



Maritime
Academy
Trust

Complaints Policy & Procedure

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Complaints Policy & Procedure

1. Introduction and Scope

1.1 All Academies are required to have

- (i) complaints procedures which meet minimum requirements under the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 (the **Regulations**) and
- (ii) to make the procedure available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils. In the event of any variance between this Policy and the Regulations, the Regulations will apply.

1.2 The Maritime Academy Trust (the **Trust**) Complaints Policy (the **Policy**) is based on the principle that concerns expressed by a pupil, parent, carer, or any other individual or organisation should be resolved as quickly as possible without the need to escalate to the formal stages of the procedure. Where resolution has not been achieved, and the person raising the concern wishes to take the matter further, the formal procedure for dealing with complaints will be followed. Complaints about or relating to a pupil should be directed to the relevant member of the Academy's staff. If the complainant is not happy with the manner in which the complaint was handled, then they may put their complaint in writing and ask for it to be dealt with formally.

1.3 This Policy does not cover every type of complaint. The issues noted below have their own, separate procedures.

- (a) content of a statutory statement of Special Educational Needs;
- (b) pupil exclusions¹
- (c) the National Curriculum and related matters, including religious education;
- (d) child protection;
- (e) allegations management (safeguarding concerns about staff that need to be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer);

- (f) matters that are the responsibility of the Local Authority, such as student admissions;
- (g) complaints made by members of staff should be dealt with under separate grievance procedures applicable to employees.

¹¹ Statutory Exclusions Guidance is covered under https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/641418/20170831_Exclusion_Stat_guidance_Web_version.pdf.

1.4 This policy does not affect rights and responsibilities under other processes, legal or otherwise.

2. Aims

2.1 This Policy sets out the way in which complaints are managed. The Policy promotes a consistent, fair and transparent approach to dealing with complaints.

3. Principles

3.1 This Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- (a) complaints will be considered and resolved as quickly and as efficiently as possible
- (b) complaints will be dealt with by the member of staff best suited to deal with the matter
- (c) if the complaint is about an individual member of staff, they will have the right to know the substance and source of any allegation made against them
- (d) complaints will be dealt with in line with relevant national legislation and statutory obligations
- (e) complaints will be dealt with having due regard for confidentiality, the security of any records made and the Trust Data Protection Policy

- (f) for complaints against the Trust head office, this Policy will apply but substituting the terms “Headteacher” with “CEO” and “Local Academy Council” with “Trust Board”.

4. Implementation

4.1 The Trust has a three-stage process for dealing with complaints. This policy must be followed and the process steps adhered to. Please contact the Academy in the first instance before initiating the formal complaints process. This is important as issues are most often resolved early on just by asking the Academy for clarification around any areas of concern and any potential misunderstandings are easily cleared up.

Stage 1	Complaint heard by a member of staff (informal).
Stage 2	Complaint heard by the Headteacher (complaint which is put in writing).
Stage 3	Complaint heard by the Local Academy Council (LAC) (complaint appeal panel).

4.2 Complaints should be raised within three weeks of either:

- (a) the incident to which the complaint relates (or, where the complaint relates to a series of incidents or events, within three weeks of the latest incident or event); or
- (b) when a parent or carer can reasonably be expected to have known and/or knew about the incident.

Investigating a Complaint

4.3 The person investigating a complaint will comply with the following principles:

- (a) read this Policy to familiarise themselves with the procedure;
- (b) be aware of the time limits that apply to the relevant stages and ensure that they comply with them;

- (c) establish the nature of the complaint and what issues remain unresolved;
- (d) limit the scope of their investigation to the subject matter of the complaint, but may accept into scope reasonable new issues raised by the complainant during the investigation where they are linked or relevant to the original complaint and/or where it appears, to the investigator (or for Stage 3, the complaint appeal panel), that doing so would help facilitate an overall resolution;
- (e) establish what the complainant says has happened, who has been involved, and what the complainant feels would put things right;
- (f) take a proportionate approach in deciding what steps are required in conducting the investigation, including who to interview, balancing the need to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible with the need to preserve the privacy of those involved and minimise unnecessary distress to all parties;
- (g) if necessary, interview those involved in the matter, for example the complainant, pupils, members of staff and those complained about;
- (h) allow pupils and those complained about to be accompanied during interviews, if they wish;
- (i) keep a written record of the interview, and ask the interviewee to sign and date it;
- (j) establish relevant facts, on a balance of probabilities, based on evidence not speculation, and keep a written record of these;
- (k) provide an effective response to the complaint, addressing all issues raised (including, where relevant, complaints about the way in which the complaint has been dealt with in earlier stages);
- (l) ensure that the response to the complaint includes the appropriate redress, where necessary, while recognising that confidentiality and data protection rules may limit the extent of disclosure in some circumstances (e.g. potential employee disciplinary processes which must remain confidential);

