



DIOCESE OF SOUTHWELL
& NOTTINGHAM

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

SNMAT Procedure for Implementing the Complaints Policy (for parents, carers and visitors)

To be read in conjunction with:
SNMAT Complaints Policy (for parents, carers, visitors)
SNMAT Code of Conduct for parents, carers and visitors.

Approved by the Board of Directors –

Model Process Templates

Document 1	Letter of Acknowledgment to Complainant
Document 2	Stage 1 closure letter
Document 3	Stage 2 - letter inviting complainant to a panel meeting
Document 4	Stage 2 - letter to complainant outlining information for panel meeting
Document 5	Stage 2 – Agenda for Panel meeting
Document 6	Stage 2 – checklist for Panel members
Document 7	Stage 2 – minutes of the panel meeting
Document 8	Stage 2 – letter to complainant giving findings of the panel meeting
Document 9	Stage 2 – final closure letter to complainant

Document 1 – Letter of Acknowledgment to Complainant Stage 1

Dear (Complainant/s)

Thank you for your letter/form dated (insert date on letter/form). Your complaint will be investigated by (insert name of headteacher/investigating governor). They will contact you within 10 days to arrange to meet with you.

At this meeting (name of headteacher/investigating governor) will wish to clarify the nature of the complaint and what you feel would put things right.

I enclose a copy of the SNMAT complaints policy so you are clear about what will happen and the timelines involved.

Yours sincerely

Document 2 – Stage 1 closure letter

Dear Mr/Mrs etc.,

FORMAL STAGE 1 COMPLAINT ABOUT

Thank you for meeting with me on (insert date) to discuss your complaint, which I have outlined as follows:

- *Insert summary of complaint. State each point separately.*

I have completed my investigation and can offer the following response(s) on each of the points you have raised.

- *Insert summary response for each point of the complaint*

State what investigative action was taken in response and the outcome of this, including any remedial action to be taken if complaint is upheld.

I hope this response answers your concerns. Please let me know if you wish me to clarify any points.

In the meantime, if you are still not satisfied with my reply, there is a further stage of the complaints procedure that you can follow. Formal stage two is a review by a panel of governors who will look at the way in which your complaint has been dealt with. **The panel will not, however, rehear the whole case.**

If you wish to go to the next formal stage two, you should write to the chair of governors (*insert name*) within ten days of the receipt of this letter, giving your reasons why you wish to take your complaint further.

Yours sincerely

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Document 3 – Stage 2 letter inviting complainant to panel meeting

Dear Mr/Mrs etc.,

Re: Complaints panel meeting – Day, Month, Date, year, time, and venue

Thank you for your letter dated

From your letter it is clear that you are still unhappy with the situation.

I write to invite you to attend a meeting of the complaints panel of (*insert academy name*) Governing Body to be held on day, month, date, year, time, venue. The panel will consider your complaint and the investigation carried out in order to resolve it.

If you wish to make a written submission to the panel I should be grateful if you would send it to (name, address or email address), by day, month, date, year, marked for the attention of (complaints co-ordinator), who will arrange for copies to be distributed to members of the panel, the headteacher/governor(s), who carried out the initial investigation into your complaint. The members of the panel will be:

- *
- *
- *

If you wish to bring any witnesses to the meeting, please inform the undersigned by (day, month, date, and year.) If you are unable to attend this meeting, would you please let me know so that the panel can decide whether to go ahead with the meeting in your absence, or to postpone the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Next Steps in Process for complaints co-ordinator/clerk:

- Arrange panel of Governors – x3 people and agree who will Chair the meeting
- Pull together all document pertaining to the complaint to date, from both the complainant and person who has investigated the complaint as part of Formal Stage 1. **N.B.** This information should be issued to the complainant with Document 4, which is the next step in the process.

Document 4 – Stage 2 letter to complainant outlining information for panel meeting

Dear complainant

Re: Complaints panel meeting – day, month, date, year, time, venue (usually school)

Please find enclosed information received from (investigating governor/headteacher) to be presented by both parties at the complaints panel hearing on day, month, date, year.

I also enclose a copy of the papers submitted by you as evidence to support your complaint.

I understand that you will be bringing the following witness/s:

*

*

Copies of all these papers have been sent to all panel members, (investigating governor(s) and (headteacher). They have also been sent to (complaints co-ordinator/clerk to the panel).

The complaints co-ordinator/clerk to the panel will greet you before the meeting and outline the procedure to be followed.

Yours sincerely

Document 5 - Stage 2 Agenda for Panel meeting

MEETING AGENDA



Meeting title:

Date and time:

Location:

1.	Chair welcomes and makes introductions to all present
2.	Apologies for absence
3.	Declaration of any interest or prior involvement in the matter by panel members
4.	Reminder of confidentiality and expectations of behaviour **during the meeting it may be necessary to disclose to the panel, information regarding other children. At this point the complainant may be asked to leave the meeting.
5.	Invitation to the complainant to give details of their case and call any witnesses. (Witnesses join the meeting at the appropriate time).
6.	School questions complainant
7.	Panel/and or clerk questions complainant
8.	School questions complainants' witnesses
9.	Panel questions complainants' witnesses (Witnesses leave the meeting after this point)
10.	School to make any response to the complainants' case. ** complainant leaves the meeting to allow disclosure of information.

