



Gledhow Primary School

Gledhow Primary School Concerns and Complaints Procedure

Adopted by the governing board on: March 2026

To be reviewed by March 2027

Signed on behalf of the governing board:

Gledhow Primary school complaints procedure

Be Adventurous: Making the ordinary extraordinary

1. Introduction

This policy statement sets out the school's approach to dealing with parental concerns and complaints.

Gledhow Primary is a listening school, and we welcome both constructive and positive feedback from parents: We see this as an opportunity for the school to respond proactively and consider, where appropriate, if we can learn or if any improvements can be made.

At Gledhow Primary School we will always try to deal with issues or concerns at an informal level, in the hope of reaching a satisfactory resolution. We really value good home - school relations and will, therefore, do everything we can to establish and maintain them. This includes seeking to resolve any concerns or complaints as promptly as possible, and to the satisfaction of all concerned. We accept that from time-to-time, mistakes are made, and things can go wrong but will always aim to put things right.

The DfE and the local authority advocate positive and informal resolution of parental concerns and complaints at school level, wherever possible. However, if you are still not satisfied with the response from the school then use the formal channels outlined in this document.

All complaints are taken seriously by the school and the Governing Board and will be investigated in line with this Policy and Procedure and in a manner which is consistent, thorough, and transparent.

Please note the following:

1. We always prefer to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of all parties; it may not be possible to achieve this in every case. Please be assured that it is never our intention to disappoint, and we will always work hard to maintain positive relationships with our community.
2. The Department for Education (DfE) outlines the key difference between a **concern** and a **complaint**.
 - **A concern** is an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought. This would not normally constitute grounds regarding a formal complaint.

- **A complaint** is a clear statement of dissatisfaction, about actions taken or a lack of action.

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

2. Scope of the complaints procedure.

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 Gledhow Primary about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Please check in section 7 of this document to ensure it is appropriate to use this procedure for your complaint.

3. How to raise a concern or make a complaint

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

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

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 later in this process.

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 or an individual governor 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 or the whole governing board should be sent to the Clerk of governors via the school office. The clerk will enlist the help of an appropriate independent expert to investigate the complaint. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

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

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

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

4. Anonymous complaints

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

5. Time scales

We respectfully ask you to 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.

6. 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.

7. Scope of this Complaints Procedure

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

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals 	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with complaints.children@leeds.gov.uk</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding lado@leeds.gov.uk or contact Duty and Advice - Report a child protection concern</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-</p>

	<p>discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure. The policy is here Gledhow Positive Behaviour Policy</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Curriculum - content 	<p>Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Operational and Strategic Decisions Protocol 	<p>Appendix One outlines decisions that all schools are reasonably and lawfully allowed to make without stakeholder approval. In the interests of transparency, it is likely that 'agreeing to disagree' may be the only outcome in situations</p>

	where complaints are centred around areas covered with this protocol.
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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 Gledhow Primary 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.

8. Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Gledhow Primary wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation,
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better,
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur,
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made,
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint,
- an apology.

9. Withdrawal of a Complaint

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

10. Stage 1 of the formal complaints process.

Introduction

There are a series of roles defined later in this document in the section Roles and Responsibilities. This covers:

- Complainant
- Investigator (for Stage 1)
- Complaints Co-ordinator
- Decision Maker
- Clerk to the governing board
- Complaints Panel Chair (for Stage 2)
- Complaints Panel Member

Unless otherwise agreed then the default roles for the complaints process are:

- Complaints Co-ordinator - Headteacher
- Investigator – Headteacher or delegated to a member of the leadership team
- Decision maker on the outcome of the complaint - Headteacher

Formal complaints must be made to the Complaints Co-ordinator. This may be done in person or via e-mail (using the complaint form in this policy), or by telephone.

If the complaint is about the headteacher then please see section 10.2 below.

If the complaint is about the Chair of Governors or the governing board then please see section 10.3 below.

For any complaint raised the individuals allocated and involved in the case must not share any details of the complaint with Gledhow Primary governors, staff or any external third party who are not involved in the process.

10.1 Standard complaints process

The Complaints Co-ordinator will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days. The Complaints Co-ordinator will inform the complainant who the Investigator will be. The Complaints Co-ordinator may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team or an independent investigator.

The Investigator will then get in touch with the complainant to seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Investigator can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this. It is essential that a clear remit and resolution for the complaint is established at this point.

The 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 the investigation, the Investigator will provide a formal written response to the Decision Maker within 15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the Investigator is unable to meet this 15-day deadline to produce their written response, they will instruct the Complaints Co-ordinator to provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

When the Investigator completes their written response, the Decision Maker will then use the findings from this to agree the outcome, which will be shared with the complainant.

