

COMPLAINTS POLICY

V10

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1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 At Beckfoot Trust, we value family engagement and the role that we all play in supporting our children and young people to enjoy, learn and succeed. We expect all our staff, our young people and our families to commit to working together to meet our mission of 'creating remarkable schools where no child is left behind'. Our young people are more likely to succeed when adults work together in a mutually respectful partnership as outlined in the Home School Agreement.
- 1.2 The Trust takes its duty to respond to concerns and complaints seriously and every complaint will be dealt with sensitively, swiftly and professionally, with every effort to resolve matter/s raised whilst being fair and transparent.

2.0 Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 Under Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, parents/carers have a right to raise a concern or make a complaint and will be directed to this procedure.
- 2.2 This procedure covers complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by the school, except complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including the exceptions listed below. Complaints in relation to third party, e.g., lettings may need to be referred to the supplier for resolution under their own complaints procedure.

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions	Concerns about admissions are handled by the local authority. Further details and contacts can be found on Apply for a place at one of Bradford District's schools Bradford Council For sixth form admissions, contact the relevant school
Child Protection (matters likely to require investigation)	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under the child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the Children's Initial Contact Point (01274 433999) or out of hours Emergency Duty Team (01274 431010)
Data Protection	Complaints about a response from our schools should be sent to the DPO (compliance@beckfoot.org) who will acknowledge receipt of data protection complaints and will provide a response without undue delay. Complainants will be informed of their right to escalate unresolved data protection concerns to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
Exam Results	The school Exams Manager will provide details of appeal for external exam results
Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions . <i>*Complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through our Trust's complaints procedure.</i>
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under our Trust grievance procedures
Staff conduct	Where appropriate, complaints about staff conduct will be dealt with under our Trust's disciplinary procedures. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under the disciplinary procedure, but outcomes will not be shared with them.
Statutory assessment of SEND	Concerns should be raised directly with the Local Authority.
Whistleblowing	Our Trust has a whistleblowing procedure for all staff, including temporary staff, contractors and volunteers. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistle-blowers in education who do not want to raise matters

	direct with their employer. Advice on how referrals can be made is available here Blowing the whistle to the Department for Education - GOV.UK
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- 2.3 Complaints from other persons are not covered by the same regulations however will also be handled sensitively, swiftly and professionally in accordance with Section 4.10 of this policy.
- 2.4 It is recognised that on occasion, a child/young person may wish to complain, and their views will be given equal consideration to those of adults. However, their age and ability to understand the process they are engaging in will be taken into consideration when dealing with the complaint, and the welfare of the child/young person will be paramount throughout. If the complaint of a child/young person progresses to Stage 4, extra care will be taken, with careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings throughout the hearing, to ensure they do not feel intimidated. The parents/carers will have the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing they feel the child/young person should attend, if any, but it may be that the panel feel it is not in the child/young person's best interests to be present during all or part of the hearing.
- 2.5 If other public bodies are investigating aspects of a complaint, for example the Police, Local Authority (LA) Safeguarding Teams or Tribunal Officers, this may impact on the Trust's ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, the complainant will be informed of a proposed new timescale.
- 2.6 If a complainant commences legal action against our Trust in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

3.0 Overarching Principles

3.1 The Difference Between a Concern and a Complaint

- 3.1.1 A concern is defined as ***'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'***.
- 3.1.2 A complaint is defined as ***'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'***.
- 3.1.3 A complainant will receive a more effective response to their complaint if they:
- Are specific about their concern/s and expected resolution
 - Communicate as early as possible and allow opportunity for a response in line with the procedure
 - Work in partnership to resolve the issue, responding promptly to requests for information, meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
 - Ask for assistance as needed
 - Treat all those involved in the complaint with respect and courtesy
 - Use social media responsibly, not as a platform to air concerns or fuel campaigns against members of the school community.

3.2 Resolving Complaints

3.2.1 At each stage in the procedure, our aim is always 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 policies and procedures in light of the complaint
- an apology.