11.	Complainant to question the school
12.	Panel and/or clerk to question the school
13.	Complainant questions the schools' witnesses
14.	Panel questions the schools' witnesses
15.	Invitation to the complainant to sum up his/her case if so desired
16.	Invitation to the school to sum up its' case if so desired
17.	All parties to leave the meeting including the clerk unless he/she requested to remain by the panel such decision to be noted and minuted.
18.	Panel deliberations and decision
19.	Parties remaining to be invited to re-join the meeting and decision announced by the chair
20.	Decision letter to be sent to all parties in writing (within 10 working days)

Document 6 - Stage 2 – checklist for Panel members

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- The Executive Head / Head of School may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Executive Head / Head of School is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the Executive Head / Head of School and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Executive Head / Head of School is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.

Document 7 – Stage 2: Minutes of the panel meeting

MINUTES OF MEETING (Based on Agenda)



School:

Meeting title:

Date and time:

Location:

Confidential item(s)

Minute Number	Heading / detail of minute	Action
	Introductions	
	Outline of proceedings (as per the agenda)	
	Case for the Complainant	
	<i>Questions from the school to the complainant</i>	
	<i>Questions from the panel to the complainant</i>	
	<i>Evidence of the witness</i>	
	<i>Questions from the school to the witness</i>	
	<i>Questions from the panel to the witness</i>	
	The witness was released from the meeting and reminded that all matters were confidential and not to be disclosed.	
	Case for the School	
	<i>Questions from the complainant/s to the school</i>	
	<i>Questions from the panel to the school:</i>	

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	<i>Evidence of witness</i>	
	<i>Questions from the panel to witness</i>	
	The witness was released from the meeting and reminded that all matters were confidential and not to be disclosed.	
	Both parties invited by the chair to sum up their cases	
	<u>Summing up by the complainants</u>	
	<u>Summing up by the school</u>	
	<p>Deliberation and decision of the Panel [On enquiry by the chair all parties confirmed that they had received a fair opportunity to say what they needed to.] The chair advised the parties that the panel would now consider all the evidence and deliberate so as to reach a decision on the complaint in accordance with the complaints procedure. S/He said the decision would be confirmed in writing within five school days.</p>	
	Both parties were advised they could remain to hear the decision. All parties decided to leave and were released etc.,	
	The Panel first considered the factual issues raised by the parties and decided that, having listened carefully to the evidence of the complainants and the witnesses, and having taken account of the any other relevant written statements, made the following unanimous findings of fact regarding the alleged incidents:	
	[details of alleged incident] - Proved/Not proved – [reasons]	
	Having taken account of their finding of fact/s as above and after carefully considering all other relevant evidence and submissions presented by the complainants and the school, both orally and in writing, and also having considered the stated desired outcome of the complaint, the panel unanimously decided that the complaint was not upheld / upheld in full / upheld in part [give details] as detailed in the decision letter to be sent to all parties	

Signed(chair)

Date

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Document 8 - Stage 2 letter to complainant giving findings of the panel meeting

Dear *

.....Academy – Your complaint in connection with issues relating to ...

I refer to your complaint in relation to (outline complaint) presented to the Governing Body's Complaints Panel on *day, date, year*.

On behalf of the Panel, I thank you for attending the meeting to present your case. Personal attendance can be very difficult but always allows the relevant issues to be drawn out in a much more thorough and relevant way. The Panel also wish to acknowledge the positive and constructive conduct of all parties at the meeting.

In summary the Panel understood your complaint to be that:-

The school's case was that:-

The Panel took into account all the evidence presented by the (insert name/role of staff and yourselves, both orally and in writing and also considered the outcomes from your complaint that you wished to happen as indicated in your closing summary. After very careful consideration, the Panel's findings on your complaint are:-

I have copied this letter to Panel members and the Headteacher.

For the sake of completeness I have to advise that, beyond the above, there is now no further action that can be taken by the academy or the Governing Body on this matter. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Panel's decision then the final option is for you to take the matter up with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Their role is specific - to check that your complaint has been dealt with according the complaints policy/process.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy/complain-about-an-academy>

Once again, thank you for attending the meeting.

Yours Sincerely

cc Headteacher/Principal
 Complaint Panel members
 File/clerk/complaints co-ordinator

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Document 9 - Stage 2 final closure letter to complainant

This letter should only be used if the complainant responds to contest the outcome from the panel meeting. It is the last piece of correspondence to be used in the process.

Dear *

FORMAL STAGE 2Academy – Your complaint in connection with issues relating to ...

The panel met on ...(date)...to hear your appeal regarding your complaint which can be summarised as follows:

That so and so/the school did/said/did not,...

Legal or administrative background

State any legal or administrative background to the case, including any legislation relevant to the investigation.

The investigation

Set out the key facts about the complaint, the findings and conclusions from the formal stage one investigation, and any continuing concerns.

Conclusion

Set out the findings of the panel

Panel decision

Outcome of the decision

Please let me know if you wish me to clarify any points for you.

In the meantime, if you remain dissatisfied with the way in which your complaint has been dealt with you can contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Their role is to check that your complaint has been dealt with according the complaints policy/process.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy/complain-about-an-academy>

Yours sincerely