The complainant will be informed if this is the case to give an opportunity to reconsider consent to share the material.

The same complaints process will be applied to data protection issues. A written outcome will be provided. If the academy does not comply with a Subject Access Request within one month (subject to any extension), or refuses all or part of the request, written reasons will be provided, setting out the principles for the refusal.

However, if a complainant feels that the academy has not dealt with the matter satisfactorily, complaints may be made to the Information Commissioner.

- By post: Customer Contact, Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF.

  - By email: casework@ico.org.uk
  - More information is on the ICO website www.ico.org.uk/

The difference between a concern and a complaint

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We define “concern” as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”.

We define “complaint” as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”.

If a complainant has difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect their views. In these cases, the matter should be discussed with the Principal or member of the leadership team so arrangements can be made to refer the complainant to another staff member. Similarly, if the employee directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, arrangements will be made to refer the complainant 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, the Trust and individual Academy will attempt to resolve the issue internally through the stages outlined within this document.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the academy to that which relates to their complaint while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful to send repeated correspondence, whether by letter, phone, email, text or other means, as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Principal will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an “unreasonable” marking. If, however, the behaviour continues, the Principal will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively cause a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

Ultimately, if a complainant persists in pursuing a complaint to the point where the Academy/Trust considers that the behaviour of the complainant constitutes harassment, discrimination and/or is threatening or intimidating to the staff of the Academy/Trust, and/or a threat to the welfare or well-being of any child at the academy, it may be necessary for the Academy/Trust to take further and proportionate action, including (by way of example) the imposition of a ban on the complainant from contacting the Academy/Trust; attending academy premises; taking legal action (which may include seeking an injunction or court order); and/or notifying the Police.

Individuals will have the right to make representations to the Principal/Trust Senior Leader as appropriate in circumstances where a decision to ban them has been made (and, in certain circumstances and where considered appropriate by the Academy/Trust, where a decision to ban is being considered).

Time scales

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Complaints must be raised by the complainant 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.

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 of a complainant if they have appropriate consent to do so.

Complaints against employees (except the Principal) should be made, in the first instance, to the Principal via the applicable academy office and also copied to complaints@spencertrust.org.uk

Complaints that involve or are about the Principal or a member of the Trust central team should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer and sent to complaints@spencertrust.org.uk

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing Board should be addressed to the Head of Governance and sent to complaints@spencertrust.org.uk

Complaints concerning the CEO, Executive Principal/Leader, Principal, members of the Trust Executive or Central Team will be managed in the case of the Executive Principal/Leader, Principal, or members of the Executive and Trust Central Team by the CEO or their appointed representative and in the case of the CEO by the Chair of the Trust Board or their appointed representative. In such cases, contact must be made with the Head of Governance who will manage the process and appoint an appropriate leader to investigate the concerns raised under this Policy unless the complaint is about the Head of Governance, this will be managed by the CEO.

In all cases the complaint should be marked as private and confidential. Once received you will receive confirmation that the complaint has been received and your complaint will be passed to the relevant party to investigate.

A template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the academy office. You can also ask a third-party organisation, for example 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., including but not limited to:

- Providing information in alternative formats
- Assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint
- Holding meetings in accessible locations.

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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, head of year/subject head or Principal. Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide an informal written response where possible within 10 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the issue remains dissatisfied, the next step is to make a formal complaint within five working days of Stage 1's conclusion.

Stage 2: Formal complaints

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

The Principal will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing, either by letter or email, within five working days.

Within this response, the Principal, or the appointed representative (this may be a Trust Senior Leader) will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains dissatisfied and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Principal or appointed representative can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

If the matter is within the scope of the complaint policy, it is important that the right person to investigate is identified. The Principal will look within the resources of the academy or wider Trust if appropriate, but in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to seek an external, neutral third party to undertake this role. The Trust has discretion to appoint this person and to notify the complainant about who the person is and reasons for the decision.

If the complaint is about an employee, a HR process will be followed. That is outside the scope of this complaints policy.