The response from the Decision Maker 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 Gledhow Primary will take to resolve the complaint.

If appropriate, the Decision Maker will consider inviting the complainant to meet in school to discuss the outcome. This is to ensure the complainant understands the outcome and to minimise the risk of needing to move to stage 2.

The Decision Maker will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of stage 1. The Decision Maker will ensure that the complainant is clear on the purpose/remit of the next stage.

Please note the Decision Maker cannot appoint a second investigator to re-look at an existing complaint.

10.2 Complaint against the Headteacher

If the complaint is about the headteacher then the following roles will be allocated to the complaints process

- Complaints Co-ordinator – Chair of Governors with support from the clerk
- Investigator – Chair of Governors or agreed independent expert
- Decision maker on the outcome of the complaint – Chair of Governors

Any individual involved in this process must have no knowledge of the complaint and no conflict of interests with any party involved in this process.

Please see section 10.1 for the details of the complaints procedure to follow.

10.3 Complaint against the Chair of Governors or the whole governing board

If the complaint is about the Chair of Governors, then the following roles will be allocated to the complaints process

- Complaints Co-ordinator – Headteacher with support from the clerk
- Investigator – Agreed independent expert
- Decision maker on the outcome of the complaint – Agreed independent expert

Any individual involved in this process must have no knowledge of the complaint and no conflict of interests with any party involved in this process.

Please see section 10.1 for the details of the complaints procedure to follow.

11. Stage 2 of the formal complaints process

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.

The purpose of stage 2 is to ensure that the stage 1 complaints process has been executed fairly and in line with the agreed procedures.

It will involve an independent assessment from a complaints panel. This is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure.

There are several roles that need to be filled as part of undertaking the process. It is important that any individual allocated must have no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint and to have no conflicts of interests with any parties involved.

The default responsibilities are as follows:

- Complaints Co-ordinator – Chair of Governors
- Complaints panel – three independent Gledhow Primary governors (that can include the chair) who were not involved in stage 1. If needed an external governor or independent expert can be included if three independent Gledhow Primary governors cannot be appointed.
- Decision maker on the outcome of the complaint – Panel Chair

If the original complaint was against the headteacher then the responsibilities are as follows:

- Complaints Co-ordinator – Clerk to the governing board
- Complaints panel – three independent Gledhow Primary governors not involved in stage 1 of the complaint. If needed an external governor or independent expert can be included if three independent Gledhow Primary governors cannot be appointed.
- Decision maker on the outcome of the complaint – Panel Chair

If the original complaint was against the Chair of Governors or the whole governing board then the responsibilities are modified as follows:

- Complaints Co-ordinator – Clerk to the governing board
- Complaints panel – three independent appointed governors from other schools and/or other independent experts.
- Decision maker on the outcome of the complaint – Panel Chair

The selected 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.

A request to escalate to stage 2 must be made to the school office, within **10** school days of receipt of the stage 1 response.

The Complaints Co-ordinator will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 3 school days.

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

The Complaints Co-ordinator 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 Complaints Co-ordinator will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

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

The complaints panel must have no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint and to have no conflicts of interests. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Panel Chair.

The panel 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.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, it is not encouraged for either party to bring legal representatives to the panel meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

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

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

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 10 school days before the meeting, the Complaints Co-ordinator 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
- confirm and notify any Gledhow Primary staff members of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the staff member 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 5 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 3 school 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 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:

- 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 panel 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 decision maker will provide the complainant and the Complaints Co-ordinator with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days. The decision maker must have any formal communication to the complainant reviewed by a qualified HR representative from the local authority before it is issued. The Complaints Co-ordinator will ensure that any members of Gledhow Primary staff involved in the process are updated on the outcome of the complaint.

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 Gledhow Primary School.

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

For any complaint raised the individuals allocated and involved in the case must not share any details of the complaint with Gledhow Primary governors, staff or any external third party.

12. 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 by Gledhow Primary. They will consider whether Gledhow Primary 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.

13. Managing serial and unreasonable complaints

Gledhow Primary 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.

Gledhow Primary 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 applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Gledhow Primary causing 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.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Gledhow Primary.

14. Managing complaint campaigns

Occasionally we may become the focus of a campaign and receive large volumes of complaints all based on the same subject and/ or from complainants unconnected with the school.

If this happens we will:

- send a template response to all complainants, or
- publish a single response on the school's website.

15. Reporting complaints

Any stage 1 or stage 2 complaints are reported to Governors within the termly headteacher report. There are no details of the complaint shared, just the stage that the complaint is in the process and the details regarding adherence to the outlined timelines in this policy.

