Bosco Complaints Policy

For all schools within the Bosco Catholic Education Trust

This policy has been approved by the Bosco Catholic Education Trust Board

APPROVED	NEXT REVIEW DUE
September 2026	September 2027

Contents

1. Bosco Catholic Education Trust Mission Statement 3
2. Who can make a complaint? 3
3. The difference between a concern and a complaint 3
4. How to raise a concern or make a complaint 3
5. Anonymous complaints 4
6. Timescales for raising a complaint 4
7. Complaints received outside of term time 4
8. Audio or video evidence 4
9. Deviation from the procedure 5
10. Scope of this complaints procedure 5
11. Resolving complaints 6
12. Withdrawal of a complaint 7
13. Concerns and informal complaints 7
14. Formal complaints 7
15. Timeline 10
16. Attendees at the meeting 11
17. Conduct of the meeting 12
18. Complaints about the Headteacher or Governors of the school 14
19. Complaints about the Trust, CEO or Trustee 14
20. Next Steps 15
21. Roles and Responsibilities 15
22. Procedure for managing serial and unreasonable complaints 16
23. Procedure for managing complaint campaigns 18
24. Appendix A – School contact details 19
25. Appendix B – Complaint form 20

1. Bosco Catholic Education Trust Mission Statement

The Bosco Catholic Education Trust is a Christ-centred family of Catholic academies, within the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, working together as one body to provide an outstanding education for all. As Catholic schools, we endeavour to develop confident, compassionate and faithful young people. Through partnership, collaboration and mutual support, we seek to enable all those entrusted to our care to become the person God called them to be.

"Serve the Lord joyfully"

2. 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 any Bosco Catholic Education Trust school about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

3. 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 the complaints procedure. Bosco Catholic Education Trust 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, Bosco Catholic Education Trust will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

4. How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern can be raised in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of the person with the concern, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or Headteacher.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint, using the Complaint form (Appendix B). If you require assistance with completing the form, please contact the school office.

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.

A template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure, for use at any stage of the procedure as required. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask a third-party organisation such as the Citizens Advice Bureau 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.

5. Anonymous complaints

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

6. Timescales for raising a complaint

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 only if exceptional circumstances apply.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Deviation from the procedure

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 the deviation given.

10. Scope of this complaints procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Bosco Catholic Education Trust other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	**Who to contact**
Admissions to schools	Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process – either through the appeals process or via the local authority.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Local Authority Single Point of Access (SPOA) on 01323 464 222 (West Sussex) or 01323 464222 (East Sussex).
Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline- exclusions/exclusions. **complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.*
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistle-blowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. 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.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints and allegations about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, or management of allegations policy as appropriate. 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.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.

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 Bosco Catholic Education Trust in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

11. Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Bosco Catholic Education Trust 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.

12. Withdrawal of a complaint

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

13. Concerns and informal complaints

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

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, year head/subject head or Headteacher. 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.

14. Formal complaints

Summary of timeline for formal complaints:

NOTE: In all cases, timescales refer to school days so exclude weekends, school holidays and INSET days.

Stage 1	• Formal investigation by Headteacher /designated member of SLT • Where complainant feels that issues have not been fully addressed progress to Stage 2	15 days
Stage 2	• Formal investigation by Chair of Governors / nominated Governor • Where complainant feels that issues have not been fully addressed progress to Stage 3	15 days
Stage 3	• Bosco Catholic Education Trust Panel Hearing • This is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure • Where dissatisfied with outcomes, contact Education & Skills Funding Agency	40 days

Stage 1 Headteachers Investigation

- Acknowledgement of receipt of complaint to be sent within 3 school days of receipt of the complaint.

- Complaint to be investigated and written response to be received by complainant within 15 school days of receipt of the formal complaint.

Stage 2 Governor Investigation

- If the complainant believes that their complaint has not been fully addressed at stage 1, they may request to move to stage 2. This request must be made within 10 school days of the receipt of the outcome letter at stage 1.
- Acknowledgement of receipt of complaint to be sent within 3 school days of receipt of the complaint.
- Complaint to be investigated and written response to be received by complainant within 15 school days of receipt of the stage 2 formal complaint.

