BISHOP HEBER HIGH SCHOOL

RESPECT • OPPORTUNITY • ACHIEVEMENT

COMPLAINTS POLICY (CWaC Adopted)

HANDLING COMPLAINTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In light of the Department for Education updating the guidance for school complaint policies, please note that we will endeavour to respond to your complaint in accordance with our usual complaints policy and procedure. If your complaint relates to remote education provision, please clearly mark it as such.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it may not always be possible to adhere to our usual processes and timescales. If we have to deviate from our published policy, please be assured you will be kept fully informed as to the reason why and the timescale within which you can expect a response to your complaint.

Our policy states we may invite you into the school to meet and discuss the complaint you have raised. Please be aware that this meeting will have to take account of the relevant restrictions and social distancing guidance that is in place at that time. It may therefore be that the matter is discussed by exchange of correspondence, over the telephone or via video call as an alternative. This would be done in full consultation with you.

MISSION

At Bishop Heber High School, we provide a safe and inclusive learning environment where everyone is valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

RATIONALE

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, Governing Bodies of all maintained schools in England have been required to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

There is a difference between a concern and a complaint; taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the number that develop into formal complaints. The formal procedures will need to be invoked only when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

AIMS

We will endeavour to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and will always put the interests of our students above all else. We will give careful consideration to all complaints and we aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding.

Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions).

Our complaints policy will:

- encourage resolution of problems by **informal** means wherever possible;
- be easily **accessible** and **publicised;**
- be **simple** to understand and use;
- be **impartial and non-adversarial;**
- allow **swift** handling with established **time-limits** for action and keeping people informed of the progress;

- ensure a full and **fair** investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect **confidentiality;**
- address all the points at issue and provide an **effective** response and **appropriate** redress;
- provide **information** to the school's senior management team and governors so that services can be improved.

GUIDELINES
All complaints shall be considered whether made for example in writing, by email, in person or by telephone.

For a General Complaint:

Step 1: If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education or support that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher or tutor; most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

Step 2: Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher or tutor, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Subject Leader or Year Leader. The Subject Leader or Year Leader will consider all matters of concern very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly.

Step 3: Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the Subject Leader or Year Leader, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider all matters of concern very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly. Most complaints would normally be resolved at this stage.

Step 4: Only when an informal complaint fails to be resolved by the Headteacher should a formal complaint be made to the Governing Body. Complaints should be made using the appropriate Complaints Form (attached), stating the nature of the complaint, who has been spoken to already and the preferred outcome. The parent should send the Complaints Procedure Form to the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to Governors.

For a Complaint about the Headteacher:

Step 1: If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the behaviour, leadership or management of the Headteacher, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the Headteacher; most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way.

Step 2: Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the Headteacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Chair of the Governing Body. The Chair will consider all matters of concern very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly. Most complaints would normally be resolved at this stage.

Step 3: Only when an informal complaint fails to be resolved by the Chair should a formal complaint be made to the Governing Body. Complaints should be made using the appropriate Complaints Form (attached), stating the nature of the complaint, who has been spoken to already and the preferred outcome. The parent should send the Complaints Form to the Governing Body via the Clerk to Governors (Miss Jane Ashley via the Main School Office).

For a Complaint about a School Governor:

Any complaint made against the Chair of Governors or another member of the Governing Body should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body. Where a complaint is against the Chair of Governors or another Governor, the complaint will move straight to Step 3 of the procedure.

Governing Body Complaints Committee:

The Governing Body must consider all written complaints **within 21 school working days** of receipt.

The Chair of Governors will nominate a Governor to co-ordinate the procedure and will appoint a **Complaints Panel** consisting of **3 Governors** who are **not employees** of the School. The nominated co-ordinator will chair the complaints panel.

The co-ordinator will arrange a meeting of the complaints panel to discuss the complaint and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting so that they can explain the complaint in more detail. The school will give the complainant **at least five days' notice** of the meeting. If the complainant cannot attend the suggested date, a further date will be set. If the complainant does not attend the second date, a third and final date will be set, at which time the meeting will proceed without the complainant present.