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Investigation

The Principal may delegate the investigation to another member of the academy senior leadership team or suitable investigating officer.

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

- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, if necessary, 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 Principal (or investigator) will provide a formal written response within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the Principal or investigating officer be 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 that will be taken to resolve the complaint.

The Principal or investigator 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 Principal or a member of the governing board (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), the CEO will appoint a Trust Senior Leader to complete all investigations at Stage 2 actions.

Records

The records of a complaint process are subject to the Data Protection Act 2018 and other statutory requirements. There is an obligation to keep appropriate records. The investigating officer will collect and keep records of meetings as necessary. When the investigating officer writes their report, they may decide to combine their notes into that report and destroy original copies. They may decide to summarise their notes in the report and keep original copies. This will be specified in any report.

Schools keep necessary records and not notes of every meeting or discussion that is held between school staff or with parents, carers and/or pupils. To try and retain a record of every interaction or discussion about a pupil would be impossible on a daily basis. On occasion, emails may also be deleted as part of the retention and information management process.

Stage 3: Panel Meeting

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3: a panel meeting consisting of up to 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 academy (this may be a Trust leader or leader from another academy within the Trust). This is the final stage of the SAT complaints policy and is laid out in the following section.

Right to Seek a Panel

Following an investigation or outcome, either the complainant or the person complained about can seek to take the matter to a panel hearing if they disagree with the outcome of the investigator's report and recommendations.

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Procedure for Stage 3

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Chief Executive Officer within five working days of receipt of the Stage 2 response via email complaints@spencertrust.org.uk or letter to the Trust office. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

A record of the date the complaint is received will be made and acknowledgement of receipt will be provided in writing, either by letter or email, within five working days.

Academy Panels

Arrangements for the Panel

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

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

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage them to bring legal representatives to the meeting. If an employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

Material for the Panel Meeting

At least 10 working days before the meeting, we 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 copies of any further written material to be submitted to the panel at least seven working days before the meeting.

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

The panel will also 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.

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The Panel Meeting

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 panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The panel can either uphold the complaint in whole or in part OR dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the panel will decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint. Where appropriate, the panel may recommend changes to systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the panel will provide the complainant and academy with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 working days. The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled.

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 Academy/Trust will take to resolve the complaint.

The panel will ensure that these findings and recommendations are sent by email or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the academy premises.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, including whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel meeting, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

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

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Trust Panel Make-up

If the complaint is jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair, the entire Trust Board, or the majority of the Trust Board, Stage 3 will be heard by an independent panel or trust member. This panel will consist of up to three members. None of the members of the complaint panel will have been involved in the incidents or events which led to the complaint or in dealing with the complaint in the previous stages or have any detailed prior knowledge of the complaint.

One of the panel members will be independent of the management and running of the Trust. This means that the independent complaint panel member will not be a Board Member or an employee of the Trust.

Complaints about an employee will not generally be handled under this complaint's procedure. Complainants will be advised that any employee conduct complaints will be considered under the SAT disciplinary policy, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

The Chair will consider the outcome from the mediation meeting and will write to the complainant confirming the actions agreed to and/or any outcome from the meeting. Mediation may take place at any stage of the procedure.

Further Steps

If the complainant believes the Academy/Trust 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 ESFA.

The ESFA will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the Academy/Trust. They will consider whether the Academy/Trust has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and whether they have followed Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the ESFA through any of the following methods:

- By post: Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT
- By phone: 0370 000 2288
- Online: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, they will be asked to confirm this in writing.

Managing Unreasonable Complaints

The Trust is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. The Trust will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the Trust itself or any of its schools; however, the Trust does not expect staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is unreasonably repetitive, abusive, offensive, or threatening.
For the purposes of this policy, unreasonable complaints include:

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Vexatious complaints, which:

- are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, or repetitious.
- insist upon pursuing complaints that are spurious and/or expect outcomes that are disproportionate.
- insist upon pursuing complaints in an unreasonable manner.
- are designed to cause disruption or annoyance.
- demand for redress which lacks any serious purpose or value.

