







## 1. What is a complaint?

Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust (FMAT) takes very seriously any concern or complaint about the education or other services we provide or about the conduct of our staff. We believe that by tackling concerns at the earliest possible stage it allows us to improve relationships, enhance learning, prevent issues escalating and reduce the number of formal complaints we receive.

We define a concern as follows:









complainant. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated, save in exceptional circumstances, as we are unable to respond to the complainant. (These circumstances would include serious concerns such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, where the Trust is either required to involve appropriate external agencies or might conduct an internal review to test whether there is any corroborative evidence which might trigger a formal investigation).

Complaints must be about the work of the Trust as distinct from individual academies. Once the process is concluded for the latter, the same complaint(s) will not be reconsidered under the guise of a complaint about the Trust.

#### 7. Where to send your complaint

You should send your complaint to the Principal if the complaint is about an individual Academy. If your complaint is about the Academy Association or the broader work of the Trust, it should be sent to the CEO.

In the event of a complaint relating to the Principal, the complaint should be sent to the CEO using the address of the Central Office of the Trust. In the event of a complaint relating to the CEO, the complaint should be sent to the Chair of the Trust Board. The relevant address can be found on the Trust's website.

The Academy/Trust will acknowledge receipt of a complaint in writing within two working day.

#### 8. The stages of handling a complaint

If an individual has a complaint made to them and they are unsure how to respond in line with this policy, they should immediately seek the guidance of either: their academy's complaints coordinator, the trust's complaints coordinator, or their line manager. They should not respond directly to the complainant other than to acknowledge the complaint and say that someone will respond to them at the earliest available opportunity.

Informal - all concerns or complaints will be dealt with informally in the first instance.

Stage 1 - the complaint will be investigated by a nominated member of the academy staff and, if resolved satisfactorily at this stage, the procedure is completed. The member of staff should confirm what the complainant feels would be a satisfactory resolution to their concern or complaint.





Stage 2 – the complaint will be investigated by a nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Principal. The member of staff should confirm what the complainant feels would be a satisfactory resolution to their concern or complaint.

Stage 3 – if not resolved at Stage 2, the CEO will arrange for a member of trust staff who is independent of the matter to consider the complaint. At this stage, the complaint itself will not be reinvestigated. The member of staff will review if due process has been followed at the previous stages. If resolved satisfactorily at this stage, the procedure is completed.

Stage 4 – if not resolved at Stage 3, the complaint will be considered by a panel of three consisting of at least one member of the Trust Board, one of whom may





## Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated as confidential. Correspondence, statements and 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 2018 Act requests access to them.

However, it should be noted that if any action taken by a member of staff is the subject of a complaint, the employee should be advised of the complaint made against them, and they should be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint as part of the investigation process.

All confidential information will be securely maintained by the Academy/Trust in line with FMA T's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice and in line with the requirements of current Data Protection Legislation.

### 9. Investigating the complaint

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Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, members of the Academy Association or Trust Board, we will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.



Concern dealt with by nominated member of staff.

Informal Concern

five

Issue not resolved

Issue resolved (normally within



## APPENDIX 2: THE ACADEMY/TRUST COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete this form and return it to the Principal/PA to the CEO, who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name .....

Relationship to student: .....

Students name:

.....

Your address: .....

.....

Daytime telephone number: .....

Evening telephone number: .....

Email address: .....

Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc), to allow the matter to be fully investigated. You may continue on a separate piece of paper, or attach additional paperwork, if you wish.















## APPENDIX 5 – PANEL HEARING PROCEDURE

The panel hearing procedure is as follows:

The papers for the hearing will be circulated by the Clerk five working days prior to the panel hearing. Any additional material should be provided to the Clerk no later than two working day before the panel hearing for distribution to relevant parties.

The hearing will be as informal as possible commensurate with the fact that it is part of a formal procedure. The style will not be confrontational or adversarial and will be a genuine attempt to allow the complainant to present their views on how they feel due process has not been followed at an earlier Stage or Stages







Date received  
Name of complainant  
Summary of reason for complaint or concern  
Complaint owner (member of staff dealing with it)  
Summary of actions taken  
Statement outlining resolution

