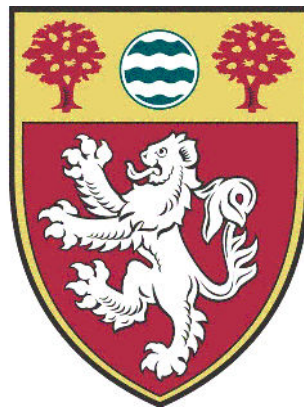


# Royal Alexandra & Albert School



## Complaints Policy

<b>Applies to</b>	Any person who has a complaint against the School
<b>Governing Body approval required</b>	Yes – internal procedures require all DfE statutory policies to be approved by GB
<b>Accountable Executive</b>	Headteacher
<b>Status &amp; Review Cycle</b>	Statutory, annual
<b>Last approval</b>	GB May 2024
<b>Next approval</b>	GB May 2025

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## Introduction

The Royal Alexandra & Albert School endeavours to provide the best education and boarding experience possible for all of its pupils in an open and transparent environment. We welcome any feedback that we receive from parents, pupils and third parties, and we accept that not all of this will be positive. Where concerns are raised the school intends for these to be dealt with:

- Fairly
- Openly
- Promptly
- Without Prejudice

In order to do so, the Governing Body of Royal Alexandra & Albert School has approved the following procedure (which is based on Surrey County Council model procedure for maintained schools) which explains what you should do if you have any concerns about the school. All members of staff will be familiar with the procedure and will be able to assist you.

### Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to The Royal Alexandra and Albert School about any provision of facilities or services. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory / other procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

### The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

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 this complaints procedure. The Royal Alexandra and Albert School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, you will be referred to an appropriate alternative staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, you will be referred 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.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, The Royal Alexandra and Albert School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

## Who should I approach with a concern?

**Educational matters:** Form Tutor

**Pastoral care:** Form Tutor or Head of House in the case of a boarding matter

**Disciplinary matters:** Form Tutor or the member of staff that gave the sanction

**Financial/Administration matters:** Bursar via [elizabethlowe@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:elizabethlowe@gatton-park.org.uk)

**Complaint about a staff member's conduct:** direct approach to the staff member themselves, or where this is thought inappropriate / does not resolve the situation, their line manager should be approached or the Headteacher. If you are unsure who the appropriate line manager is, please contact the school office.

## How to raise a concern or complaint?

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a person with a concern or a complaint, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis, within 10 school working days.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at a later stage of the procedure.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint using the Complaint form set out in this policy (see Appendix B). If you require assistance with completing the form, please contact the school office or email [Head@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:Head@gatton-park.org.uk) (see Appendix A).

You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments 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.

## Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

## Safeguarding

Wherever a complaint indicates that a child's wellbeing or safety is at risk, the school is under a duty to report this immediately to the local authority. Any action taken will be in accordance with the school's Safeguarding policy which can be found on the school's website.

## Social media

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, Royal Alexandra & Albert School requests the complainants do not discuss complaints publicly via social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, Twitter or any other social media platform. Complaints

will be dealt with confidentially for those involved, and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

## Timescales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Please note that all timescales refer to full school working days excluding weekends, school holidays and INSET days etc.

There may be occasions when it's necessary or reasonable to deviate from the published complaints procedure. In these cases, the complainant will be kept informed and reasons for deviation given.

### Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## Audio or Video evidence

Complainants should make sure they obtain informed consent from all parties present before recording conversations or meetings. In line with DfE guidance, we do not normally accept electronic recordings as evidence when we are asked to consider a complaint. Unless exceptional circumstances apply, we will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without informed consent of all parties being recorded.