- (m) report the complaint and the outcome of the complaint to the Academy's Senior Leadership Team, LAC and the Trust so that services can be improved; and
- (n) conduct the investigation in an impartial, objective, fair, proportionate and timely manner, keeping in mind the privacy of the parties involved.

Resolving a Complaint

4.4 It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The way in which the complaint is dealt with after the complainant first raises the matter can be crucial in determining whether the matter will escalate. To that end, members of staff will be periodically made aware of the procedure in this Policy, so they will know what to do when a concern is raised with them.

4.5 At each stage of the complaints procedure, the investigator will give due regard to the seriousness of the complaint and how it may be resolved. In order to bring the complaint to a resolution, it may be appropriate for the investigator to recommend:

- (a) an explanation;
- (b) an apology;
- (c) assurance that steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence of events which led to the complaint;
- (d) assurance that the Academy and/or the Trust will undertake a review of its policies and procedures in light of the complaint.

None of the above will constitute an admission of negligence or an acceptance of liability on behalf of the Academy or the Trust.

Notifying the Outcome of a Complaint

4.6 Once all of the facts have been established, the investigator will write to the complainant setting out:

- (a) all of the issues in dispute;

- (b) the results of the investigation;
- (c) the decision made,
- (d) the reasons for the decision; and
- (e) details of any action to be taken to resolve matters or prevent a reoccurrence.

Alternatively, the investigator may wish to meet with the complainant to discuss:

- (a) the outcome of the investigation;
- (b) the decision made;
- (c) the reasons for the decision; and
- (d) any action to be taken directly, in which case a full written record will be made of the meeting, which the complainant will be asked to sign and date.

Strictly confidential procedures such as staff disciplinary investigations or sanctions **must not** be referred to.

4.7 The outcome of all complaints, whether dealt with informally, formally or proceed to a panel hearing, will be recorded centrally by the Academy. This written record will also contain action taken by the academy as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Examples of outcomes include but are not limited to:

- (a) There was insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld
- (b) The evidence did not substantiate the concern, so the complaint cannot be upheld
- (c) The complaint was substantiated in part or in full. A brief description should be given of the remedial action being taken by the Academy as

a consequence of the complaint. Details of the investigation of any disciplinary sanctions to be taken against a member of staff cannot be disclosed

- (d) The matter has been fully investigated and, as a consequence, further confidential procedures are being pursued. Strictly confidential procedures such as staff disciplinary investigations and sanctions must not be referred to.

Time Limits

4.8 This Policy sets out the time limits for each stage of the complaints procedure. Those dealing with complaints will keep to these time limits. However, where a complaint is of a particularly complex nature, or further investigations are required to ascertain certain facts, new time limits can be set. The complainant will, within the time limit specified in this Policy, be sent the details of any changes to the time limits with an explanation for the delay and confirmation of the revised date.

Late Complaints

4.9 Where a complaint is raised outside of the parameters outlined in paragraph 4.2 above, the Academy may refuse to investigate the complaint if it appears reasonable and fair to do so, having regard to the circumstances surrounding the complaint.

4.10 Where the Academy decides that a late raised complaint will not be investigated the Academy will write to the complainant notifying them of the decision within **5 school days** of the complaint being raised.

4.11 If the complainant is unhappy with the decision not to investigate a late raised complaint, the complainant may write to the Chair of the LAC at the Academy asking for the decision to be reviewed. The Chair will be provided with all documentation relating to the complaint, including the letter from the Academy to the complainant, and will review the decision made. The Chair will write to the complainant with the outcome of the review within **10 school days** of the date that the letter from the complainant seeking the review was received. The Chair shall provide the Academy with a copy of their letter.

4.12 If the Chair of the LAC quashes the Academy's decision not to investigate the complaint, it will be referred to the Academy to be dealt with under the procedure in this Policy in the usual way.