Serial or persistent complaints, which:

- are duplicated, sent by the same complainant once the initial complaint has been closed.
- are new complaints that are submitted additionally, as part of an existing open complaint, by the same complainant.
- are repetitive in nature to deliberately undermine the school or member/s of staff or cause disruption.
- A complaint may also be regarded as unreasonable when 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 while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaint's procedure.
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales.
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeks to have them replaced.
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed.
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the trust's complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed, including referral to the ESFA.
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated, and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the complainant:

- Acts maliciously or aggressively.

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- Uses threats, intimidation, or violence.
- Uses abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language.
- Knows the complaint to be false.
- Uses falsified information.
- Publishes unacceptable information in media such as social media websites and newspapers.

The above applies regardless of the method the complaint is made, e.g. face-to-face, by telephone, in writing or electronically.
Complainants should limit the number of communications with the Trust while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent, either by letter, phone, email, or text, as it could delay the outcome being reached.
Whenever possible, the member of staff, local governor or trustee leading the response to a complaint will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.
Serial or persistent complaints will only be marked as 'serial' once the complainant has completed the complaints procedure. It is the complaint that will be marked as 'serial', meaning the complainant can complain about a separate issue if necessary.
If the behaviour continues, the individual handling the complaint will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the Trust or any of its schools causing a significant level of disruption, the Trust may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after six months.

A decision to stop responding to a complainant.

The decision to stop responding will not be taken lightly. Such a decision will only be considered in circumstances where the following statements are true:

- every reasonable step has been taken to address the complainant's concerns.
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school or Trust's position and their options.
- The complainant contacts the Trust or any of its schools repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time.
- The case to stop responding is stronger if one or more of these statements are true:
- The complainant's letters, emails, or telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive.
- The complainant makes insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff.
- The complaint lead has reason to believe the complainant is contacting the school with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience.

The complaint lead will make the decision to cease responding after consultation with the CEO.

If the decision to stop responding is taken the following will apply;

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- The complainant will be restricted to a single point of contact via an email address.
- The number of times the complainant can make contact will be limited, for example a fixed number of contacts per term will be specified.
- The complainant will be asked to select a third party to act on their behalf such as the local Citizens' Advice Bureau
- The Trust will seek legal advice.

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

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Principal, in conjunction with the Trust, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact our ability to adhere to the timescales laid out within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against the Trust or one of our academies in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until legal proceedings have concluded.

Duplicate complaints

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that had not been previously considered or any new information we need to consider.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and the local process is complete. We will also direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint.

If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

Complaint campaigns

There can be occasions where the academy receives large volumes of complaints from multiple sources. In these cases, we reserve our right to treat this as a complaints campaign and as such may choose to manage these complaints as a whole and produce a single statement which is shared with all complainants.

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Although the subject matter of the complaint will be taken seriously and fully investigated, the issue will not be investigated repeatedly without good reason. In the event of a complaint which is identified as a part of a series of near identical complaints, the following process will be followed:

1. The complainant begins the complaints process as usual.
2. The Principal identifies that this complaint is one of many very similar complaints
3. A single letter of response is prepared.
4. This letter of response is shared with each complainant.
5. Complainants will have an opportunity to appeal the outcome of the complaint.

As there may be a high number of complainants and therefore a high number of appeals received, appeals may also be managed as a whole and as such the procedure will vary. It will not be possible for all complainants to attend an appeal meeting; however, an opportunity to submit additional information will be provided.

Barring from school premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. The Trust will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff, and other members of their community.

If an individual's behaviour is a cause for concern, a Principal can ask them to leave school premises. In some cases, individuals can be barred from entering school premises. The Trust will always give the individual the opportunity to express formally their views on a decision to bar.

The Principal's decision to bar should then be reviewed by the chair of governors. The CEO must be informed.

They should consider any representations made by the individual and decide whether to either confirm or lift the bar. If the decision is confirmed, the individual should be notified in writing, explaining:

1. how long the bar will be in place.
2. when the decision will be reviewed.