3.2.2 It is in everyone's interest that concerns, and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. However, it is understood that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, we will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure. We expect all complainants to make reasonable attempts to seek informal resolution before escalating a complaint.

3.2.3 We recognise that raising concerns or complaints can be difficult, emotional, and stressful for parents/carers. We expect our staff to always be respectful and courteous and expect parents/carers to treat staff with the same respect and courtesy. We will not accept abusive and threatening behaviour towards our staff and where this happens, we may, put restrictions in place to protect the safety and welfare of pupils and staff (See Section 4.7.4)

3.2.4 If a complainant has difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, these views will be respected. In these cases, you will be referred 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.

3.2.5 Complainants should not approach individual LSC members or Trustees to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may prevent them from considering at a later stage.

3.3 Anonymous Complaints

3.3.1 We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) / Chief Executive Officer (CEO), will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation into issues raised.

3.4 Timescales

3.4.1 The complaint must be raised within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. The DCEO will consider whether exceptional circumstances apply for consideration outside of this timeframe.

- 3.4.2 Complaints need to be considered, and resolved, as quickly and efficiently as possible using time limits published in this procedure. However, where further investigations are necessary, or the complaint is complex, new time limits can be set and the complainant sent details of the new deadline and an explanation for the delay.

3.5 Complaints Received Outside of Term Time

- 3.5.1 Complaints made outside of term time will be considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday or closure period. The reference 'school days' in this policy excludes weekends, school holidays and periods of partial or total school closure.

3.6 Withdrawal of a Complaint

- 3.6.1 If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, this should be done in writing.

3.7 Records and Monitoring

- 3.7.1 All complaints will be recorded, including informal complaints. The Headteacher is responsible ensuring that staff record all complaints and their outcomes in schools for stage 1 and 2 complaints. The Trust Operations Support Manager is responsible for recording Stage 3 and 4 or Trust complaints and will oversee a consistent logging process for our schools.
- 3.7.2 Records relating to individual complaints are confidential, except where:
- access is requested by the Secretary of State
 - disclosure is required during a school inspection
 - an individual has a legal right to access their own personal data within such documentation; or
 - under other legal authority.
- 3.7.3 The Local School Committee (LSC) and Trust Board will monitor the level and the subject matter of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis through the mechanism of key performance indicator reporting.
- 3.7.4 The complaints procedure is available in hard copy from the school office on each site. It will also be published on school websites and the Trust website.

4.0 Responsibilities and Arrangements

4.1 How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint

- 4.1.1 A concern can be raised in person, by email or by telephone to the appropriate person which may include the Class Teacher, Head of Subject, Tutor or Head of Year in school. Published key contact details are available on the school / Trust website. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant if they have appropriate consent to do so.
- 4.1.2 Complaints should be made in writing and marked as Private and Confidential and contain details about the nature of the complaint, how it has been dealt with so far, potential witnesses, dates and times of event, copies of relevant documents along with a statement of actions that you would like us to take to resolve your complaint. For ease, an optional template complaint form is included at the

end of this procedure (Appendix 2). Help can be provided by the Complaints Co-ordinator to complete the form, or you can also ask a third-party organisation, for example, Citizens Advice to help you.

4.1.3 In accordance with equality law, reasonable adjustments will be considered, 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.

4.1.4 Complaints should be made in the first instance, to the individual below via the contact provided.

Complaint involving / about	Send FAO	Contact
School matter / school staff	Headteacher	See school website for key contacts
Headteacher	Executive Headteacher	Joanne Whittleston JWhittleston01@beckfoottrust.org
LSC Committee Member	DCEO	
LSC Chair and Vice Chair or majority /entire LSC	CEO	
Trust matter / central staff	DCEO	
Executive Headteacher / DCEO	CEO	
CEO / Trustee	Chair of Trust	
Chair and Vice Chair or majority / entire Board	CEO	

4.1.5 The Deputy Chief Executive Officer has responsibility for ensuring that this procedure is implemented in Trust schools. Headteachers may refer complaints received to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer for consideration because they consider the matter is one of such a nature that it should be investigated independently of the school. Likewise, complaints may be retrieved and dealt with by the central team of the Trust for the same reason. Where a complaint is made directly to the central team of the Trust, it will be logged by the Trust Operations Support Manager and forwarded to the appropriate person /school to follow the stages outlined in the procedure.