## Scope of this Complaints Policy

This policy covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by The Royal Alexandra and Albert School, other than complaints that are dealt with under other procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fees charged for Boarding and Co-curricular activities</li> </ul>	<p>In the event that you are dissatisfied, you should contact the Bursar (<a href="mailto:elizabethlowe@gatton-park.org.uk">elizabethlowe@gatton-park.org.uk</a>). If this does not resolve your concern, you may escalate your complaint to the Foundation by request to the Clerk (<a href="mailto:katedavenport@gatton-park.org.uk">katedavenport@gatton-park.org.uk</a>).</p> <p>Please note that there is no power to consider fees under this Complaints policy, the payment of which is governed by the terms and conditions of the Foundation only.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admissions to schools</li> <li>Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li> <li>School re-organisation proposals</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Surrey County Council</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or Surrey Children’s Single Point of Access (C-SPA) on 0300 470 9100</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exclusion of children from school*</li> </ul>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at:  <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school’s complaints procedure.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at:  <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school’s complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff grievances</li> </ul>	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff conduct</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</li> </ul>	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● National Curriculum - content</li> </ul>	Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against The Royal Alexandra and Albert School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

## Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure, The Royal Alexandra and Albert School wants 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:

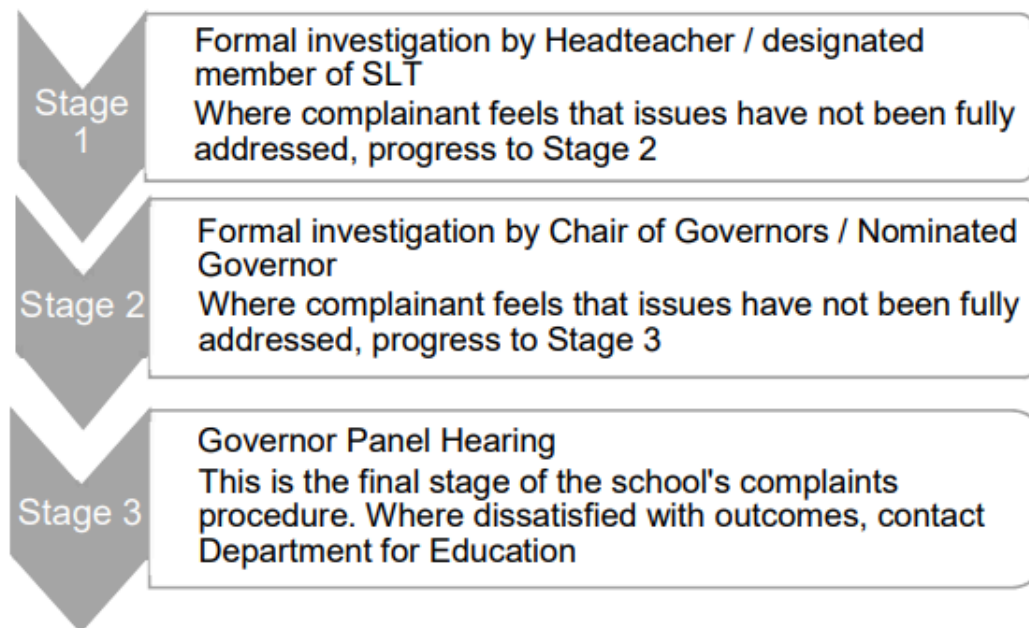
- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained about will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

In addition, mediation can provide a helpful mechanism for discussion when a complaint is raised, and can help to rebuild the relationship between parties once all of the investigative stages of the complaints procedure have been completed.

## Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

## Timeline for complaints



## Summary of stages

### Stage 1 Headteacher investigation

Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), using the Complaint Form (see Appendix A for the contact details of the Headteacher and Appendix B for a copy of the form). The form is useful as it ensures that relevant information is communicated at the outset.

The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **3 school days**.

The Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see.

The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the School's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the Headteacher (or investigator) will:

- If necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

The investigating member of staff may ask the complainant to attend a meeting in person or remotely to discuss their concerns.