4.13 If the Chair of the LAC upholds the decision not to investigate the complaint, the complainant may refer the complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency using the procedure stated in this Policy (see below paragraphs 4.47 to 4.50).

4.14 In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the LAC can delegate the responsibility for the review to their Vice Chair.

Persistent Complaints

4.15 There may be occasions when, despite exhausting the procedure in this Policy, a complainant:

- (a) persists in making substantially the same complaint to the Academy;
or
- (b) persists in making repeated complaints against the same individual or group of individuals with the intention to harass or subdue that individual or those individuals; or
- (c) raises complaints about matters which do not affect them or which are unmeritorious; or
- (d) raises a complaint a matter for which the continued use of the Academy's resources to progress through all the stages of the policy would be disproportionate; or
- (e) persists in using abusive, offensive, threatening or other forms of unacceptable language or behaviours.

In all of these cases, the Academy reserves the right to regard the complaint as falling into the scope of the Trust's Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy. In such circumstances, the Academy can refuse to investigate it under this Policy if it appears reasonable and fair to do so, having regard to all the circumstances¹ surrounding the complaint. An Academy should consult the Trust before using the Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy.

Anonymous Complaints

The Academy and the wider Trust have a duty of care towards staff as well as towards pupils and their parents/carers; the Academy may therefore factor into its consideration of the 'circumstances' the impact that persistent, repeated, abusive, offensive, threatening, or other such complaints may have on staff members and their wellbeing. It is worth noting that the Department for Education have an equivalent policy, available at www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/489056/Best_Practice_Advice_for_School_Complaints_2016.pdf

4.16 The Academy will not investigate anonymous complaints under the Policy. Anonymous complaints will be referred to the Headteacher to decide what, if any, action should be taken. In the event the anonymous complaint is in regards to the Headteacher, it will be referred to the Chair of the LAC who will decide what, if any, action should be taken.

Stage 1: Complaint heard by a member of staff (informal)

4.17 The Trust aims to resolve a complaint at the earliest possible opportunity by way of a discussion with the appropriate member of staff. The class teacher and other members of staff can deal with many concerns to the satisfaction of the complainant, without needing to deal with it formally. The Academy values informal meetings and telephone discussions as a way of improving its procedures and relations with parents/carers.

Where the complainant indicates that he or she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff, the matter will be referred to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may, if they feel it necessary, refer the complaint to another member of staff for investigation. Only if the complaint cannot be resolved at that informal stage will it be escalated to Stage 2 of this Policy.

Stage 2: Complaint heard by the Headteacher (or Chair/Vice Chair of LAC) (formal)

4.18 If the complainant thinks that their complaint has not been resolved using Stage 1 above, they can take their complaint to Stage 2. Complaints must be submitted in writing within **10 school days** of the informal meeting/telephone call held pursuant to paragraph 4.17 above. During Stage 2 the Headteacher will deal with the complaint.

4.19 Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher or a Local Councillor, the complaint will be referred to the Chair of the LAC (subject to paragraph 4.22 below) who will investigate under Stage 2 of this Policy. Where the complaint includes the Chair of the LAC, their Vice Chair will investigate the complaint instead (subject to paragraph 4.22 below).

4.20 Where the complaint is made to a Local Academy Councillor the Councillor must refer the complaint to the Headteacher/Chair/Vice Chair as appropriate. Local Councillors should not act outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages.

4.21 The Headteacher (or Chair/Vice Chair) will:

- (a) Write to the complainant acknowledging the complaint within **5 school days** of receiving the written complaint. The acknowledgment will confirm the complaint is being investigated under Stage 2 of the Policy and the date for providing a response to the complaint.
- (b) Respond to the complaint and confirm the outcome of their investigation in writing (by letter or email) within **10 school days** of receiving the written complaint.
- (c) If the time limit in paragraph (b) cannot be met, the Headteacher will write to the complainant within **10 school days** of the written complaint being received, explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised date.

The response from the Headteacher (or Chair/Vice Chair) to a complaint will address each of the points listed in paragraph 4.6 above. Any response must state that if the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation, they should write to the LAC within **10 school days** of receiving the outcome asking for the complaint to be investigated under Stage 3 of the Policy. This request should include full details of the complaint and the reason why they remain dissatisfied with previous attempts to resolve it. If no further communication is received from the complainant **within 10 school days**, the complaint will be deemed to have been resolved.

