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| Subject: <b>Complaints</b> | Number: <b>POL00105</b>          |
| Approved by:               | Type: <b>Policy</b>              |
| <b>Managing Director</b>   | Effective: <b>February 2021</b>  |
|                            | Revision: <b>2.2</b>             |
|                            | Effective: <b>September 2023</b> |

**1. Objectives**

The Robert Holme Academy is committed to the highest standards of quality, openness, accountability and integrity. The Robert Holme Academy is also dedicated to meeting the needs of our students. However, we recognise that not everything goes well all the time and we take any weaknesses or issues that are raised by stakeholders seriously.

As such, the intention of this policy is to ensure a clear process is implemented that will enable issues to be addressed effectively while ensuring all formal complaints are logged and dealt with promptly, fairly and appropriately.

All Robert Holme Academy staff are aware of this policy and are required to adhere to the process when dealing with any complaints that are raised.

Details of previous formal complaints received in the current and previous academic year are available on request to the Managing Director.

**2. Scope and Applicability**

This policy is applicable to parents or carers or any other person that has parental responsibility for a student currently attending the school who wish to raise a specific issue or formal complaint.

The process can also be used by other stakeholders, including external agencies and local authorities, who are involved in the day to day operation of the Robert Holme Academy who may also wish to raise a specific issue or formal complaint.

A separate Grievance Policy is in place for staff to formally raise issues or concerns within the school.

Serious staff concerns, including suspicion of criminal activities and breaches of legal obligations are governed by the Whistleblowing Policy.

**3. Procedure**

**3.1 Responsibilities**

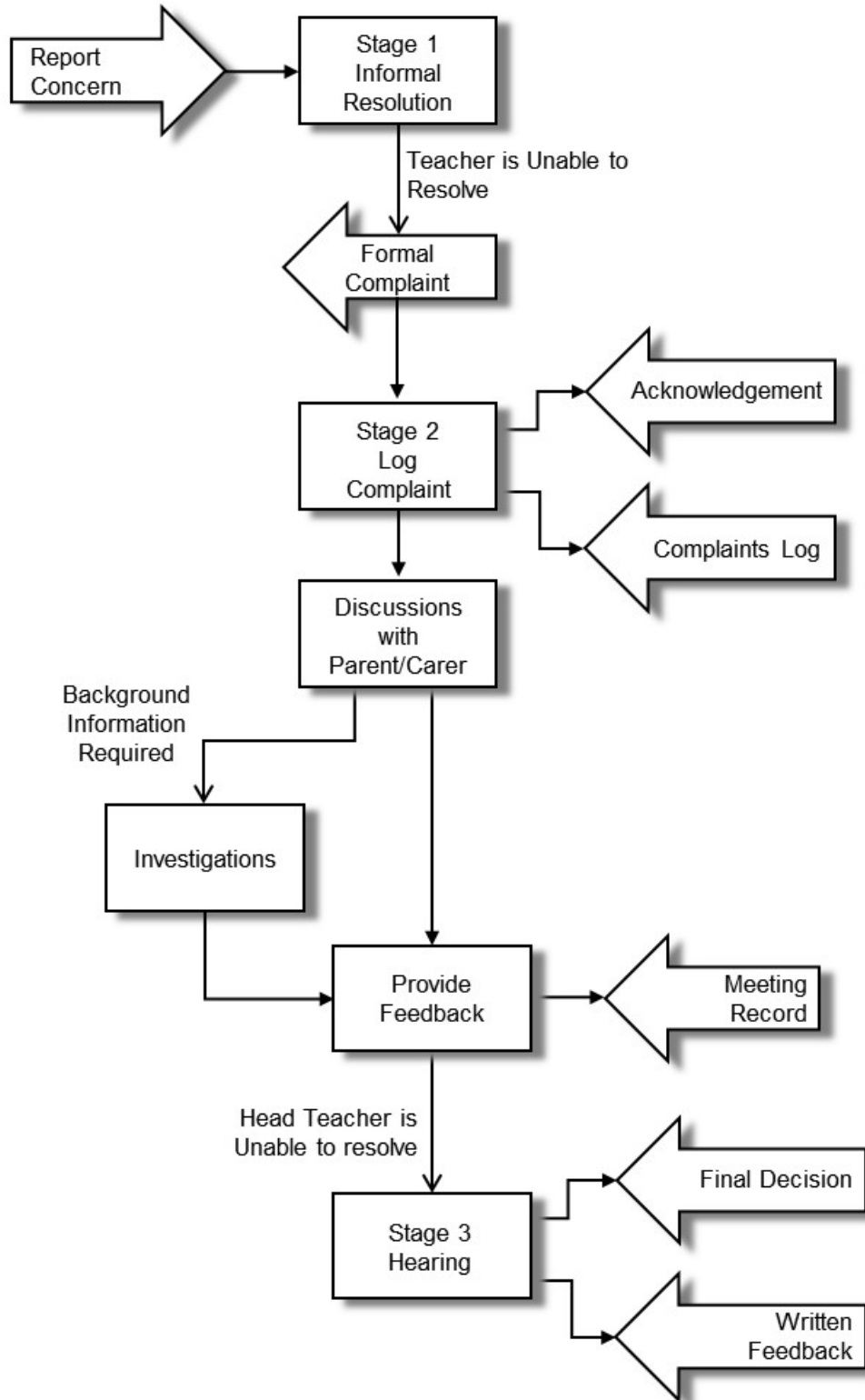
All members of staff are responsible for dealing with issues and concerns raised by parents/carers appropriately and as quickly as possible.

