



Aylesford School
Sports College

**Aylesford School – Sports
College**

Parental Complaints Policy

Ratified March 2016

Review Date March 2019

“Every Child, Every Lesson, Every Day”

Complaints Procedure

Aylesford School – Sports College

Introduction

This document sets out the school's procedure for addressing complaints. It should be used only when informal attempts to resolve problems have been unsuccessful. If you have any concerns about the school or the education provided, you are encouraged to discuss the matter first with your child's Pastoral Support Manager/Mentor/Assistant Head Teacher at the earliest opportunity. The school considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved at this stage.

Resolving Concerns Informally

Parents are always welcome to discuss any concerns with the appropriate member of staff, who will clarify with the parent the nature of the concern and reassure them that the school wants to hear about it. Parents should be advised from the outset that there is a complaints procedure that they can use if the matter cannot be resolved. The member of staff may explain to the parent how the situation happened. It can be helpful at this point to identify what sort of outcome the parent is looking for.

If the member of staff first contacted cannot immediately deal with the matter, s/he will make a clear note of the date, name and contact address or phone number.

All members of staff will know how to refer, if necessary, to the person with responsibility for the particular issue raised by the parent. S/he will check later to make sure the referral has been dealt with.

If the matter is brought to the attention of the Headteacher s/he may decide to deal with the complaint. If the complaint is against the Headteacher the parent will be advised to contact the Chair of the Governing Body.

The member of staff dealing with the concern will make sure the parent is clear what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed, putting it in writing if appropriate.

While it is often a helpful way to resolve problems more quickly, a parent or pupil is not required to pursue informal ways to address complaints but has the right to make a formal complaint at any time.

Please note that this procedure does not apply to issues concerning the curriculum, collective worship, admissions, exclusion appeals, decisions about your child's special educational needs or grievances by or against staff. These are the subject of separate procedures, copies of which can be obtained from the school.

All other complaints are handled by the school according to the arrangements set out below.

Aims and Objectives

The school will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them fairly and honestly. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Our Procedure aims to

- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to use and understand
- be impartial
- be 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 people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the school's Leadership Management Team so that services can be improved.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

If you feel that a concern has not been addressed through informal discussion with the Pastoral Support Manager/Mentor/Director of Learning and you wish to have the matter formally investigated, this process begins with the completion of a complaints form, which you will find at the end of this pack. If you would like help completing the form, the school will be happy to provide the assistance of someone unconnected with the complaint. The completed form should be returned to (a) The Headteacher if the concern/complaint is under the Headteacher's responsibility or (b) The Chair of Governors if the concern/complaint is under the Governing Body's responsibility, (these are indicated below). The complaint form should be returned to the school office, marked Confidential, for the attention of either the Headteacher or Chair of Governors as appropriate. The Headteacher/Chair of Governors will acknowledge in writing receipt of the complaint form within **three working days*** after receiving it and will enclose a copy of the school's complaints procedure with the acknowledgement.

If the matter is about:

- the day-to-day running of the school
- the interpretation of school policies
- the actions or inactions of staff at the school

These are concerns/complaints under the Headteacher's responsibility and will be investigated by the Headteacher or a senior member of staff nominated by the Headteacher. *See D1 for flowchart.*

If the matter is about:

- school policies as determined by the Governing Body
- the actions or inactions of the Governing Body
- the Headteacher

These are concerns/complaints under the Governing Body's responsibility and will be investigated by the Chair of Governors or a Governor nominated by the Chair. It may be necessary to appoint an independent investigator in certain circumstances. *See D2 for flowchart.*

Stage 2

If the concern/complaint has been investigated by the Headteacher, Stage 2 of the formal procedure will begin with the complaint form being passed to the Chair or nominated complaints Governor to review whether the complaint has been properly dealt with (see flow chart D1). If the concern/complaint has been investigated by the Chair, the complaint form passes to the Governing Body (see flow chart D2).

If the complaint is a staff disciplinary or capability issue, then the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure rather than the complaints procedure. You will be notified if this is the case with your complaint, but we will not be able to tell you which procedure or the final outcome.