Once the school's appeal process has been completed, individuals may be able to apply to the Courts. Individuals wishing to exercise this option should seek independent legal advice.

Staff Complaints

If a member of staff wishes to make a complaint (in their capacity as an employee) should be investigated using the Grievance Procedure and not the Complaints Policy.

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What is not covered by this policy

The DfE's advice identifies areas lying outside the scope of school procedures.

Subject	Who to contact
Admissions to schools	Concerns about admissions should be handled either through the appeals process or via the local authority. Guidance can be sought from the Trust's Head of Governance.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our safeguarding and child protection policy, which can be found on our website, 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*	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 SAT complaints procedure.*
Whistleblowing	Employees, including temporary staff and contractors, should see the Trust Whistleblowing Policy on our website. 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 academy should complain through the SAT 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.
Employee grievances	Complaints from employees will be dealt with under the SAT Grievance Policy.
Employee conduct	Complaints about an employee's conduct or behaviour will be dealt with under the SAT 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.

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Complaint against Academy or Academy Employees

Complaint relates to	Stage 1: Informal	Stage 2: Formal Investigating Officer	Stage 3: Complaint Panel
Pupils, parents or staff (other than the Principal)	Appropriate member of staff	Principal or another Senior Leader	Up to three people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, including one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the academy
Principal	Senior Trust Leader	CEO or Senior Trust Leader	Up to three people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, including one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the academy
A Governor or Governors (other than the Chair of Governors)		Chair of Governors/ Head of Governance	Up to three people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, including one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the academy
Chair of Governors		CEO/Trust Senior Leader/Head of Governance	Up to three people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, including one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the academy
Entire Board of Governors		CEO/Trust Senior Leader/Head of Governance	Up to three people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, including one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the academy

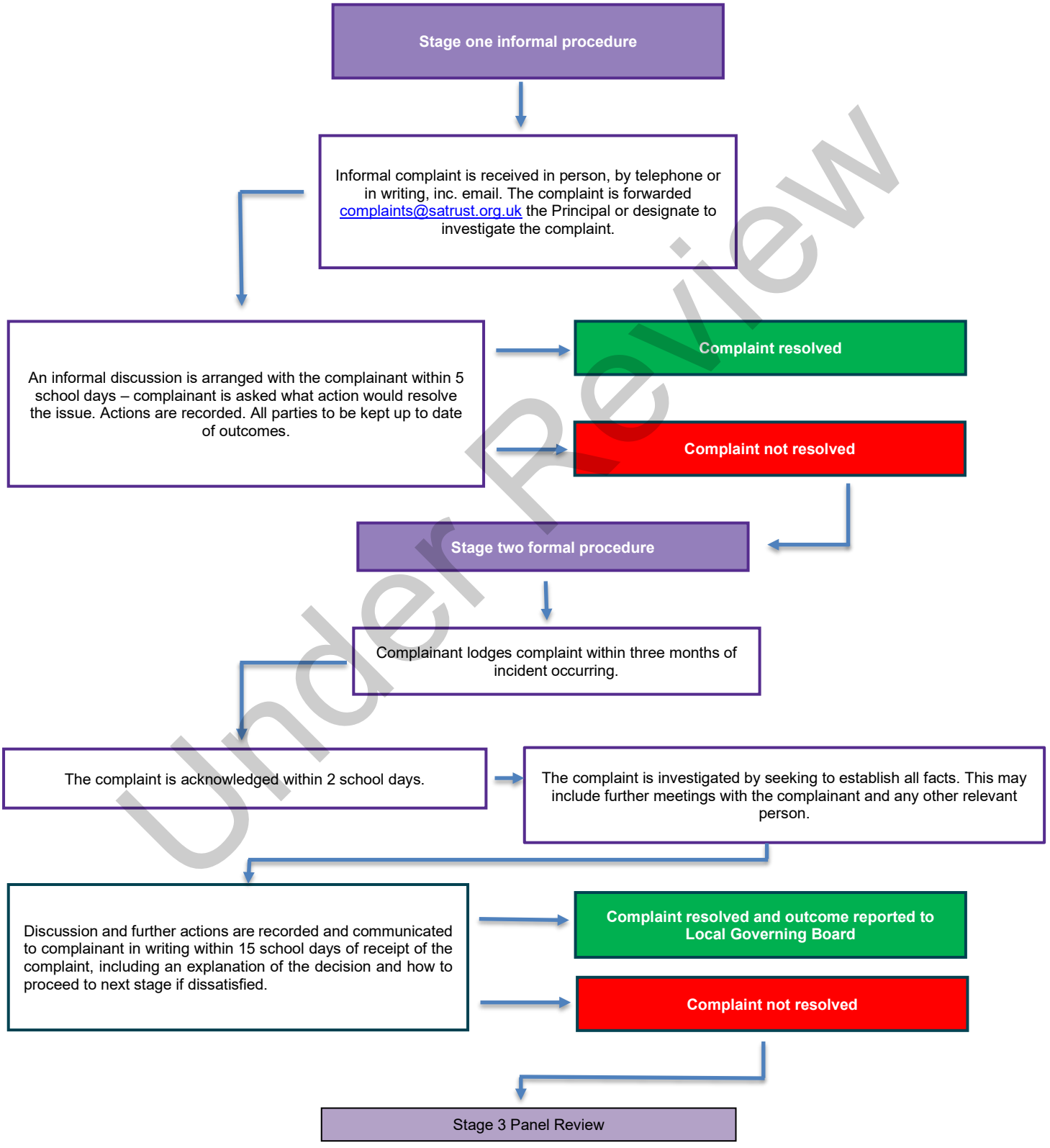
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Complaint against Trust or Trust Officer