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Complaints Co-ordinator who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number: Email address:
Please give details of your complaint, 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:

Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

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

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

Investigator (Stage 1)

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 individuals relevant to the complaint
 - consideration of any recorded facts and other relevant information
 - analysing the information provided
- 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 decision maker that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The decision maker 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 Complaints Co-ordinator is the contact point for the complainant plus the Complaints Panel in stage 2 of this process and should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure.
- ensure the complainant is notified if there are any delays in the process
- ensure that both the complainant and complainee have the opportunity to identify the witnesses they want involved in the process.
- liaise with the appropriate individuals to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- ensure if the complaint is about a member of staff that that member of staff is notified of the complaint, what it is about and is kept updated during the process.
- ensure that any member of staff involved has access to support if required. This can include HR support if the member of staff is off work and the appropriate return to work support as needed.
- act as the escalation point for the complainant and any members of Gledhow Primary staff involved in the process if they have identified any part of the complaints process that has not been correctly followed. The Complaints Co-ordinator will need to review this escalation and assess any corrective action. The Complaints Co-ordinator must respond in writing to all relevant parties post any escalation request.
- keep records
- 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

Roles specific to Stage Two complaints:

- 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 the agreed timescale
- notify all parties of the Complaints Panel decision
- circulate the minutes of the Complaints Panel meeting if requested.

Decision maker

The decision maker is the final authority on the outcome of the complaints process.

Clerk to the Governing Board

The Clerk can be appointed to provide procedural advice and take minutes of the stage 2 panel meeting to:

- 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
- record the proceedings

Complaints Panel Chair (Stage 2)

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

- both parties are asked (via the school Complaints Co-ordinator) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in a professional manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- complainants who feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting are put at ease. Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- extra care is taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting by:
 - careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.
 - ensuring the panel should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
 - ensuring if the child/young person is the complainant, the panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint.
 - assessing when the child/young person's parent is the complainant, ensuring the panel gives 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 panel considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- the remit of the panel is explained to the complainant
- any 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 aim of the meeting is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are shared
- the panel is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the panel 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 Complaints Co-ordinator

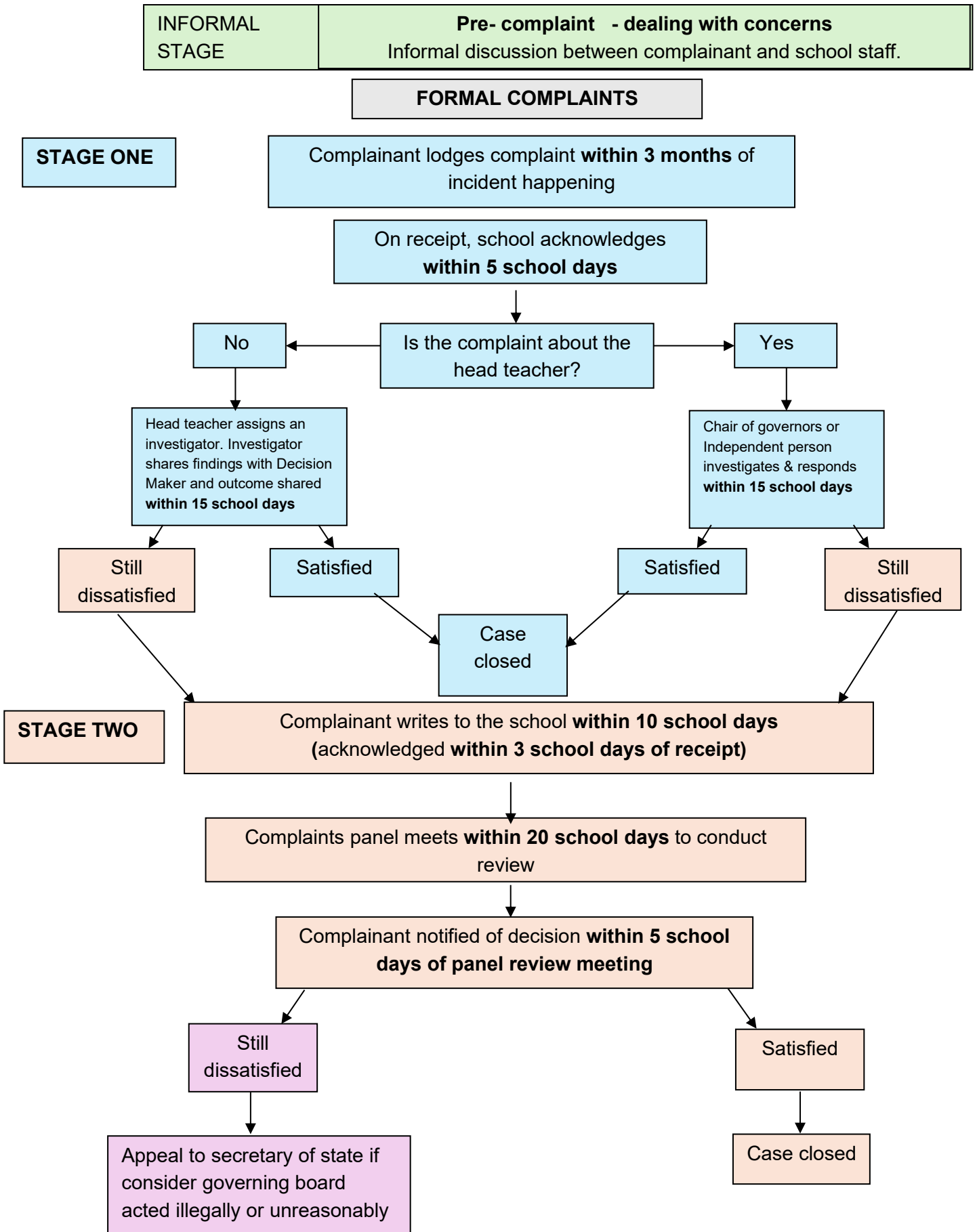
Complaints Panel Member (Stage 2)