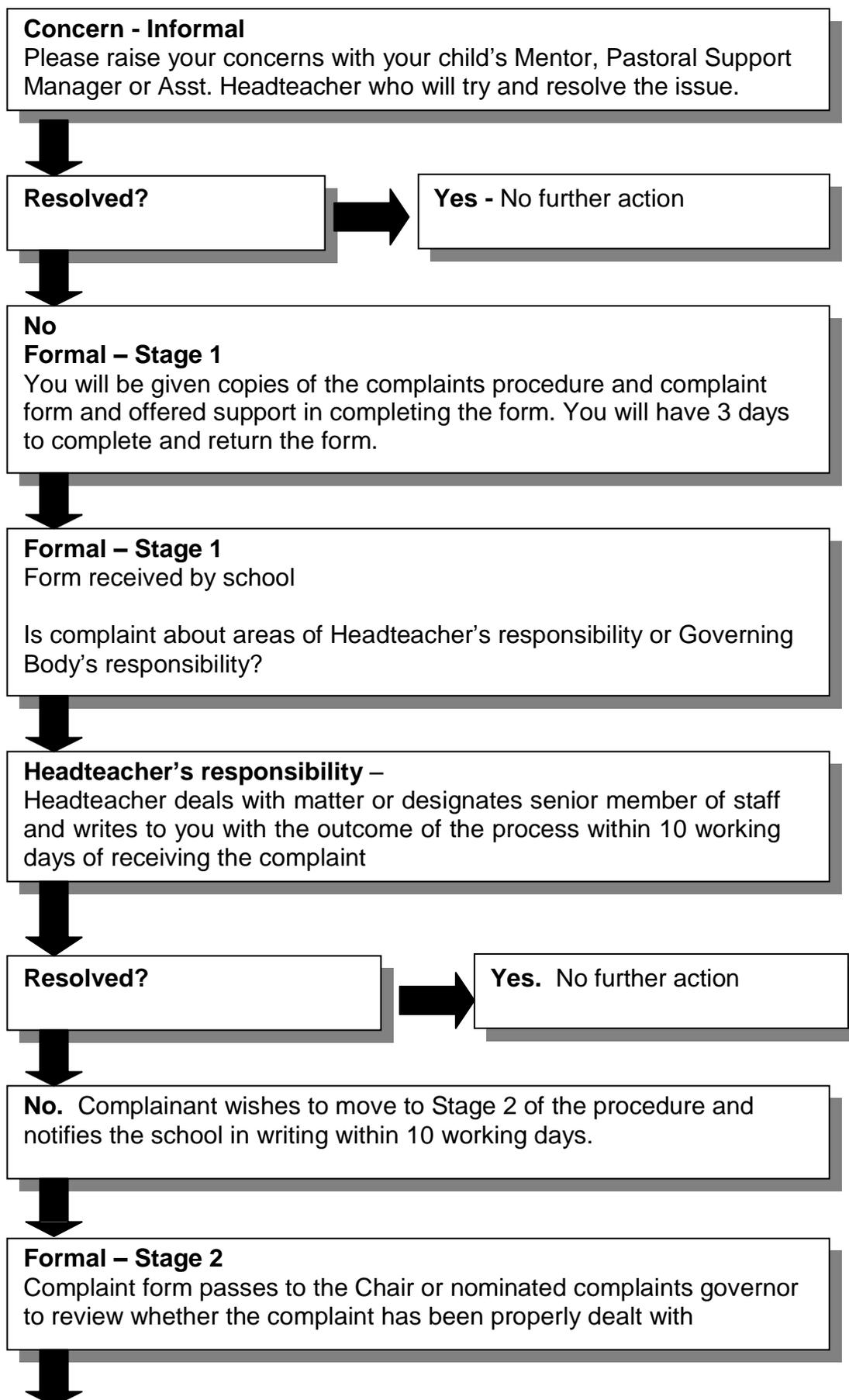
Monitoring and Review

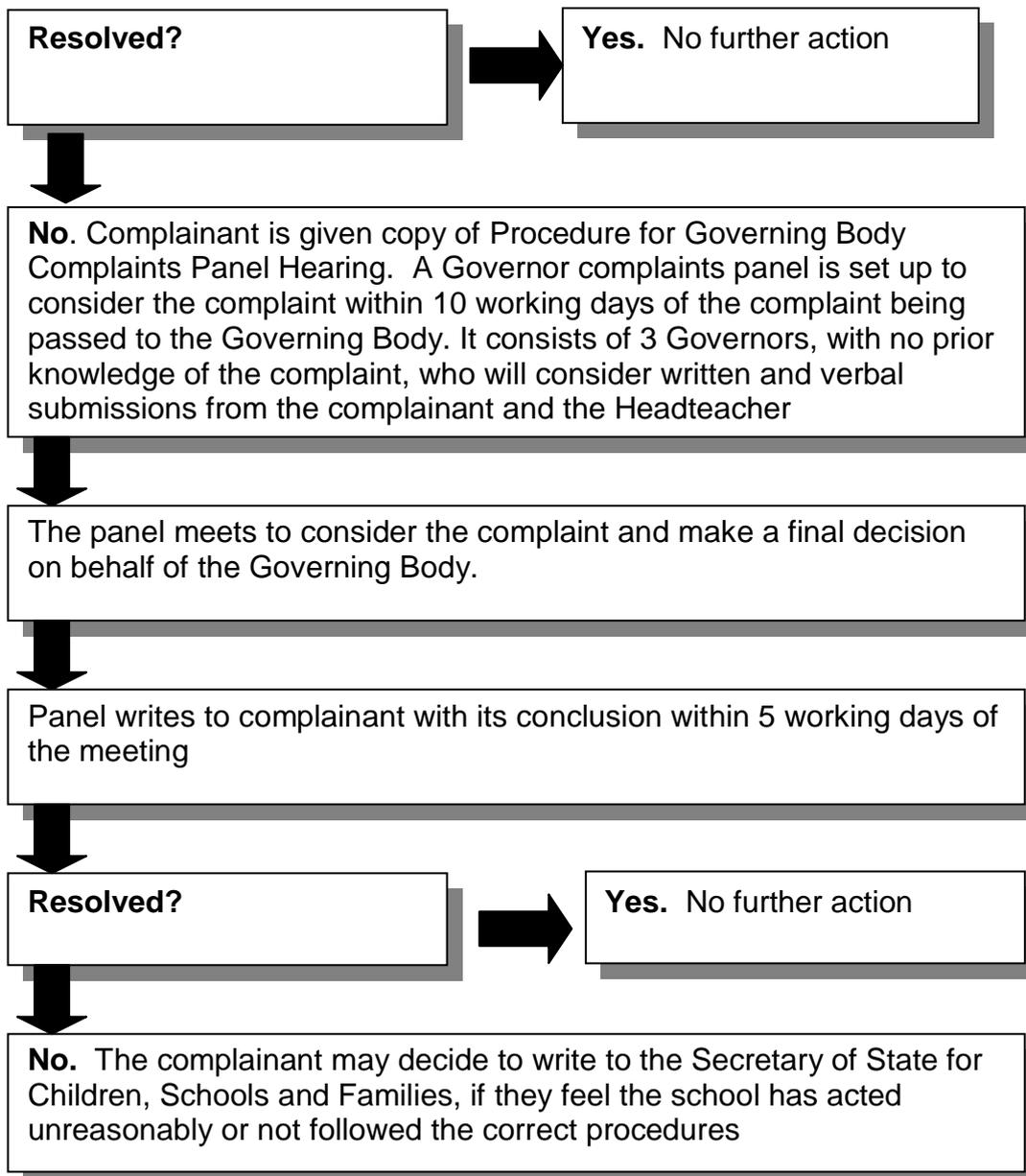
The Governing Body monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