Complaint relates to	Stage 1: Informal	Stage 2: Formal Investigating Officer	Stage 3: Complaint Panel
Academy Trust Officer (other than the CEO)	Trust Manager as appropriate	Senior Trust Leader	Chief Executive Officer/Senior Trust Leader
Chief Executive Officer	Board Member	Chair of Trust Board	Panel appointed of independent members
Trust Director (other than the Chair)	Chair of Trust Board	Chair of Trust Board	Panel appointed of independent members
The Chair of the Trust (or group of Directors)	Vice-Chair of the Trust	Vice-Chair of the Trust	Panel appointed of independent members
The whole Board of Trust Directors	Trust Member	Independent investigation	Panel appointed of independent members

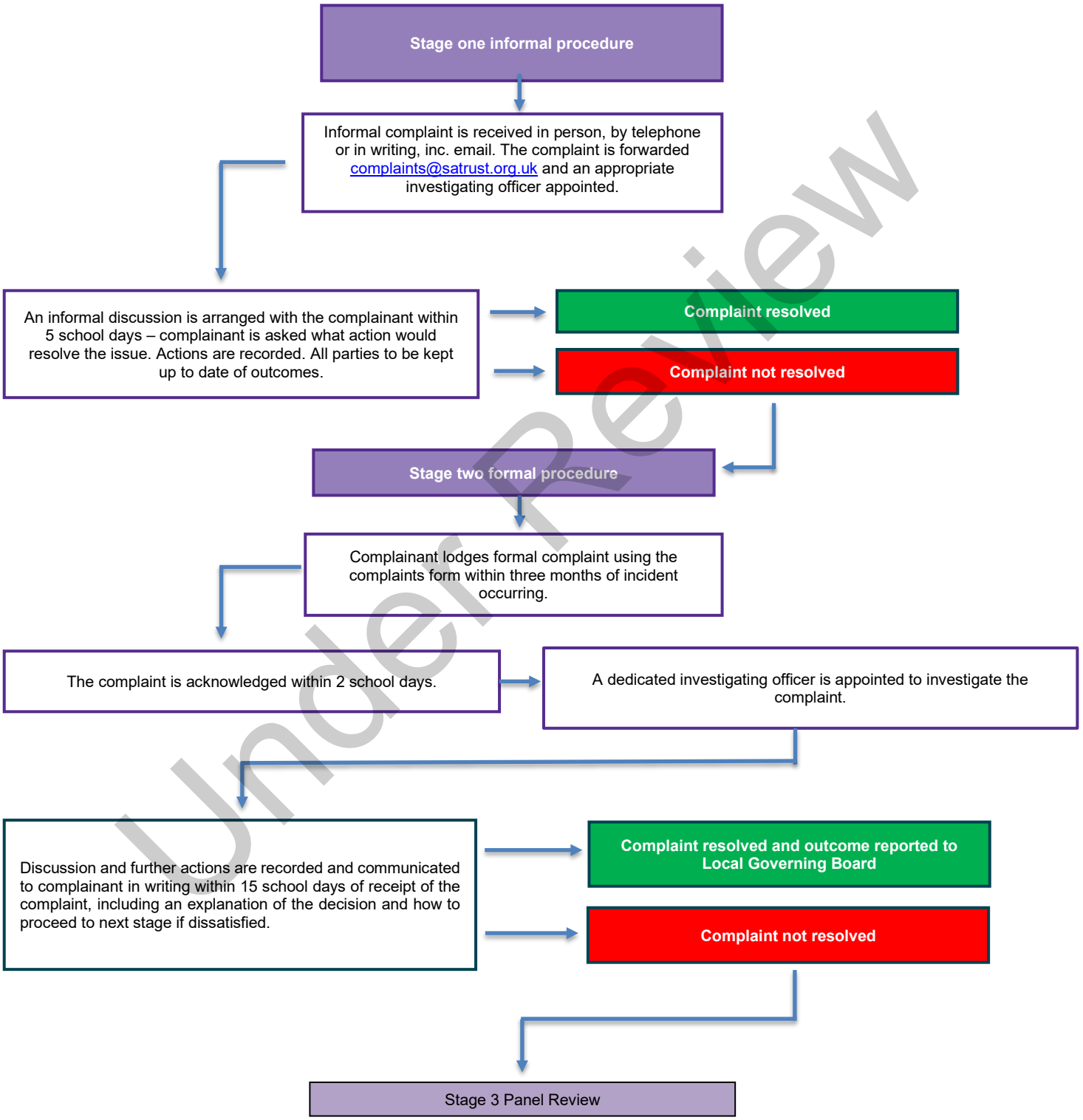
Under Review