4.2 Stage 1 – Informal Complaints

4.2.1 Concerns should be raised with the appropriate person which may include the Class Teacher, Head of Subject, Tutor, or Head of Year. We value informal discussion and encourage parents/carers to approach staff with any concerns they may have to resolve all issues with open dialogue.

4.2.2 It is hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved through discussion. If, through day-to-day discussions with staff, the concern cannot be resolved, the complainant should be informed that the complaint will now need to be dealt with informally, this will be acknowledged in 3 school days and a meeting offered with an appropriate senior member of staff.

4.2.3 At the conclusion, a written response will be provided within 10 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

4.2.4 If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint, within 10 school days of receipt of the informal written response.

4.3 Stage 2 – Formal Complaints

4.3.1 All complaints should follow the stage process outlined in this procedure. For a complaint to be considered at stage 2, an informal response at stage 1 should have been completed.

- 4.3.2 The Complaints Coordinator 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 after notifying the Headteacher or Central Senior Officer responsible for Stage 2 (see table below) who will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, what remains unresolved and explore possible resolutions. It should be considered whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this, or whether a telephone conversation is sufficient before an investigation (if required) commences.

Complaint involving / about	Stage 2 Owner
School matter / school staff	Headteacher (investigation, if required, may be delegated to senior member*)
Headteacher	Executive Headteacher
LSC Committee Member	DCEO or nominated senior member of staff
LSC Chair and Vice Chair Majority / entire LSC	CEO or nominated senior member of staff
Trust matter / central staff	DCEO or nominated senior member of staff
Executive Headteacher / DCEO	CEO or nominated senior member of staff
CEO / Trustee	Chair of Trust
Board Chair and Vice Chair Majority / entire Board	CEO

**An investigation can be delegated to a senior leader but not the decision to be taken.*

- 4.3.3 During any investigation, the investigator will be impartial and non-adversarial in their duties which include:
- Gathering evidence in connection with the issues raised
 - If necessary, interviewing thoroughly those involved in the matter and/or those complained about, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil will usually be interviewed, normally with their parent/carer present. If this would seriously delay the investigation of a serious urgent complaint or if the pupil states they would prefer their parent/carer is not involved, another member of staff who the pupil feels comfortable with will be present
 - Ensuring a written record is taken of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.
- 4.3.4 At the conclusion of the investigation, a face-to-face meeting will be held with the complainant, followed by written correspondence within 15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If this deadline cannot be met, the complainant will be provided with an update and revised response date (See 3.4.2).
- 4.3.5 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 taken/will be taken to resolve the complaint. The complainant will be advised how to escalate their complaint to Stage 3 of this procedure, should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.

4.4 Stage 3 – Formal Complaints (Assessment)

- 4.4.1 If the complaint is not resolved through Stages 1 and 2, either the school or the complainant can ask for additional assessment of the complaint by a member of senior staff from the Central Team. This may also be a member of senior staff from a different school in the Trust to support the Central Team.

It will not be the same person who has had any prior involvement or will have future involvement with the complaint.

- 4.4.2 This is another opportunity to resolve the complaint without the need for a formal panel hearing.
- 4.4.3 The Central Team representative will endeavour to provide a written response within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint. If this deadline cannot be met, the complainant will be provided with an update and revised response date (See 3.4.2)

We may engage an external investigator to carry out an investigation into matters raised where needed, especially for complex matters.