4.22 Where an Academy has a Transition Board (**TB**) as part of the Trust governance model (or where the established LAC is carrying Councillor vacancies), this Policy applies as if to an established LAC, and that TB or LAC should consider if it has the capacity and capability required to act in line with this policy. If not, other arrangements can and should be made, liaising

with the Trust to involve, for example, Councillors from other academies within the Trust.

Stage 3: Complaint heard by the LAC Complaint Appeal Panel

4.23 Upon receipt of the complaint requesting a panel hearing under Stage 2, the Chair of the LAC may, at his or her absolute discretion, propose that they or the Vice Chair have a meeting with the complainant to

- (i) review the process/outcomes to date and
- (ii) discuss how best to achieve a resolution without the need for a full panel hearing.

Otherwise the clerk to the LAC will write to the complainant within **5 school days** of receiving a letter under paragraph 4.22, acknowledging the request for the complaint to be heard before a complaint appeal panel (**CAP**). The letter will inform the complainant that:

- (a) the CAP hearing will take place within **25 school days** of the receipt of the complainant's letter;
- (b) arrangements to appoint and convene the CAP will be made by the clerk to the LAC;
- (c) the Clerk to the LAC will be the complainant's sole point of contact; (d) invite the complainant to attend the CAP.

The complainant will be informed of the time, date and venue for the CAP in accordance with paragraph 4.31 below.

4.24 The Clerk to the LAC will liaise with the Academy to make arrangements for the CAP to be appointed. The CAP will consist of three members - none of the three members of the CAP will have been involved in the events which led to the complaint, have been involved in dealing with the complaint in the previous stages, or have any detailed prior knowledge of the complaint.

4.25 One of the LAC will be appointed as the Chair of the CAP. This does not have to be the Chair of the LAC.

4.26 The CAP will include at least one member who is independent of the management of the Academy. The Chair will appoint an independent individual to fulfil the role. The independent panel member will not be a Trustee, a Local Councillor of the Academy, or an employee of the Trust/Academy. When appointing the independent panel member, the Trust and the Academy will bear in mind the non-statutory advice of the Department for Education, which states:

“Whilst we do not wish to be prescriptive about who schools should appoint as an independent person our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the police force might be considered by schools. Schools will of course have their own views.”

For the avoidance of doubt, a Local Councillor of another Trust Academy may be the independent panel member, as long as they are

- (i) not an employee or Trustee of the Trust, and
- (ii) sufficiently removed from the management and running of the Academy to be considered truly independent.

4.27 One or both of the other two CAP members can be a Trustee, or a Local Councillor of the Academy or another Trust academy, as long as they fulfil the requirements of paragraph 4.24 above and are not an employee of the Academy.

4.28 The CAP will:

- (a) reach an outcome in respect of the complaint in accordance with paragraph 4.43 below;
- (b) agree any appropriate action to be taken as a result of the complaint; and
- (c) where appropriate, make recommendations to change processes/procedures to ensure problems of a similar nature do not recur.

4.29 The CAP hearing will be held in private and all elements of the complaint will be taken seriously.

The Academy's Representative

4.30 The Academy will be represented at the CAP by the person who investigated the complaint under the most recent stage of the procedure. This will usually be the Headteacher, however it may on occasions be the Chair/Vice Chair of the LAC or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the complainant has only complained about the way in which the complaint was investigated by that person (rather than only or also disagreeing with the outcome of the investigation) then the Academy may choose to be represented by another person at the CAP and to involve the investigator from the previous stage only as a witness. There may be other circumstances (e.g. changes in staff) where the Academy has to nominate another person as their representative.

Convening the CAP Hearing

4.31 The Clerk to the LAC will liaise with the Academy and convene the CAP hearing on a date and at a time convenient to all parties. The Clerk will send a letter/email to all parties **at least 5 school days** before the CAP hearing is due to take place confirming the date and time.

Witnesses

4.32 Where the complainant and/or the Academy's representative intends to rely on his or her own account at the hearing, there is no need for that account to be submitted in advance (although it may be helpful to do so).

4.33 The complainant may rely on the accounts of witnesses, which are relevant to the complaint. The complainant should ask each witness to write down their account in a statement (signed and dated) and send it to the Academy **at least 3 school days** before the CAP hearing is due to take place.