The Headteacher will write a report addressing the complaint and ensure that the complaints panel members and the complainant receive a copy **4 days before the meeting**. (If it is a complaint about the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will write the report).

The complainant is invited to write a report addressing the issue and must ensure that the complaints panel members and the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) receives a copy **2 days before the meeting**. Other written evidence will be not be accepted at the meeting, except in exceptional circumstances.

Check List for a Panel Hearing:

The panel must take the following points into account:

- the hearing is as informal as possible;
- after introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, with the support of the Information Support and Advice Service (IAS) (Parent Partnership), or other advocate if required);
- the panel members and Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) may ask questions;
- the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) is then invited to explain the school's actions (with support of DHT, SENCo or other supporter if required);
- the panel members or complainant may ask questions;

- the complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint;
- the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint;
- the Chair of the panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within 3 working days;
- both parties leave the meeting while the panel decides on the issues.

When the panel has fully investigated the complaint, the chair of the panel, on behalf of the Governing Body, will write to the complainant confirming the outcome of the complaint and any agreed action to be taken. The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Investigating Complaints:

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint should make sure that they:

- establish **what** has happened so far, and **who** has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meet with the complainant or contact them;
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of the interview.

Matters Outside the Scope of a Complaints Procedure:

The **exceptions** listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures, will not be dealt with via the school complaints procedure:

Exception	Who to Contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) • School re-organisation proposals	Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities (LA). For school admissions, it will

Exception	Who to Contact
• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	depend on who is the admission authority (either the school or the LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.
• Exclusion of children from school	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions
• Whistleblowing	Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.
• Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures	These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.
• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about

Resolving Complaints:

At each stage in the procedure we will look for a way in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

It should be noted that an admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

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If you believe that the Governing Body has acted unreasonably, you can complain in writing to the Secretary of State for Education.

Unresolved Complaints

From 1 August 2012 complaints about maintained schools not resolved by the school that would have been considered by the Local Government Ombudsman or the LA should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Education.

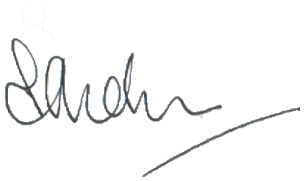
Further information can be obtained by calling the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288 or going online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus or by writing to:

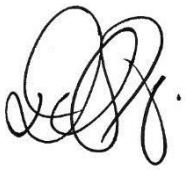
Department for Education
School Complaints Unit
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

This information is correct as at the time of the policy approval.

SCHOOL CONTACTS:

- Mr David Curry (Headteacher) c/o Bishop Heber High School
- Mrs Sue Anderson (Chair of Governing Body) c/o Bishop Heber High School
- Mrs Jaclyn Middleton-Patel (PA to Headteacher) c/o Bishop Heber High School
- Miss Jane Ashley (Clerk to Governing Body) c/o Bishop Heber High School





Signed: (Chair of Governors) **(Headteacher)**

Administration Use:	
Statutory/Non-Statutory:	Statutory
Website:	Yes
GB Committee:	REP
Document Formulated:	2007
Review:	Annually
Date Reviewed by Committee:	23rd November 2020
Reviewed Document Adopted by FGB:	7th December 2020
Next Review Date:	November 2021 *Covid-19 Statement updated February 2021 and will be removed once no longer applicable

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COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to the relevant person who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken

Your Name:	
Student's Name:	
Your Relationship with the Student:	
Address:	
Post Code:	
Daytime Telephone Number:	
Evening Telephone Number:	
Mobile Telephone Number:	

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint:

Who did you speak to and what was the response?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

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Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please given details:

Signature…… **Date……..**

OFFICIAL USE:	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
By who:	
Complaint referred to:	
Date:	