Stage 3 Bosco Catholic Education Trust Panel Hearing

- If the complainant believes that their complaint has not been fully addressed at stage 2, they may request to move to stage 3. This request must be made within 10 school days of the receipt of the outcome letter at stage 2.
- Acknowledgement of receipt of request to escalate complaint to stage 3 to be sent within 5 school days.
- Hearing to be held within 30 school days of receipt of request to go to stage 3.
- Paperwork for Stage 3 hearing to be received from all parties at least 10 school days before the hearing.
- Paperwork for Stage 3 hearing to be sent to all parties at least 5 school days before the hearing.
- Outcome letter from panel to be received by complainant within 10 school days of the hearing.

Stage 1 – Headteacher Investigation

Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in writing 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.

Within this response, 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 can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: 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.

At the conclusion of their 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 Bosco Catholic Education Trust will take to resolve the complaint.

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

Stage 2 – Governor Investigation

If the complainant believes that their complaint has not been fully addressed at Stage 1, they may request a Governor investigation. This should be done in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form (see Appendix A for the contact details of the Chair of Governors, and Appendix B for a copy of the form).

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 complaint form will be acknowledged. In most cases the complainant will be invited to meet with the Chair of Governors / Nominated Governor at the outset of the process. The aim of this meeting is to enable the Chair of Governors / Nominated Governor to understand the scope of the complaint and desired outcomes prior to commencing their investigation.

The Chair of Governors/Nominated 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 Chair of Governors/Nominated 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 Chair of Governors /Nominated 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 Chair of Governors / Nominated Governor should inform the complainant of their decision in writing within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint. They should explain clearly why they have come to the decision that they made. They should detail any agreed actions as a result of the complaint. Finally, they should provide the complainant with details of how to progress the complaint to Stage 3 if they believe their complaint has not been fully addressed, providing them with the contact details of the Clerk to the Governing Body (Appendix A). Should the complaint not be resolved mediation should be considered. This can be arranged through the Area Schools Support Service and will be impartial and objective.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If the complainant does not believe that 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 any previous investigation. The panel will include a panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school. This means that the independent Complaint Panel member will not be a Trustee or an employee of the Trust, it could be a governor of a school within the Trust or a representative from another school or the Diocese. An investigator may be appointed to investigate the issues raised in the complaint and report to the Bosco Catholic Education Trust complaints panel. Fair consideration will be given to any legitimate objection to a particular member of the panel.

Complainants can request an independent complaints committee if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. They 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.

This is the final stage of the Trust's complaints procedure.

15. Timeline

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

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.

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, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible and
- inform both parties that copies of any further written material 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.

16. Attendees at the meeting

The Clerk will invite the following parties as applicable:

- a panel of three governors / Trustees, one or more of whom is independent of the running and management of the school
- the complainant
- the Headteacher
- investigating member of SLT (if appropriate)
- the Chair of Governors / Nominated Governor who dealt with the complaint at Stage 2
- relevant witnesses

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 to the Complaint Review Panel of the name and role of this additional person prior to the hearing,. 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.

If the attendance of any pupils is required at the hearing, parental permission will be sought if the pupil 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 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. Where the child / young person's parent is the complainant, the Panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, 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. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

17. 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 meeting 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 was submitted at stage 1 and 2. Any new issues will need to be dealt with by a separate complaint procedure.

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 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 decisions 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 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 of Education (DfE) if they believe that their complaint has been handled unreasonably or unlawfully by Bosco Catholic Education Trust.

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 Bosco Catholic Education Trust will take to resolve the complaint.

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 complaint investigator / the Chair of the Complaint Review 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 and is available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor or the Headteacher.

Record keeping
The school/Trust will keep a written record of all complaints made under the formal stages of this complaints procedure.

The written record will include:

- the nature and date of the complaint;
- the stage at which the complaint was considered and whether it was resolved following the

formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing;
- the final outcome of the complaint, including whether it was upheld, partially upheld or not upheld; and
- any action taken by the school or Trust as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether the complaint was upheld.

The school/Trust will also keep appropriate records of the progress of each formal complaint and its final outcome.

Records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them, or where disclosure is otherwise required by law.