The complainant must explain in writing

- An overview of the complaint so far
- Who has been involved
- Why the complaint remains unresolved
- Action they would like to be taken to put things right

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response **within 15 school days** of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

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 the School will take to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher will advise the complainant how to escalate the complaint if they believe it has not been fully addressed at this stage.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the Governing Body (including the Chair or Vice Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all actions at stage 2.

Complaints about the Headteacher or member of the Governing Body must be made to the Clerk (see Appendix A for contact details).

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- The entire Governing Body or
- The majority of the Governing Body

The complaint will move to Stage 2 and will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Governing Body or Foundation. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response to the complainant with a copy to the Headteacher.

The investigator will make and retain a record of the concern and the outcomes of the investigation.

## Stage 2 Governor Investigation

If the complainant believes that their complaint has not been fully addressed at Stage 1, the complainant may request a Governor Investigation. This should be done in writing (preferably by email) to the Clerk (see Appendix A for the contact details of the Clerk). This request must be made within 10 school days of the receipt of the outcome letter at stage 1.

The Chair of Governors may choose to delegate the investigation of the complaint to a nominated Governor who may, at the sole discretion of the Chair of Governors, be independent of the School. The investigating Governor will have had no prior involvement in the complaint.

Receipt of the written request to go stage 2 will be acknowledged within 3 school days. In most cases the complainant will be invited to a meeting with the nominated Governor at the outset of the process (“the Investigating Governor”). The aim of this meeting is to enable the investigating Governor to understand the scope of the complaint and desired outcomes prior to commencing their investigation.

The Investigating Governor will consider all relevant evidence; this may include but is not limited to:

- Evidence and outcome from Stage 1 investigation if applicable

- A statement from the complainant
- Where relevant a meeting with / statement from an individual who is the subject of the complaint
- Any previous correspondence regarding the complaint
- Any supporting documents from all parties
- Interviews with / statements from anyone related to the complaint
- Relevant policies and whether they were followed

After considering the available evidence, the Investigating Governor may:

- uphold the complaint and direct that certain action be taken to resolve it
- not uphold the complaint and provide the complainant with details of the Stage 3 complaint review process
- uphold the complaint in part: in other words, the Investigating Governor may find one aspect of the complaint to be valid, but not another aspect. They may recommend certain action to be taken to resolve any aspect that they find in favour of the complainant.

The Investigating Governor should inform the complainant of their decision in writing **within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint**. The response should explain clearly why they have come to the decision that they made. It should also detail any agreed actions as a result of the complaint. Finally, it should provide the complainant with details of how to progress the complaint to Stage 3 if they believe that their complaint has not been fully addressed, providing them with the contact details of the Clerk to the Governing Body.

### Stage 3 Governor Panel Hearing

If the complainant does not believe their complaint has been fully addressed at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3. This consists of a Panel hearing with at least three governors who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint or in any previous investigation, with consideration being given to one of whom being an independent governor.

Complainants can request an independent complaints committee if they reasonably believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings which cannot be addressed by the appointment of one independent governor. Complainants should provide evidence of bias in support of their request, as it is the panel's decision whether to agree to it. If the appearance of bias is sufficient to taint the decision reached, then it is recommended that the panel grants such requests.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 3 will be heard by a committee of independent governors.

This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

### Timeline for a Stage 3 Governor Panel Hearing

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply and are explained to the Clerk at the same time that the request for a Stage 3 hearing is made.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 30 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. In this case, the Panel will meet, with the Clerk and Area Schools Officer in attendance, and consider the complaint on the basis of written submissions from both parties, with neither party being present.

### Attendees at the meeting

The Clerk will invite the following parties:

- a panel of 3 governors, one or more of whom may be independent of the school
- the complainant
- the Headteacher
- investigating member of the Senior Leadership Team (if appropriate)
- investigating governor who dealt with the complaint at Stage 2
- relevant witnesses
- Area Schools Support Service representative (procedural advice)

The complainant may ask to be accompanied to the meeting by a supportive companion, interpreter or advocate. It is not advisable for this person to be a member of the school community, for reasons of confidentiality and to avoid conflict of interest. The complainant must advise the Clerk of the name and role of this additional person prior to the hearing, and the Clerk will seek agreement from the Chair of the Panel. If the additional person is attending as an advocate, they will be presenting the complainant's case and speaking on their behalf, and therefore the complainant will not be able to address the Panel directly. If the additional person is attending as a supportive companion, they will not be able to address the Panel directly.