Availability

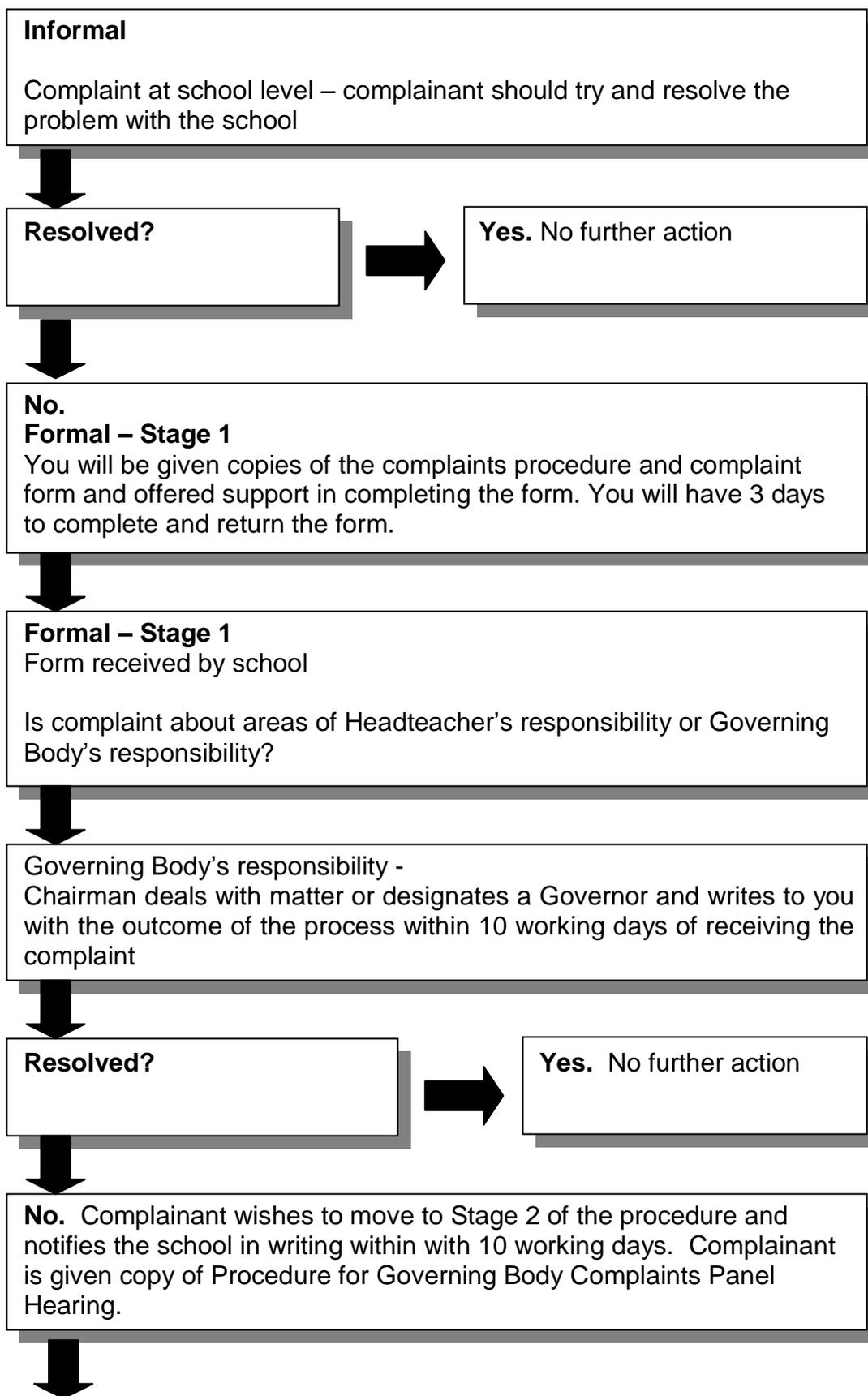
A copy of this procedure is available to all parents on request.

D1 Complaint/Concern under Headteacher's Responsibility





D2 Complaint/Concern under Governing Body's Responsibility



Formal – Stage 2

Complaint form passes to the Governing Body



A Governor complaints panel is set up to consider the complaint within 10 working days of the complaint being passed to the Governing Body. (See Procedure for a Governing Body Complaints Panel hearing). It consists of 3 Governors, with no prior knowledge of the complaint, who will consider written and verbal submissions from the complainant and Chair of Governors (or designated Governor)



The panel meets to consider the complaint and make a final decision on behalf of the Governing Body.