Formal complaints are submitted to, and are logged by, a Head Teacher who is responsible for managing the complaint to resolution. Where necessary, this includes the implementation of appropriate corrective actions.

Complaints that are not resolved or are specifically in regard to actions of a Head Teacher may be escalated to the Managing Director for attention.



3.2 Process





**3.3 Stage 1: Informal Resolution**

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise any causes for concern directly with a member of staff. In the first instance, it is preferred that a parent/carer call or write to the student's class teacher as matters can usually be quickly and satisfactorily resolved once they are brought to the teacher's attention.

Informal concerns are not documented as formal complaints and can be resolved directly by the teacher. The parent/carer is made aware of the complaints policy and how to raise a formal complaint should they feel that their concerns have not been adequately addressed.

When a concern is reported, the member of staff will be arranged to speak to the parent/carer. If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately within these discussions, further investigation and consultation is opened.

A concern that cannot be resolved informally is escalated to a Head Teacher as a formal complaint.

An issue that refers directly to a Head Teacher, that cannot be resolved informally, is escalated to the Managing Director as a formal complaint.

Where possible, informal concerns are resolved within 10 working days.

**3.4 Stage 2: Formal Complaint.**

Parents/carers are invited to make any formal complaint to a Head Teacher in writing. This can be as a letter or email.

The parent/carer should start by explaining clearly that they wish to invoke the formal complaints procedure. If the parent/carer does not state this explicitly, the issue will be treated as an informal concern.

Formal complaints are formally logged and acknowledged with a written receipt within 2 working days of being received.

In most cases, the Head Teacher will meet or speak to the parent/carer about their concerns and discuss possible resolutions. If agreement is reached, the Head Teacher confirms, in writing, what actions are to be taken.

However, the Head Teacher may decide that further investigations are necessary to ensure all relevant facts have been established to determine appropriate actions.

On completion of the investigation, the Head Teacher provides feedback, in writing, regarding the decision that has been made, along with the any proposed actions.

Where possible, feedback is provided in no longer than 15 working days from acknowledgement of the complaint. If, in exceptional circumstances, more time is needed to complete the investigation, the Head Teacher will inform the complainant.

All meetings, interviews and conversations relating to the formal complaint are kept on file.

If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the decision, they proceed to Stage 3 (Panel Hearing) of the procedure.

**3.5 Stage 3: Panel Hearing**

If, having followed Stage 2 of the complaints procedure, the Head Teacher and parent fail to reach a resolution, they should make a written request to the Managing Director who will make arrangements for a Panel Hearing. The request must state explicitly that they wish to request a panel hearing. They should outline the grounds of the complaint, and the outcome they desire.

They should list any materials they wish the panel to see. They should also attach copies of any materials that they have personally and that they wish to be considered by the panel.



A panel hearing is convened with at least two panel members who are not directly involved in the complaint, including one who is not part of the management team and is independent from the day-to-day running of the school.

The parent/carer is given 5 working days notice of the panel hearing and may have a friend or family member to accompany them for support. Every effort is made during the panel meeting to resolve the complaint.

The panel undertakes further investigation if a resolution cannot be achieved during the hearing. The panel reaches a final decision after the investigation is concluded.

The decision, findings and recommendations are provided, in writing, to the parent/carer and, where relevant, the persons involved in the complaint within 5 working days of the hearing. The findings, recommendations and supporting documentation is shared with the Managing Director and Head Teachers.

The panel's decision is final.

### **3.6 Record Keeping and Confidentiality**

A written record of all complaints and additional documentation, actions and correspondence are securely stored within the school regardless of outcome. Records are kept confidential except as required by formal inspection or for legal obligations.

Records of individual complaints will be retained at least until the school's next inspection. Thereafter, in accordance with data protection principles, only for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary.

Head Teachers and the Managing Director will maintain oversight of these records in order to determine the appropriate implementation of this policy and to monitor and respond to patterns of complaints which may become apparent.

All records will be kept in accordance with the Confidentiality and Data Protection policy.

## **4 References**

Further information can be found in:

1. Further assistance and guidance is available from the local authorities Special Educational Needs and Disabilities team.
2. Support can also be provided by Ofsted via the email at [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).