As this is not a legal process, neither party may bring legal representation with them except in exceptional circumstances, by prior agreement of the Panel.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

If the attendance of any students is required at the hearing, parental permission will be sought if the student is under the age of 18. Extra care will be taken to consider the vulnerability of children where they are present at a complaints hearing. The Panel should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of the adults. If the child/young person is the complainant, the Panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint **and** the Panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, that the child/young person needs to attend. However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the Panel considers is not in the child/young person's best interests. The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

At least 15 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify both parties of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- inform both parties that copies of any further evidence should be submitted to the clerk at least 10 school days before the meeting. Any evidence submitted after this, including on the day of the hearing, will only be considered in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the panel, whose decision is final.

Any written material will be collated and circulated by the clerk to all parties so that it is received at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. 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.

### Conduct of the meeting

The aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the panel does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations. Financial compensation is not a possible outcome of the process.

The panel hearing will consider the complaint as it was submitted at stage 1 and stage 2. Any new issues will need to be dealt with as a new complaint under this policy.

The Panel will not only consider the handling of the complaint at the previous stages, but will also consider those aspects of the original complaint which the complainant believes have not been fully addressed.

The meeting will be held in private and is confidential. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or additional needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations are recorded. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The format of the meeting is that the complainant is given a set amount of time to make their case. The Panel and the school may then ask the complainant questions for clarification.

The school then has the same amount of time to make their case. The Panel and the complainant then have the opportunity to seek clarification from the school. Both parties then leave the meeting and the Panel will deliberate.

The Panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and will come to their decision on the balance of probabilities. The Panel can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- determine that all or part of the complaint is out of their scope to consider

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 the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Panel will provide the complainant and The Royal Alexandra and Albert School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, and a copy of the minutes of the Panel hearing, within 10 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they believe that their complaint has been handled unreasonably or unlawfully by The Royal Alexandra and Albert School.

The Panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by post, electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, with a copy to the Headteacher.

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 The Royal Alexandra and Albert School will take to resolve the complaint.

The complaint investigator / the Chair of the Panel will ensure that a copy of all relevant information relating to the complaint is kept at the school in a secure, confidential file, separate from staff and pupil records. This information should be retained for 6 years from the date of the complaint, in line with guidance from the Information and Records Management Society ([www.irms.org.uk](http://www.irms.org.uk)) and in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The complainant should be informed that this will be done.

Please note that the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under s.109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 may request access to complaints documentation.

## Next steps

If the complainant believes the school 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 Department for Education after they have completed Stage 3.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by The Royal Alexandra and Albert School. They will consider

whether The Royal Alexandra and Albert School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at:  
[www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus),

## Roles & Responsibilities

### Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

### Investigator

The investigator's role is to provide a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:

- sensitive and thorough discussion with the complainant to establish their perspective and desired outcomes
- interviewing staff and other people relevant to the complaint
- consideration of records and other relevant information
- analysing information, liaising with the complainant and the Clerk as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the Headteacher or complaints Panel that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

### Complaints co-ordinator

A member of the senior leadership team acts as the Complaints Co-ordinator at the Royal Alexandra & Albert School.

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk, LAs and Children's Services (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
  - sharing third party information
  - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records.

### Clerk to the Stage 3 Panel Hearing

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the Panel and should:

- ensure that, where appropriate, all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale)
- ensure minutes of the meeting are taken
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the Panel's decision.

### Panel Chair

The Panel's chair, who is nominated in advance of a complaint meeting, will ensure that the meeting is conducted in line with the complaints procedure and best practice principles.