4.5 Stage 4 – Panel Hearing

- 4.5.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 3 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 4. Stage 4 will involve the Trust representative from stage 3 to present findings and attempts to resolve to the panel. This is the final stage of the Trust complaints procedure.
- 4.5.2 A request to escalate to Stage 4 must be made to the Trust Operations Support Manager within 10 school days of receipt of a Stage 3 response. This can be emailed to JWhittleston01@beckfoottrust.org or sent by post to Beckfoot Trust, Wagon Lane, Bingley, BD16 1EE, marking it *Private and Confidential*, and for the attention of the Trust Operations Support Manager.
- 4.5.3 Requests to progress to Stage 4 received outside of this timeframe will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.
- 4.5.4 The Trust Operations Support Manager 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. The complainant will also be asked to provide copies of any further written material they wish to submit, in relation to matters raised in the complaint within 5 school days of the date of the acknowledgement letter.
- 4.5.5 The Clerk to the Trust Board will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the panel hearing. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 4 request. If this is not possible, they will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.
- 4.5.6 A panel will be convened taking into account the matter complained about as follows:

Complaint involving / about	Stage 4 Hearing (if required)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School matter / staff• Headteacher / Executive Headteacher• LSC Governor	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 school (this may be a LSC member at another school in the Trust)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chair and Vice Chair LSC• Majority / Entire LSC• Trust matter / staff• DCEO / CEO / Trustee	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 Trust (for example from another Trust)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of Trust Board 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair and Vice Chair Board • Majority / Entire Board 	Three people who are completely independent of the Trust and not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint

- 4.5.7 At least 10 school days before the panel hearing, the Clerk to the Trust Board will confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
- 4.5.8 Any written material will be circulated by email to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the panel hearing. 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.
- 4.5.9 If a complainant rejects the offer of two arranged dates, without good reason, a decision will be taken by the Trust Operations Support Manager in consultation with the Clerk on when to hold the hearing. It will proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.
- 4.5.10 A complainant may bring someone along to the panel hearing to provide support, not represent. This can be a relative, friend or interpreter and must be notified in advance. The panel hearing is an internal proceeding, it is not a legal proceeding and therefore legal representation is not permitted. If a complainant is accompanied by a legally qualified person, that person will not be permitted to act as an advocate or to address the hearing unless invited to do so by the Chair of the Panel.
- 4.5.11 There may be occasions when representation is appropriate, and this must be approved in advance. For example, a school employee called as a witness may wish to be supported by union representation.
- 4.5.12 The panel shall be under no obligation to hear evidence at the panel hearing from witnesses about the matter but may do so and /or may take written statements into account. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- 4.5.13 The panel will not review any new complaints raised at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.
- 4.5.14 The panel hearing 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 recordings of meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken and recordings will be managed and retained by the Trust.
- 4.5.15 The panel will consider the complaint, and all the evidence presented. The panel can decide to uphold the complaint in whole or in part or not uphold.
- 4.5.16 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 processes or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

4.5.17 The Clerk to the Trust Board will provide the complainant and the school with a full explanation of the Panel decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days of the panel hearing. The response will detail the decision of the committee and any reasons underpinning that decision. This may include actions the Trust will take to resolve the complaint. The letter will include details of how to contact the Department for Education (DfE) if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled.

4.5.18 The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the premises by the Trustees and the Headteacher.

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

4.6 Complaints about the Trust, Chief Executive Officer or Trustee

4.6.1 If a complainant wishes to complain directly about the Trust, CEO or a Trustee, the complaint should be sent to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer to be investigated.

4.6.2 The Deputy Chief Executive Officer (or their nominated senior officer) will write to the complainant acknowledging the complaint within 3 school days of the date that the written request was received. The acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint will be addressed using the appropriate stage in this procedure and will confirm the date for providing a response to the complainant.

4.6.3 Dependent on the nature of the complaint, the DCEO or the CEO (as Accounting Officer) may have a statutory duty to report the complaint to external agencies.

Note: Where the Chair of the Trust Board has investigated the complaint, they will write the outcome letter to the complainant and provide a copy to the Chief Executive Officer.