4.34 The Academy may rely on the accounts of witnesses, which are relevant to the complaint. Such witnesses may also include those persons who dealt with the complaint in the previous stages, if the complainant has complained about the way in which the complaint was investigated (rather than simply disagreeing with the outcome of the complaint). Such witnesses should, if they have not already done so, provide a written statement of their

account (signed and dated) and provide it to the clerk to the LAC **at least 3 school days** before the CAP hearing is due to take place.

4.35 The CAP has the absolute discretion to decide whether a witness account is

- (i) relevant to the complaint or
- (ii) undisputed by the complainant or the Academy respectively. Where a witness statement is irrelevant or undisputed, their attendance at the CAP is not required.

4.36 The CAP has absolute discretion to decide whether an additional witness may be invited to participate, even after the documents for the CAP hearing (see below) have been issued, if they believe it will help achieve a resolution to the complaint without causing undue prejudice to any of the parties involved.

4.37 All witnesses, whether they are for the complainant or the Academy, will not be allowed to sit in on any part of the CAP hearing except when they are giving their own verbal account or answering questions. Upon conclusion of their evidence they will leave the room.

Documents

4.38 The Clerk to the LAC will provide a copy of all correspondence, statements, witness statements and records relating to the complaint (including records made by those persons who investigated the complaint in the previous stages) to the complainant, the Academy's representative and each CAP member **at least 2 school days** before the CAP hearing is due to take place.

4.39 The CAP has the absolute discretion to decide whether any new documentation is accepted after any set deadline, including at the hearing itself, if they believe it will help achieve a resolution to the complaint without causing undue prejudice to any of the parties involved.

Attendance at the Hearing

4.40 The Complainant may be accompanied by an interpreter, signer, friend or relative at the CAP hearing. The friend or relative will attend for moral support only and will not play any part in the CAP hearing, unless invited to do so by the CAP if it appears to them that it will improve the quality of the

complainant's representations and/or help achieve a resolution to the complaint. The CAP hearing is not a legal hearing and it is therefore not appropriate for either the complainant or the Academy to be legally represented.

The Clerk to the CAP

4.41 The Clerk will attend the CAP hearing and keep a written record of the proceedings. The Clerk will usually be the Clerk to the LAC, however another suitable person may be appointed to this role if the Clerk to the LAC is not available.

Procedure at the CAP Hearing

4.42 The CAP Hearing will proceed as follows:

- (a) the Clerk to the CAP will greet the complainant, the complainant's supporter(s) and the Academy's representative into the room where the CAP has convened. Witnesses will remain outside of the room until they are called in to give their account
- (b) the complainant will be invited by the CAP to give an account of their complaint
- (c) the Academy's representative will be invited to ask the complainant questions, if any
- (d) the CAP will ask the complainant questions, if any
- (e) the complainant's first witness will be invited into the room to give an account of what they saw or know
- (f) the Academy's representative will be invited to ask the complainant's witness questions, if any
- (g) the CAP will ask the complainant's witness questions, if any
- (h) the complainant's witness will be asked to leave the room

- (i) if the complainant has any further witnesses, they will be invited into the room individually to provide their accounts and be questioned as outlined in paragraphs (e) to (h) above
- (j) the Academy's representative will be invited by the CAP to respond to the complaint and make representations on behalf of the Academy
- (k) the complainant will be invited to ask the Academy's representative questions, if any
- (l) the CAP will ask the Academy's representative questions, if any
- (m) the Academy's first witness will be invited into the room to give an account or what they saw or know
- (n) the complainant will be invited to ask the Academy's witness questions, if any
- (o) the CAP will ask the Academy's witness questions, if any
- (p) the Academy's witness will be asked to leave the room
- (q) if the Academy has any further witnesses, they will be invited into the room individually to provide their accounts and be questioned, as outlined in paragraphs (m) to (p) above;
- (r) the complainant will be invited by the CAP to summarise their complaint;
- (s) the Academy's representative will be invited by the CAP to summarise their response to the complaint and the Academy's stance;
- (t) the CAP hearing will conclude and the complainant and the Academy's representative will be asked to leave.

The CAP's Decision

4.43 The CAP will meet in private, immediately after the CAP hearing, to consider all of the documentation and everything that they have heard at the CAP hearing. The CAP will make:

(a) Findings of Fact

The CAP will decide which facts are established to be true, on a balance of probabilities (i.e. more likely than not). If a fact is not deemed relevant, the CAP will not consider it further. The CAP will make a written record of the facts that have been established, those which have not been established and those which are not relevant, with reasons.