Panel writes to complainant with its conclusion within 5 working days of the meeting



Resolved?



Yes. No further action



No. The complainant may decide to write to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, if they feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures

E Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the School Office, marked for the “Confidential – for the Attention of the Headteacher” or “Confidential – for the Attention of the Chair of Governors”.

Your name:

Student’s name:

Your relationship to the student:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Mobile telephone number:

Evening 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?

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

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

F Procedure for conducting a Governing Body Complaints Panel Hearing

The Governing Body Complaints Panel operates according to the following formal procedures:

1. The Chair of the Governing Body Complaints Panel will aim to arrange for the panel meeting to take place within **10 working days**.
2. The Chair of the Governing Body Complaints Panel will ask you whether you wish to provide any further written documentation in support of your complaint. You can include witness statements, or ask witnesses to give evidence in person, if you wish.
3. The Headteacher will be asked to prepare a written report for the panel. Other members of staff directly involved in matters raised in your complaint will also be asked to prepare reports or statements.
4. The Chair of the Governing Body Complaints Panel will inform you, the Headteacher, any relevant witnesses and members of the panel by letter **at least five working days** in advance, of the date, time and place of the meeting. We hope that you will feel comfortable with the meeting taking place in the school; but we will do what we can to make alternative arrangements if you prefer.
5. With the letter, the Chair of the Governing Body Complaints Panel will send you all relevant correspondence, reports and documentation about the complaint and ask whether you wish to submit further written evidence to the panel.
6. The letter from the Chair of the Governing Body Panel will also inform you that you are entitled to be accompanied at the meeting. The choice of person to accompany you is your own, but it is usually best to involve someone in whom you have confidence but who is not directly connected with the school. They are there to give you support but also to witness the proceedings and to speak on your behalf if you wish.
7. With the agreement of the Chair of the Panel, the Headteacher may invite members of staff directly involved in matters raised by you to attend the meeting.
8. Witnesses will be invited to the hearing to give statements but withdraw once they have done so.
9. The chair of the Panel will bear in mind that the formal nature of the meeting can be intimidating for you and will do his or her best to put you at your ease.
10. As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced into the meeting by any of the participants. If either party wishes to do so, the meeting will be adjourned so that the other party has a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence.
11. The Chair of the Panel will ensure that the meeting is properly minuted. Please understand that any decision to share the minutes with you, the complainant, is a matter for the Panel's discretion and you do not have an automatic right to

see or receive a copy. Since such minutes usually name individuals, they are understandably of a sensitive and, therefore, confidential nature.

12. Normally, the written outcome of the Panel meeting, which will be sent to you, should give you all the information you require. If, however, you feel that you would like to have a copy of the minutes it would be helpful if you could indicate this in advance. If the Panel is happy for the minutes to be copied to you, the Clerk can then be asked to maintain confidentiality in the minutes.
13. During the meeting, you can expect there to be opportunities for:
 - you to explain your complaint
 - you to hear the school's response from the Headteacher
 - you to question the Headteacher about the complaint
 - you to be questioned by the Headteacher about the complaint
 - the Panel members to be able to question you and the Headteacher
 - any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to the Chair's approval) and all parties to have the right to question all witnesses
 - you and the Headteacher to make a final statement.
14. In closing the meeting, the Chair will explain that the panel will now consider its decision and that written notice of the decision will be sent to the Headteacher and yourself **within five working days**. All participants other than the panel and the Clerk will then leave.
15. The Panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented in order to:
 - reach a majority decision on the complaint
 - decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
 - recommend, where appropriate, to the Governing Body changes to the school's systems, policies or procedures to address the issues raised.
16. The Chair of the Panel will send you and the Headteacher a written statement outlining the decision of the panel **within five working days**. If you are not satisfied with the outcome you may appeal to the Secretary of State, details of which should be provided in the letter.
17. We will keep a copy of all correspondence and notes on file in the school's records but separate from students' personal records.