4.7 Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Complaints

4.7.1 This procedure aims to resolve all complaints. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, a senior representative of the Trust is able, under this procedure, to inform them in writing that the Trust has taken every reasonable step to address the complaint and given a clear statement of the position and the complainant options therefore the procedure has been exhausted and Trust will not be responding to any further correspondence in relation to this particular matter. The complainant will be signposted to the DfE.

4.7.2 This may also be the case for a complaint (not complainant) that is considered 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' in the following circumstances:

- complaints which are obsessive, unreasonably persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- insistence upon pursuing complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason

- insistence upon pursuing complaints in an unreasonable manner
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- refusal to articulate a complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refusal to co-operate with the complaints investigation process but still asking for a resolution
- refusal to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insistence on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introducing trivial or irrelevant information which is expected to be taken into account and commented on
- raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insisting they are fully answered, often immediately and within different timescales
- making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeking to have them replaced
- changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- the same complaint is made repeatedly, with minor difference after a complaints process has been completed and insisting that the minor difference makes a new complaint
- seeking an unrealistic outcome, such as the inappropriate dismissal of staff
- making 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
- knowingly providing falsified information
- publishing unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

4.7.3 Complainants may have strong grievances but are expected to behave in a respectful and courteous manner towards staff whilst their complaint is being resolved.

4.7.4 Where a complainant's behaviour or language towards staff is aggressive, abusive, offensive, discriminatory, threatening or insulting personal comments or threats are made we may:

- Inform the complainant that we consider their complaint to be vexatious or the manner in which they are pursuing their complaint to be unreasonable and why, asking them to desist
- Restrict access to the school, requesting contact in a particular form or with named persons and/or restricting calls to specified days / times
- Ban from attending the premises if all requests to behave reasonably have been ignored or behaviour is so extreme, it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff or pupils. In these instances, we may also report the matter to police

4.7.5 Complainants will be given the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full unless there is clear evidence that the complaint is unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious.

4.8 Complaint Campaigns

4.8.1 For the purpose of this procedure, a complaint campaign is defined as a complaint from three or more separate individuals (whether or not connected with a school of the Trust) which are all based on the same subject.

4.8.2 Depending on the subject in question, we may deviate from this procedure and instead:

- send a template response to all complainants and/or
- publish a single response on the school or Trust's website (as applicable).

4.9 Next Steps

- 4.9.1 If the complainant believes the 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 DfE after they have completed Stage 4.
- 4.9.2 The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the Trust. They will consider whether the 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. Further information for complainants can be found on the webpage below.
- 4.9.3 The complainant can refer their complaint to the DfE online using the enquiry form at: [How DfE handles complaints about academies - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-complain-about-a-school), or by writing to:
- Department for Education
School complaints compliance unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

4.10 Complaints from Other Persons

- 4.10.1 The stages set out above in sections 4.2-4.5 apply only to complaints made by parents or carers of current registered pupils in our Trust. We will respond to concerns and complaints from other persons as follows:
- 4.10.2 Stage 1 – a concern regarding a school or its operations may be made to any member of staff who will attempt to resolve the matter immediately or may, if appropriate, refer the matter to a member of the senior leadership team. It is expected that concerns will be responded to verbally within 10 school days. If a longer response period is required, the complainant will be informed.
- 4.10.3 Stage 2 – where a concern is not resolved at stage 1, the complainant should put this in writing for the attention of the Headteacher at the relevant school (contact details can be found on the school website). The Headteacher may delegate the task of investigation if deemed necessary to an appropriate member of staff and a formal response from the Headteacher will usually be provided within 15 school days from receipt. If a longer response period is required to allow an investigation, the complainant will be informed.
- 4.10.4 Concerns or complaints regarding the Headteacher or a member of the central team should be referred to Joanne Whittleston (contact email JWhittleston01@beckfoottrust.org) who will arrange for the stages above to be considered by an appropriate person.