The Headteacher, or an appropriately designated member of staff, will be responsible for ensuring that these records are maintained securely in accordance with the Trust's records retention and data protection arrangements.
This information should be retained for six years from the date of the complaint, in line with guidance from the Information and Records Management Society (*www.irms.org.uk*) and in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (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 s109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 may request access to complaints documentation.

18. Complaints about the Headteacher or Governors of the school

Complaints about Head of School, Headteacher, Executive Headteacher or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office. Contact details are given in Appendix A.

A complaint about a Head of School will be referred to the relevant Executive Headteacher for investigation as detailed in Stage 1. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, Executive Headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2.

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. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response to the complainant with a copy to the Headteacher.

Stage 3 complaints will be heard by a committee of governors and an independent panel

member.

19. Complaints about the Trust, CEO or Trustee

If a complaint is escalated to Bosco Catholic Education Trust ("the Trust") or if a complainant wishes to complain directly about the Trust, then the complaint should be sent to the CEO to be investigated.

The CEO will write to the complainant acknowledging the complaint within **5 school days** of the date that the written request was received. The acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint will now be investigated under Stage 2 of this Complaints Policy and will confirm the date for providing a response to the complainant.

Following the investigation, the CEO will write to the complainant confirming the outcome within 15 school days of the date that the letter was received. If this time limit cannot be met, the CEO will write to the Complainant explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised date.

If the complaint concerns the CEO or a Trustee, the complaint should be investigated by the Chair of the Trust Board. If a formal complaint form is received about the Chair, the complaint will be referred to the Vice Chair for investigation.

NB. Where the Chair of the Trust Board has investigated the complaint, they will write the letter of outcome to the Complainant and provide a copy to the CEO.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the previous stage, the complainant should write to the Clerk to the Trust Board asking for the complaint to be heard before a Complaint Panel, within 10 school days. The procedure will mirror that outlined under Stage 3 – Panel Hearing above.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire trust board or
- the majority of the trust board

the complaint will be heard by a completely independent panel.

20. Next Steps

If the complainant believes the Trust 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 Trust. They will consider whether the Trust 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, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to: Department for Education Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD

21. Roles and 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 complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

Clerk to the Stage 3 Panel Hearing
The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the Panel and should:

- ensure that 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 Regulation (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
- record the proceedings
- 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 the 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. At least one panel member must be independent of the school's management/running.
- No governor / trustee 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.

22. Procedure for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

Bosco Catholic Education Trust 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 take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Bosco Catholic Education Trust 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 Bosco Catholic Education Trust 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 Bosco Catholic Education Trust schools.

23. 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 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.

24. Appendix A – School contact details

For stage 1 and 2 complaints you need to contact the school directly.

Contact details are available on each of the Trust schools' websites or, alternatively, you can contact the school directly on the following telephone numbers:

Annecy Catholic Primary School, Seaford	01323 894 892
Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Primary School, Crawley	01293 526 057
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Haywards Heath	01444 452 584
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Worthing	01903 234 115
St Paul's Catholic College, Burgess Hill	01444 873 898
St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Shoreham-by-Sea	01273 454 066
St Philip Howard Catholic School, Barnham	01243 552 055
St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School, Angmering	01903 782 188
St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School, Burgess Hill	01444 235 254
St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School, Horsham	01403 252 357
St Catherine's Catholic Primary School, Littlehampton	01903 716 039
St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, Hastings	01424 427 801
St Thomas a Becket Catholic Primary School, Eastbourne	01323 737 221
St Richard's Catholic College, Bexhill on Sea	01424 731 070
St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Arundel	01903 882 115
St Richard's Catholic Primary School, Chichester	01243 784 549
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bognor Regis	01243 822 287
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Hastings	01424 429 494

To contact the CEO or Clerk to the Bosco Catholic Education Trust, either send your letter and complaint form to the relevant contact at:

Bosco Catholic Education Trust
c/o St Philip Howard Catholic School
Elm Grove South
Barnham
West Sussex
PO22 0EN

or by email to info@boscocet.org.uk.

25. Appendix B – Complaint form

Please complete and return to either Headteacher for Stage 1, or Clerk via the School Office for Stages 2 and 3 who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

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

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 who:
Complaint referred to:
Action taken:
Date: