



## Two Rivers Federation

### Complaints Policy

Approved/Recommended by:

**Resources Committee:** 04 July 2023

**Full Governing Board:** 04 July 2023

Policy updated: 04 July 2023

Next review date: September 2023/24

## Concerns and Formal Complaints Procedure

*We are committed to working with parents and carers to provide the best for all our children and this includes responding quickly and proportionately to concerns that you raise. There is a legally binding system in place to deal with unresolved concerns and more formal complaints. The following procedure sets out how we will work with you to resolve any concerns you raise as quickly and as informally as possible.*

### **Who can raise a concern or a complaint?**

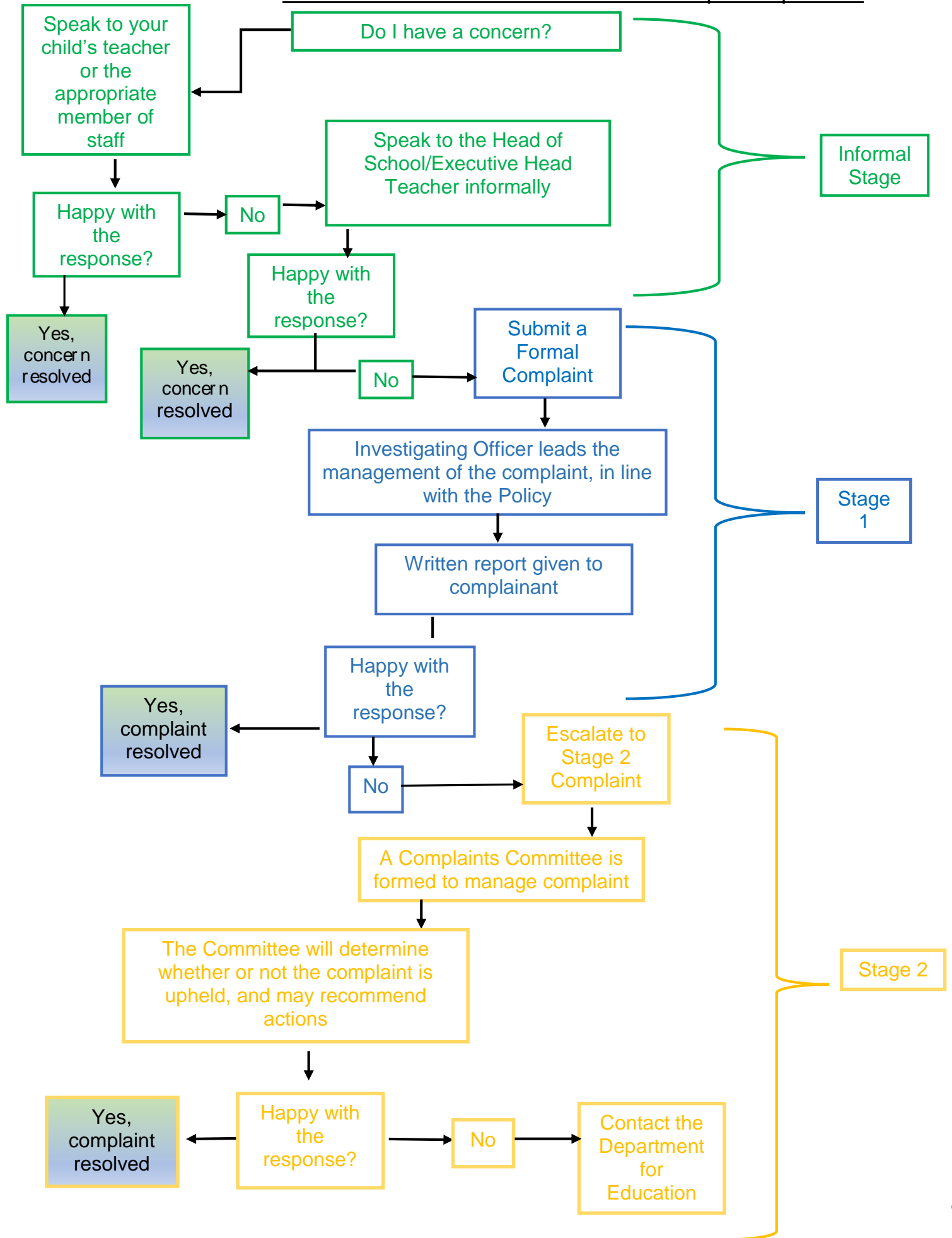
Parents, carers and any person including members of the public can raise a concern or a more formal complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the schools provide.

It is in everyone's interest that issues can be resolved informally without the need to use the formal complaints procedure. We take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. There may be occasions when people want to raise their concerns formally as a complaint, this can be done by following the stages in this complaints policy.

### **How to raise a concern or escalate it to a more formal complaint**

Please refer to the flow chart and the following guidelines.

## Two Rivers Federation concern and complaints process



## **How to raise a concern or escalate it to a more formal complaint**

A concern should initially be raised with the child's class teacher, most times this can resolve the concern.

If this does not resolve the concern it can be taken to a senior member of staff, this can be done by making an appointment to talk face to face or by telephone or in writing.

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

- There is a complaints form at the end of this policy that can be used.
- Complaints should be sent to the Executive Headteacher via the school office. It should be labelled as 'private and confidential'.
- Complaints about the Executive head should be addressed to the Chair of Governors via the school office. This should be labelled 'Private and Confidential'.
- Complaints about Governors should be given to the clerk to the governing body, via the school office.
- You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident. Complaints sent during school holidays will be received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## **Resolving concerns and complaints**

We may offer one or more of the following:

- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently.
- An assurance that we will try to ensure that the issue will not reoccur.
- An indication of the timescales within which any changes will take place.
- An undertaking to review school policies in the light of the complaint.
- An apology.