Flow-Chart - Complaint about Academy or Academy employee



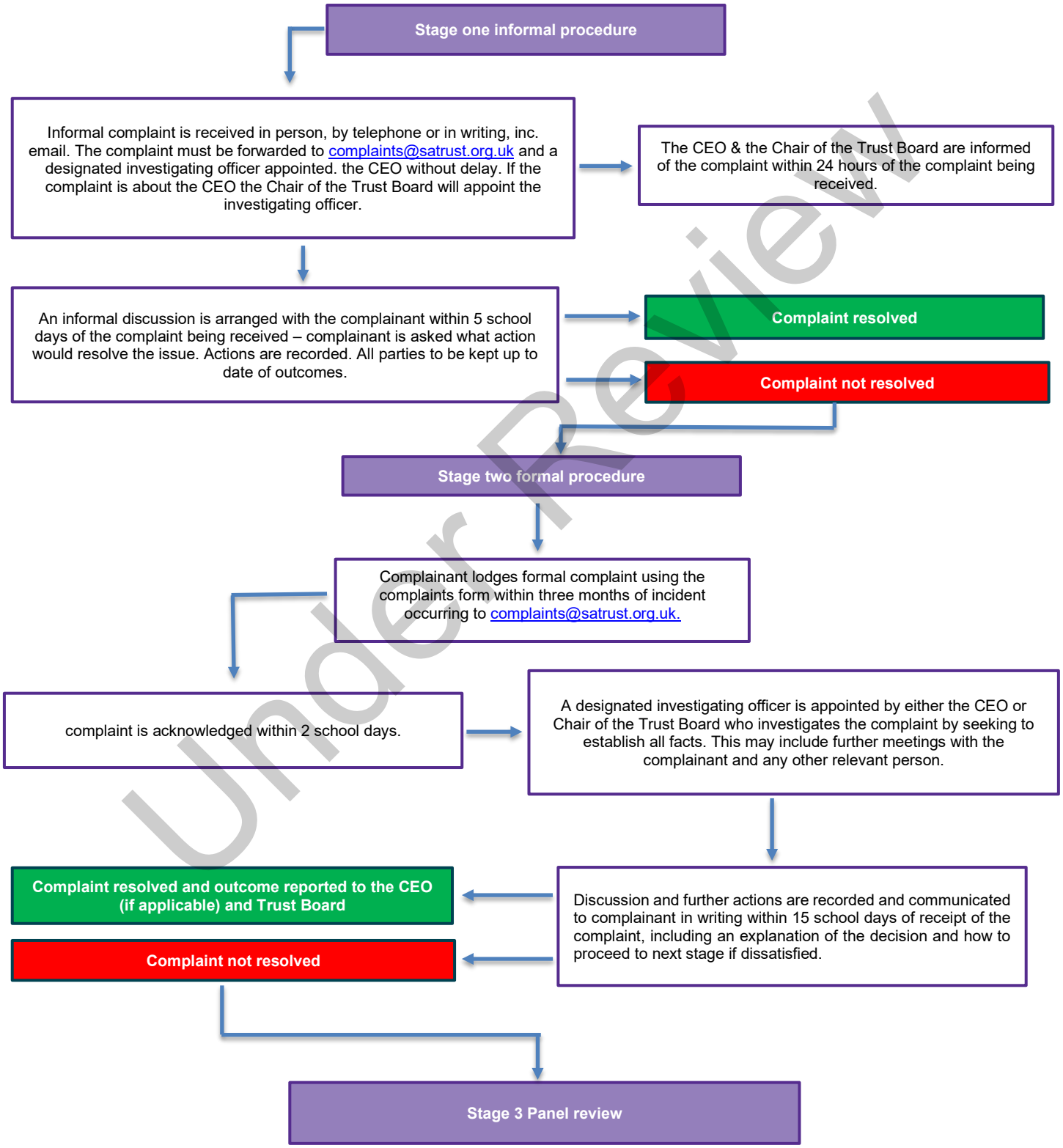
Under Review

Flow-Chart - Complaint about Principal



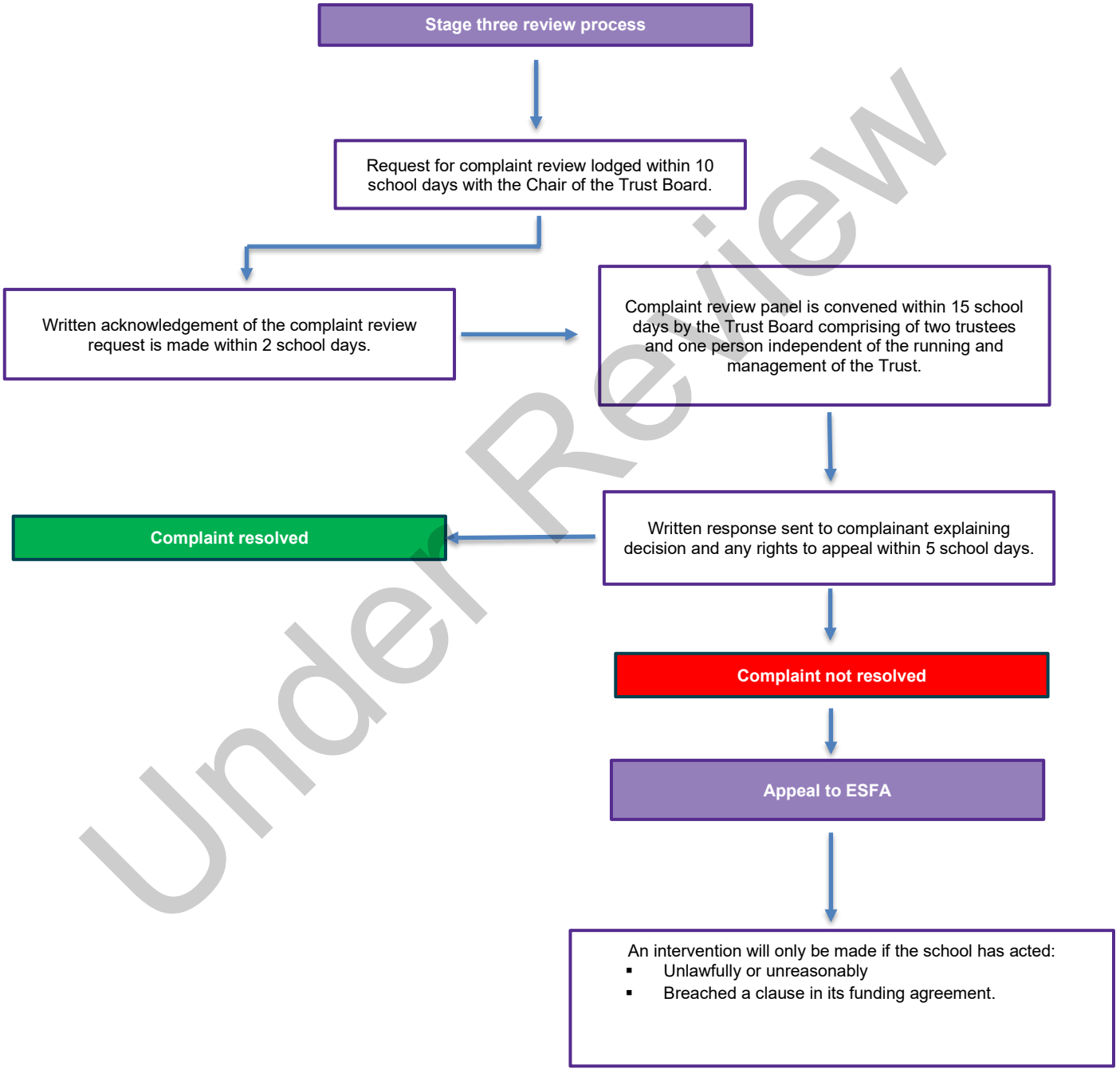
Under Review

Flow-Chart - Complaint about Trust Board, CEO, LGB or Central Team



Under Review

Flow-Chart - Stage 3 panel review process



Under Review

Complaint Form

Your name	
House/ flat/ building number and street name	
Town	
County	
Postcode	
Your telephone number	
Your email address	

Please provide as much detail as possible. All of the boxes expand to take additional text.

I am writing to make a formal complaint against/about	
Please describe what your complaint is and when it arose	
What you think the Academy did wrong or did not do. Include dates, names of witnesses etc.	
Please provide details about the consequences of what happened	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?).	
What do you think the Trust should do to resolve matters at this stage?	

Under Review

Please list copies of any documents you are attaching to the complaint.	

Please consider if you give consent to share your personal data with any investigating officer or not. Please delete all but ONE of the following:

I give my consent for information held in paper and electronic records in respect of my case to be made available to any allocated investigator. I consent to this confidential and sensitive data to be shared for that specific purpose. I realise that any information held about any third party cannot be shared without their specific consent.

Should it be necessary in the view of the investigator to seek that third party consent I give my approval that they may share sufficient information with that third party to enable that person to make an informed choice about whether or not to give consent to sharing that person's information with the investigator.

OR

I do not give my consent to share my personal data to an allocated investigating officer. I acknowledge that this may limit the scope of the complaint investigation.

OR

You may share my data for the purposes of the investigation as long as upon its conclusion all of these records are deleted or destroyed.

Signed

Dated

Under Review

Under Review

Under Review