5.0 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed at annually. The policy will be approved by the Trust Board.

Appendix 1: Complaints Procedure Summary

Concerns	Complainant brings concern to attention of member of school staff
	Issue resolved in discussion immediately or complainant informed they should proceed to a Stage 1 complaint if resolution has not been possible
Stage 1 Informal Complaint Headteacher or senior member of staff	Complainant sends written complaint or verbally raises complaint
	Complainant acknowledged within 3 school days
	Meeting within 10 school days from receipt of complaint along with an informal written outcome
Stage 2 Formal complaint Headteacher	Complainant sends written complaint outlining nature of complaint and what remains unresolved / expected resolution within 10 school days
	Complaint acknowledged within 3 school days with initial response and next steps
	(If required) Investigating Officer appointed and briefed on investigation required with report provided for Headteacher
	Meeting within 15 school days from receipt of complaint along with a formal written outcome
Stage 3 Additional Assessment Central Team	Complainant sends written complaint outlining what remains unresolved / expected resolution within 10 school days
	Additional central review and response within 15 school days
Stage 4 Panel Hearing Complaints Panel	Complainant requests within 10 school days of receiving outcome of Stage 3
	Request acknowledged within 3 school days
	Hearing to take place within 20 school days
	Complainant notified of arrangements within 10 school days before the hearing
	Evidence from Trust representative and complainant to be circulated within 5 school days before the hearing
	Complaint Panel outcome letter sent within 10 school days after the hearing

Appendix 2: Complaint Form

Please complete this form with details requested and return to the school.

Your name:	Relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Pupil's name:	
School name:	
Address:	Contact telephone number:
Postcode:	Email address:
Please give details of your complaint (if you have more than one, please number them) including dates and times of events, potential witnesses, attached documents	

<p>What have you done to resolve your complaint to date in line with stage 1 of the complaints procedure (who did you speak to and what was the response?)</p>	
<p>What would you like as an outcome?</p>	
<p>Signature:</p>	<p>Date:</p>
<p>Print name:</p>	
<p>Office Use</p> <p>Date Received: Date Acknowledged: Responsible Member of Staff:</p>	

Appendix 3: Procedure for a Panel Hearing

The hearing will be conducted in an informal manner and the Chair will ensure all parties are put at ease.

Parties usually present for a hearing are the complainant, Trust representative involved at stage 3 to present findings and attempts to resolve, panel members and Clerk.

The Clerk will ensure that sufficient notes are taken to record an accurate reflection of the points considered and decisions taken, or actions agreed.

The complainant and Trust representative will enter the hearing together and the Chair will proceed through the following stages allowing each person to speak in full and ensuring that everyone is treated with respect and courtesy, providing direction to ensure that key findings of fact are made and only the issues raised in the complaint are considered.

A break in the hearing can be called if it is felt appropriate for the welfare of those present.

- Welcome and introductions to all parties
- Explain the format for the hearing, remit of the panel and ensure all present are prepared and clear.
- The complainant will be invited to explain their complaint and refer to / be followed by any agreed witnesses to the panel.
- The Headteacher / Trust Officer may ask for clarification or question the complainant and the witnesses if present at this stage.
- Panel members and the Trust representative are invited to ask questions of the complainant.
- The Trust representative will be invited to explain their actions, attempts to resolve and refer to / be followed by any witnesses if present.
- The complainant may question the Trust representative and any witnesses at this stage.
- Panel members are invited to ask questions of the Trust Representative.
- The complainant is invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Trust Representative is then invited to sum up the actions and response to the complaint.

The Chair informs both parties regarding the timescale and format for a response. Both parties leave the hearing at the same time whilst the panel consider the issues and decides on key findings and a response. The Clerk will stay to assist the Panel with decision making.

The Complaints Committee reserves the right to modify the above procedure, for example if the complainant decides not to attend and sends written submission ahead of the hearing or a child is involved and it is not in their best interests to attend in full.