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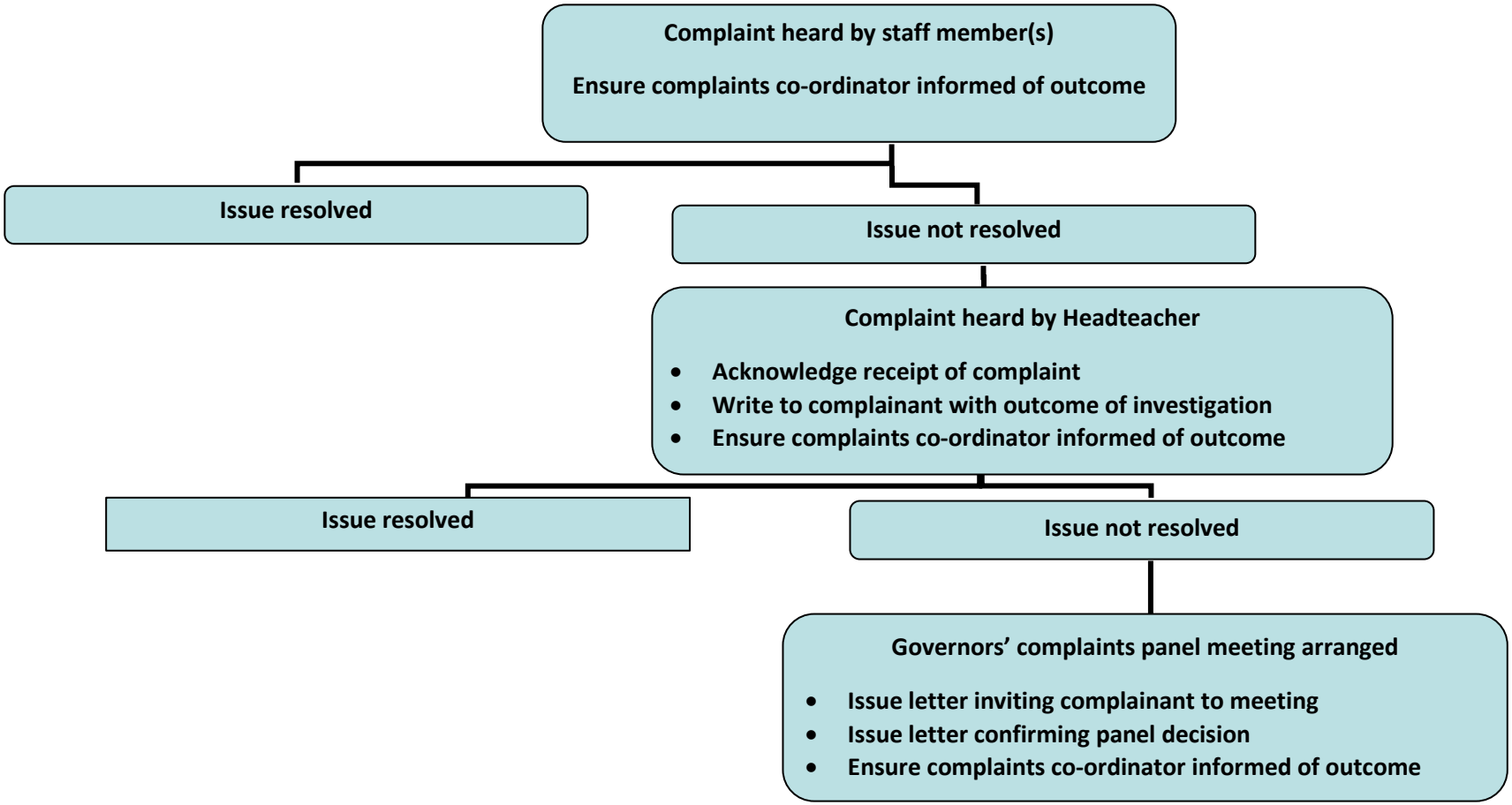
Summary of Dealing with Complaint