## **Formal Complaints**

### **Stage 1**

The head teacher, executive head or a member of the school's leadership team, (or a governor if the complaint is about the head teacher, executive head or another governor), as the Investigating Officer, will:

- Record the date the formal complaint is received
- Acknowledge the formal complaint has been received within two school days.
- Clarify the nature of the formal complaint, find out what remains unresolved
- Explore what outcome the complainant would like to see.

- Speak to those involved in the matter
- Ensure the clerk keeps a record of any meetings.
- Provide a formal written report within 15 days of the date of the formal complaint or provide the complainant with a revised response date, informing the complainant of whether or not the complaint is upheld and why.
- Advise the complainant how to escalate their complaint to Stage 2, if they feel it is still not resolved at Stage 1.

## **Stage 2**

Upon receipt of a Stage 2 complaint, there will be a meeting with three impartial members of the governing body who will form the Complaints Committee and appoint a Chair from amongst them. The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting the parties to a meeting or through written representation.

To move to stage 2

A request must be made to the clerk via the school office within 20 school days of getting the stage 1 response.

The clerk will:

- Source independent governors if three are not available from the Two Rivers Federation.
- Record the date that the complaint is received and acknowledge it by letter or email within 2 school days.
- Contact the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting, aiming to convene a meeting within 15 school days of receipt of the stage 2 complaint. If this is not possible, the complainant will be kept informed.
- If the complainant refuses three proposed dates without good reason the clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. In such a case it could be held without the complainant.
- Ten school days before the meeting the clerk will

confirm with the complainant the time, date and venue for the meeting, checking the dates are convenient and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.

- Request copies of any documents to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting. This will be circulated to all parties at least 3 school days before the meeting.

The meeting

If it is a face to face meeting the complainant may bring someone with them for support. This cannot be someone from the media.

- The meeting will not review any new complaints.
- The meeting will not accept recordings obtained covertly without consent of all parties.
- The meeting will be held in private.
- The committee will consider the complaint and evidence presented.

- The committee can uphold the complaint or part of it, and will decide on appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- The committee can dismiss the complaint, in whole or part.
- The committee may recommend changes to prevent similar issues in the future.
- The chair of the committee will give the complainant and the school a full explanation of the decision and the reason for it within 5 school days.
- The information given to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education, if they are still dissatisfied about how the complaint has been handled.

### **Next Steps**

If the complainant believes the Federation 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.

### **Contact Details**

To arrange to speak with a class teacher or subsequently a senior member of staff about a concern, please email the appropriate 'Families' account with the request. The email addresses are [families@langtree.devon.sch.uk](mailto:families@langtree.devon.sch.uk) or [families@bishopstawton-primary.org](mailto:families@bishopstawton-primary.org)

To escalate the concern and submit a Stage One complaint, please use the template below and email it to the Clerk to the governors at this email address: [clerk@tworiversfederation.org](mailto:clerk@tworiversfederation.org).



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**Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.**

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**Signature:**

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**Date:**

**Official use**

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**Date acknowledgement sent:**

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**By who:**

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**Complaint referred to:**

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**Date:**

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# Two Rivers Federation Complaints Procedure

## Investigating Officer's Report Template

Investigation into a Stage One complaint against XXXXX

Two Rivers Federation

Date XX XXX XX

This investigation was commissioned on (insert relevant date) by the Governing Board of the Two Rivers Federation, and carried out in accordance with the following Terms of Reference:

1. The investigation will confine itself to the complaint raised by (insert name of complainant) against XXXXX, dated (insert relevant date).
2. The investigation will consider the complaint in line with the School Complaints Policy, adopted in (insert current date).
3. In investigating the complaint, all lines of enquiry will be justified, proportionate and necessary.
4. The investigation will consider the complaint on the balance of probabilities.
5. The investigation will make recommendations considered appropriate and necessary for effective and efficient governance within the Two Rivers Federation schools.
6. The investigation will bring to the attention of the Local Authority any matters that are considered necessary.

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Executive Summary

This Stage One complaint has been investigated by (insert your name), on behalf of the Governing Board of the Two Rivers Federation. The purpose of this report is to detail the process and findings of the investigation, draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Details of the complaint made by (insert name of complainant)

The complaint made by (insert name of complainant) is as follows: "paste in directly from the complaint received"



Within this complaint (insert name of complainant) sought the following resolution:

A. (insert desired resolution agreed with complainant).

The investigator met with the complainant on (insert date of meeting), in the company of the Federation Clerk, Mrs L Cook. As part of this meeting, the following information was provided by the complainant:

- Insert any relevant information provided by the complainant

In the meeting held with the complainant, it was clarified that (insert, if necessary, any additional contextual information to help explain and summarise the complaint).

Response of (insert name of who complaint is against)

The investigator met with (insert name of who complaint is against) on (insert date of meeting), in the company of the Federation Clerk, Mrs L Cook. As part of this meeting, the following information was provided by (insert name of who complaint is against):

- Insert any relevant information provided by who complaint is against

### **Findings**

Detail any findings from the investigation, specifically linking to the complaint raised.

The undersigned finds that the complaint is upheld/not upheld (delete as appropriate); Explain why this decision has been reached, referencing the policy and/or other material as appropriate.

### **Conclusion**

Provide a conclusion from the investigation and findings.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made to the Governing Board:

- The complaint is upheld/not upheld (delete as appropriate).