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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stage 4 Complaints Panel time period to convene a complaints panel meeting extended to 2 school days.</li> <li>- Stage 4 procedure updated bullet points, (iii), (iv) added.</li> <li>- stage 4 procedure (v) updated with information</li> <li>- Stage 4 procedure, note added that complaints about staff conduct will not be handled under this complaint's procedure. Complaints about staff will be considered under HR policies and procedures.</li> <li>- Stage 4 procedure representatives for the media are not permitted to attend a panel hearing.</li> <li>- Stage 4 procedure(x) and(ix) added.</li> <li>- ESFA contact information updated</li> </ul>
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The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust is under a duty to comply with requirements set out in Schedule part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Complaints Policy is based on guidance published by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

In the majority of cases, complaints will be logged against a specific academy and will be dealt with by the academy/Academy Council as appropriate. This complaints policy has been written to guide complainants who are making complaints against academies.

A complainant may wish to raise a complaint against the Trust Central Team, which will be dealt with by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Trust Board as appropriate. Whilst the principle of the complaint's procedure remains the same for complaints against the Trust Central Team or Trust Board, the investigating person will differ. Further explanation of the differences can be found in

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As the complaints policy is based upon Part 7 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, it only applies to complaints from parents of pupils who attend the academies within the Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust (BWCAT) regarding their child.

Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to the academy about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Complaints made by persons who do not have a registered pupil at the school will be investigated and responded to in writing.

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

In accordance with administrative law principles, complainants will be given the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full, unless there is clear evidence that the complaint meets the criteria of a serial or persistent complaint.

This Policy will apply to most general complaints received by the Academy/Trust. However, some complaints are subject to separate statutory procedures, for example

Admissions	

and safeguarding policies and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.

If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) who has local responsibility for





Dates and times of all activities linked to the complaint in chronological order should always be recorded and made available to investigators, as necessary. It is best practice to take minutes of meetings and discussions.





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The majority of concerns from parents are handled under the following general procedure. The procedure is divided into four stages; each stage should be completed before progressing to the next stage.

Staff try to resolve the complaint through informal discussion If the complainant is not satisfied, proceed to formal stages





(The staff member will document and keep a record of all communication with the complainant). This allows the Executive/ Headteacher to remain impartial if the complainant proceeds to stage 2 (Headteacher Investigation).

If a complainant addresses their complaint directly to the Chair of the Academy Council and is not a complaint about the Executive/ Headteacher,

The Chair of the Academy Council will liaise with the Executive/ Headteacher to direct an appropriate member of staff to contact the complainant to carry out stage 1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of stage 1 the appropriate member of staff will inform the complainant how to proceed with their complaint to stage 2. The staff member will document and keep a record of all communication with the complainant. This allows the Chair of the Academy Council to remain impartial if the complainant proceeds to stage 3 (Chair of Academy Council Investigation).

The same process will be followed if a complainant addresses their complaint directly to the Chair of the Trust Board and is not a complaint about the Chief Executive officer.

Parents need to be given an opportunity to discuss their concerns with the appropriate member of staff, who can clarify the nature of their concern and reassure them that the

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It should by now have become clear that the concern is a formal complaint. The Headteacher (or member of staff designated to investigate the complaint) to adhere to





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If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the

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All complaints that reach this stage will have done so because the complainant has not been satisfied by the responses received at Stages 1 through to 3.

The complainant should complete and submit a "Stage 4 Complaint Form"





(viii) It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Panel to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted. Complainants are not permitted to record the hearing on any device but may take handwritten notes of the meeting themselves.

(ix) The panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

(x)

documentation has been read by all parties in advance of the meeting therefore maximising the use of meeting time.

At the conclusion of the meeting the Chair should explain that the Panel will consider all the representations made and will make its decision and write to all parties with the outcome  
\_\_\_\_\_ The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact





does not have a procedure that complies with part 7 of [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)

has not followed its published complaints procedure

has not allowed its complaints procedure to be completed

The ESFA cannot change an academy's/Trust decision about a complaint. Its role is to make sure the academy/Trust handles the complaint properly by following a published procedure.

The ESFA will write to the complainant with the outcome of the case. The academy/Trust will also receive a copy of the ESFA's findings, and the enquiry will then be closed.

If the ESFA upholds the complaint, it may do one or both of the following:

Ask the Trust to change its complaints procedure so that it complies with legal requirements. The ESFA will let the complainant know when the Trust has done this.