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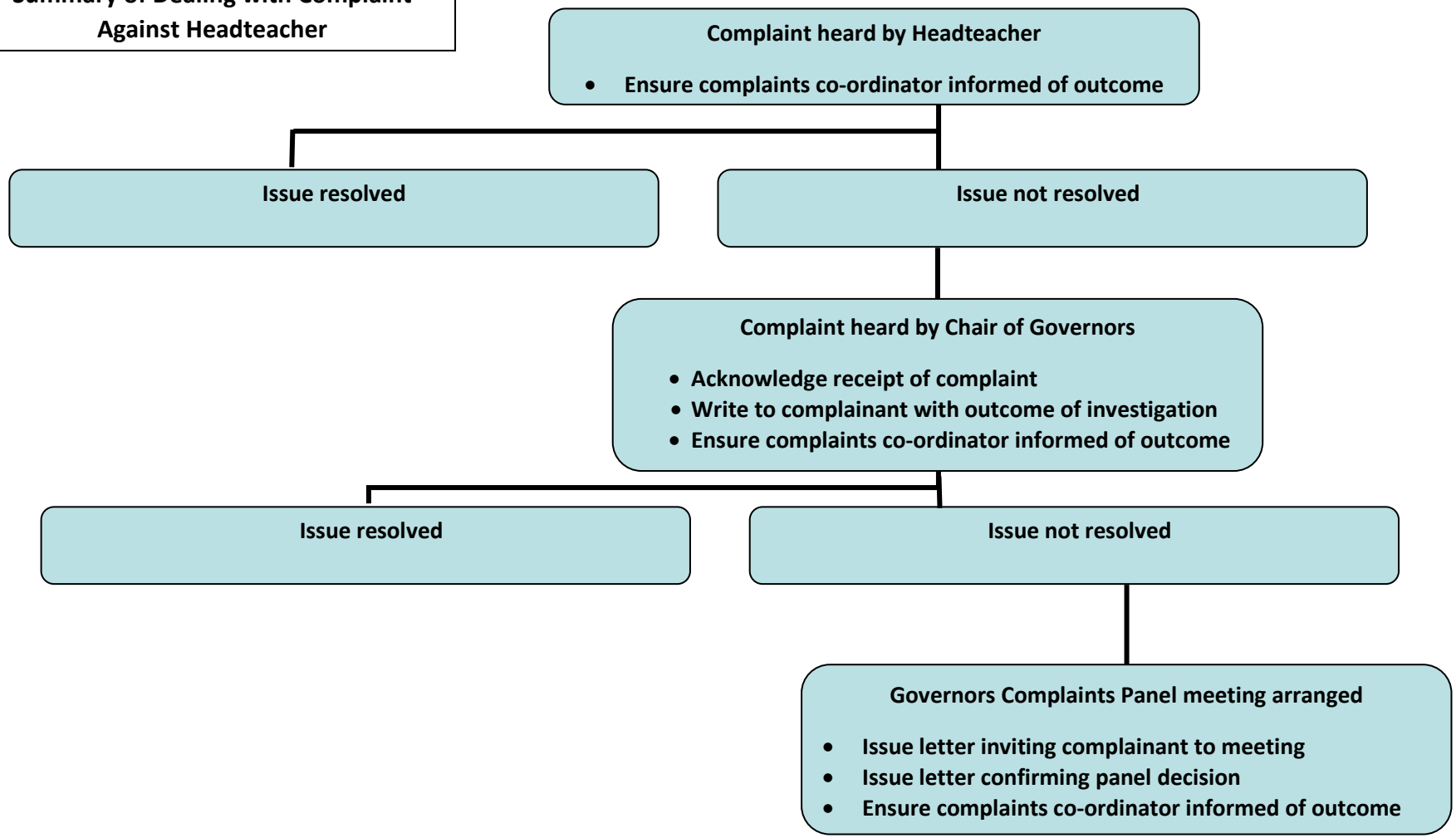
Summary of Dealing with Complaint Against Headteacher