### Panel Members

Panel members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so
- No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- They should read all documentation and understand the aims and purpose of the meeting.

## Procedure for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

The Royal Alexandra & Albert School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will act to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

The Royal Alexandra & Albert School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes 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
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before determining that they may be acting "unreasonably".

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact The Royal Alexandra & Albert School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from The Royal Alexandra & Albert School.

### Procedure for managing complaint campaigns

In the rare event that the School receives a large volume of complaints all based on the same subject, from the complainants unconnected with the school, we will either send a template response to all complainants or publish a single response on the School's website.

## Appendix A: Contact details

### Headteacher

Royal Alexandra & Albert School

Gatton Park

Reigate

RH2 0TD

**Telephone** 01737 649041

**Email:** [Head@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:Head@gatton-park.org.uk)

### Clerk to Governing Body:

Email: [malcolmbradley@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:malcolmbradley@gatton-park.org.uk)

### Area Schools Support Service:

The role of the Area Schools Support Service is to provide impartial advice and guidance to school staff, governors and complainants at all stages of the complaints process.\*

*\*For those schools which purchase the service.*

<p><b>North East Surrey</b> (Elmbridge, Epsom &amp; Ewell, Spelthorne) <b>Caroline Marden</b> <b>Area Schools Officer</b> Telephone: 01372 833412 Email: <a href="mailto:caroline.marden@surreycc.gov.uk">caroline.marden@surreycc.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Mariette Masters</b> <b>Area Schools Assistant</b> Telephone: 01372 833412 Email: <a href="mailto:mariette.masters@surreycc.gov.uk">mariette.masters@surreycc.gov.uk</a> Esher Civic Centre, High Street, Esher, Surrey KT10 9SD</p>	<p><b>North West Surrey</b> (Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Woking) <b>Kate Prince</b> <b>Area Schools Officer</b> Telephone: 01483 518104 Email: <a href="mailto:kate.prince@surreycc.gov.uk">kate.prince@surreycc.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Natalie Cull</b> <b>Area Schools Assistant</b> Telephone: 01483 518106 Email: <a href="mailto:natalie.cull@surreycc.gov.uk">natalie.cull@surreycc.gov.uk</a> Quadrant Court, Guildford Rd, Woking, Surrey GU22 7QQ</p>
<p><b>South East Surrey</b> (Mole Valley, Reigate &amp; Banstead, Tandridge) <b>Ann Panton</b> <b>Area Schools Officer</b> Telephone: 01737 737960 Email: <a href="mailto:ann.panton@surreycc.gov.uk">ann.panton@surreycc.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>South West Surrey</b> (Guildford and Waverley) <b>Jane van den Broeke</b> <b>Area Schools Officer</b> Telephone: 01483 517835 Email: <a href="mailto:jane.vandenbroeke@surreycc.gov.uk">jane.vandenbroeke@surreycc.gov.uk</a></p>

<p><b>Sally Pickford</b> <b>Area Schools Assistant</b> Telephone: 01737 737961 Email: sally.pickford@surreycc.gov.uk Consort House, 5-7 Queensway, Redhill, Surrey RH1 1YB</p>	<p><b>Yvonne Girdler</b> <b>Area Schools Assistant</b> Telephone: 01483 517835 Email: yvonne.girdler@surreycc.gov.uk Quadrant Court, Guildford Rd, Woking, Surrey GU22 7QQ</p>
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## Appendix B: Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the School office or by email to [Head@gatton-park.org.uk](mailto:Head@gatton-park.org.uk) .

<b>Your name:</b>		
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>		
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>		
<b>Contact details:</b>		
<b>Please give details of your complaint (adding extra pages if necessary):</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Details of issue</b>	<b>What action has been taken to resolve the matter and by whom?</b>
<b>1</b>		
<b>2</b>		
<b>3</b>		
<b>etc</b>		

**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 and by whom:**

**Stage:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Action taken:**

**Date:**