Ask the academy to reconsider the complaint from an appropriate stage in their procedure.

If the academy/Trust does not comply with the recommended actions, the ESFA may seek to force the Trust to do this.

Complaints made against the Trust Central Team or Trust Board follow the same principles and stages of the procedure as complaints against academies. The differences are the persons who investigate or hear the complaint.

In reading the above policy and procedure the following should be applied:

Class Teacher or					

will comprise of at least three persons. The Complaints Panel will usually be made up of:

2 Directors who serve on the Trust Board.

1 Independent Person who is not involved with the management or running of the Trust.

The panel cannot be made solely of Directors because they are not independent of the management and running of the Trust. It is a matter for the Trust to identify suitably independent individuals who can fulfil the role and responsibility of being the independent member.

The independent member of the panel will not be a Director or an employee of the Trust. For the avoidance of doubt, a Governor of an academy within the Trust may be the independent member of the panel if they are not an employee of the Trust, and they are sufficiently removed from the management and running of the Trust to be considered truly independent.

Governors make a special and important contribution to the running of academies. They work hard, giving freely their time, expertise, and skills. However, from time to time, a Governor may act or be deemed to have acted in a way that is not in the best interests of the Academy Council or the academy and, in doing so, may damage the reputation of the Academy Council. The Governor may be acting in good faith or be unaware of the consequences for his/her actions but, nevertheless, the Academy Council should act. The approach to dealing with such issues is set out below.

To ensure Governors are aware of what is expected of them, a Code of Conduct has been prepared and must be signed annually. The Code of Conduct can be obtained from the academy.

Complaints about the behaviour or actions of a Governor should be dealt with by the Chair of the Academy Council. However, if the complaint is about the Chair, the Vice-Chair should lead the process suggested below.

The Head of Governance should be contacted to facilitate an investigation if the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice-Chair; or
- the entire Academy Council; or
- the majority of the Academy Council.

All correspondence to the Head of Governance at [johnson@bwcat.org](mailto:johnson@bwcat.org)

A range of informal approaches can be used individually or as linked approaches to resolve any difficulties or disputes in a constructive way.

The following list is not exhaustive:

A quiet word from the Chair to explain the problem and suggest how to ensure it does not recur. This may be done in the presence of the Headteacher or another member of the Academy Council.

A general training or information item for all Governors covering behaviour and conduct at an Academy Council meeting.

The Chair could refer Governors to the relevant section of the Trust Scheme of Delegation and DfE Governance Handbook.

Training for all Governors at an Academy Council meeting.

The individual Governor can be asked to attend an appropriate training course.

Specific training for the Governor can be delivered in the academy (maybe with a small group of other Governors), and/or

A meeting with the Chair and Headteacher to explain the effect of the behaviour

The Chair of the Academy Council should keep a record of ~~these~~ steps used, in the event that the behaviour continues and results in action being taken to remove the Governor.

If the Chair of the Academy Council determines that the complaint needs to be dealt with formally, the following process should be followed:

The Chair should meet with the Governor to clarify the extent of ~~the~~ behaviour or disagreement and the reasons for it and produce an agreed summary in writing. The Governor should be given an opportunity to respond. Setting a reasonable time limit would be helpful. It may be possible to close the issue at this point with formal guidance or a warning or rebuke, either orally or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the issue.

If the Chair is not satisfied with the response, then the investigation should be ~~filed~~. The Chair should contact the Trust Head of Governance.

The Head of Governance then investigates the issue, taking evidence from interested parties. As interviews are likely to be a part of this process another person should accompany the Head of Governance. The investigation should be documented in full, including notes of interviews that should be checked back for accuracy with the interviewees.

The Head of Governance should report back in writing to the Chair of the Academy Council and the Chair of the Trust Board.










If you are not satisfied with the response received from the Chair of the Academy Council investigation of your complaint, then please complete this form and address it to the Chair of the Academy Council. Please send the form to [clerks@bwcat.org](mailto:clerks@bwcat.org). The form should be completed and sent to the Chair of the Academy Council for the complaint to be progressed.

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The 16 schools in our Trust:

St. Mary's Menston, a Catholic Voluntary Academy

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Otley, a Voluntary Academy

Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Ilkley, a Voluntary Academy

St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Pudsey, a Voluntary Academy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Harrogate, a Voluntary Academy

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Knaresborough, a Voluntary Academy

St. Stephen's Catholic Primary School and Nurs