Panel members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial. No panel member can be appointed if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.

It is recognised 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.

Dealing with complaints about schools – flowchart



APPENDIX ONE - Operational & Strategic Decisions Protocol

At Gledhow Primary School, we strive to build strong relationships with parents, carers, and visitors in order to help create a stimulating, happy, and safe learning environment, which extends from school to home and the wider community, providing all our pupils with the opportunity to achieve their personal best. The trust, support, and cooperation of parents are fundamental to the continued success of our school.

We will always seek, where possible, to work with parents/carers in a positive manner to ensure the highest standards within the school. We value the home/school relationship and, where appropriate, regularly seek the views of our community and often choose to share the rationale for our decisions. Whilst it is never our intention to disappoint, given the size of our community, we must accept that it is not always possible to secure agreement on all issues, and it is important to note that some decisions are not open to negotiation and that securing agreement is not necessary. In choosing to send your child to Gledhow Primary School, we ask that parents/carers understand that all schools (not just Gledhow Primary) have the right to make key operational and strategic decisions without agreement from parents. This position is protected by law.

The following list is not exhaustive, but offers examples of such areas:

- Decisions around setting, choice of teacher, class group, teaching assistant.
- Decisions regarding Behaviour or Uniform Policy (parents cannot choose for their child to 'opt out' of either policy or any of the sanctions outlined within).
- The nature of our rewards system and how we choose to implement it.
- Choice of curriculum content, resources, or approaches to Teaching and Learning.
- Our Quality Assurance procedures, approaches to homework, or marking.
- The nature of our extra-curricular offer.
- Timing of INSET/Training Days or other key events within the school calendar.
- The content and delivery of our internal policies and protocols.
- Decisions regarding the allocation of resources, including staff, to best meet the needs of pupils.
- Decisions regarding school trips or extracurricular activities, including choosing the venues, scheduling, and any associated costs.
- Decisions related to health and safety protocols, including risk assessments for activities or procedures within the school.
- The implementation of safeguarding procedures and protocols to protect the welfare of all pupils.

As outlined, we will always listen to concerns raised with the school in a respectful manner. However, please understand that listening does not necessarily mean a decision will be changed, nor does it imply that we do not value your input. There will be times when we may need to respectfully agree to disagree. It is important to note that decisions will not be altered simply because some disagree, or due to disagreement in WhatsApp groups, on social media, co-signed letters, or petitions. Similarly, we will not change our course of action simply because an individual or group voices their opinions loudly, as this does not necessarily reflect the views of the majority. In short, no stakeholder has an absolute veto or the right to demand actions from school staff. Our decisions are made in good faith, based on what we believe is in the best interests of our pupils, our community, and the effective operation of the school. We always rely on our professional judgement, expertise, and experience, in line with DfE guidance and statutory/legal frameworks. Following the Complaints Procedure will not change a decision unless it determines that the school has acted unlawfully or outside agreed policy positions.

We will endeavour to keep parents/carers informed regarding key decisions, where appropriate. However, to ensure that communications to parents are kept at an acceptable level, it is not always possible or necessary to share all decisions or enter into dialogue about the rationale. Please be aware that plans change from time to time, often beyond our control. We will inform parents/carers as soon as possible but ask for your understanding.

Finally, given the huge volume of complex decisions we make, we will not always get everything right. We are human and will always aim to operate with the best intentions. Above all, we ask parents/carers to be kind, as working together positively ensures that we can better meet the needs of Gledhow Primary school children.