(b) Recommendations

The CAP will consider the facts, which they have established, and make recommendations based upon them. These recommendations may be aimed at achieving reconciliation between the parties (for example, a written apology), improving procedures or preventing a recurrence in the future. The CAP will keep a written record of their recommendations, with reasons.

Notification of the CAP's Decision

4.44 The Clerk to the CAP will write to the:

(a) complainant;

(b) Academy's representative;

(c) Any person complained about, within **10 school days** of the CAP Hearing.

The letter will address each of the points listed in paragraph 4.6 above. The letter must also state that, if the complainant believes

(i) this Policy does not comply with the Regulations, or

- (ii) the Academy has not followed the procedure outlined in this Policy, the complainant may refer their complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency for consideration.

4.45 The Clerk will also ensure that a copy of the CAP's findings and recommendations are made available on the Academy's premises for inspection by the Trust, the LAC and the Headteacher.

4.46 Any disciplinary outcome of any investigation into the conduct of a member of staff is a confidential matter between the member of staff and

the Senior Management / LAC of the Academy. It will not be disclosed to the complainant.

Complaint Referred to Education and Skills Funding Agency

4.47 Once a complaint has been through all the stages of this Policy, the complainant can refer the complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency for consideration.

4.48 The complainant can find further information about referring a complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by using the website link below:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/b00212240/making-complaint-school/complaints-free/schoolsacademies>

4.49 The complainant can refer their complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by completing an online form by using the website link below:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/schoolcomplaints-form>

4.50 The complainant should be aware that the Education and Skills Funding Agency will not investigate the complaint itself, or interfere with the findings of the CAP, unless the decision made was manifestly unreasonable.

Administrative matters

4.51 The implementation and adherence to this Policy should reduce the number of complaints that become protracted or vexatious. If a complainant tries to reopen the same issue the Chair of the LAC will write to the complainant

explaining that the complaint has been through all stages of the procedure, is now exhausted and the matter is now closed. If the Trust feels that complaints are vexatious or there are persistent complaints, then the Trust will follow the Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy.

4.52 The Academy will keep written records of all complaints and their outcomes, whether they were dealt with informally or formally.

4.53 The Policy is published on the website for the Trust and each Academy. It is available from the Main School Office of each Academy on request.

Confidentiality

4.54 All parties involved in a complaint should respect the confidentiality of the complaint, the process and the outcome, except insofar that sharing information is a necessary part of the process and/or of implementing the outcome or related recommendations. The Academy will keep all correspondence, statements, and records relating to individual complaints confidential, except where required to disclose by law or regulation.

Monitoring & Evaluation

4.55 This Policy will be reviewed in accordance with Trust's standard review process. Notwithstanding paragraph 4.54 above, such records may be shared with the Trustees, Senior Leadership Team and Academy LAC for monitoring and evaluation.

Other Information

4.56 The Academy will deal with complaints from people who are not parents of attending pupils using the same process outlined above.

4.57 The Trust and Academy will not tolerate abusive language or behaviour at any time, and reserve the right to postpone or cancel the process should it feel that the welfare of staff, pupils and / or Councillors is at significant risk. The Trust will not investigate complaints on issues that do not affect the complainant.

5. Closure of Complaints

5.1 There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant

tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of the LAC can notify them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

- 5.2 The Trust will do all we can to help to resolve a complaint against the Academy but sometimes it is simply not possible to meet all of the complainant's wishes. Sometimes it is simply a case of "agreeing to disagree".
- 5.3 If a complainant persists in making representations to the Academy – to the Headteacher, Chair of the LAC, clerk or anyone else, the Trust are entitled to close correspondence (including personal approaches, as well as letters, telephone calls and emails) on a complaint where it considers all reasonable action has been taken to resolve the complaint.
- 5.4 Where persistent complainants harass and/or cause ongoing distress to members of staff, such complainants may become subject to the Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy.
- 5.5 In exceptional circumstances, closure may occur before a complaint has reached Stage 3 of this Policy. The Chair of the LAC may decide that every reasonable action has already been undertaken to resolve the complaint and that a CAP would not help to move things forward. The reasons for this approach must be recorded in writing.