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**1590**  
TRUST

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## **The 1590 Trust Complaints Policy**

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***Date: July 2023***

***Policy Review Cycle: Annually***

***Review Assigned to: Conyers Local Governing Body***

## **Introduction**

The 1590 Trust takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve concerns informally.

We understand however that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. This policy covers the stages of the formal complaints process.

## **Making a complaint**

A formal complaint can be made in writing using the Formal Complaints Form. If you want to withdraw your complaint at any stage you can do so by informing the Trust.

Complaints made outside of term time are considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Complaints should be made via the school office:

<b>Complaints about</b>	<b>Addressed to</b>
School staff (except the Headteacher)	Headteacher
Headteacher	Chair of Governors
Chair of Governors/individual Governors/ Whole Governing Body	Clerk to the Governing Body
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Trustees	Chair of Trust Board
Chair of Trust Board	Vice Chair of Trust Board
The 1590 Trust	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The Chief Executive and Trust school Headteachers may delegate complaint investigation and handling to other members of senior staff.

## **Anonymous complaints**

The Trust will not investigate anonymous complaints. If appropriate and in extremely exceptional circumstances the Trust may review the complaint to determine whether it warrants investigation.

## **Timescales**

Complaints must be raised within three months of an incident/the last of a series of incidents. We will only consider complaints made outside of this period if exceptional circumstances apply.

## **Vexatious & Persistent Complaints**

A vexatious complaint is contentiously raised without grounds, in order to cause annoyance or disruption.

A persistent complainant is someone who contacts the Trust and raises the same complaint or similar complaints many times, regardless of whether the complaint has been dealt with. The Trust may not proceed with a complaint that is considered vexatious and/or persistent in order to manage expectations and minimise risks.

### **Stage 1 – Informal complaints**

It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis. Concerns should initially be raised with the member of staff most directly involved, for example the Classroom Teacher or Year Manager. If you are not satisfied with the outcome then concerns should be discussed with a senior member of staff.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

### **Stage 2 – Formal complaints**

Formal complaints must be made via the school office, preferably in writing using the Formal Complaints Form (Appendix 1). The Headteacher will investigate your complaint or delegate the investigation to another member of senior staff.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Headteacher (or the delegated member of staff investigating the complaint) will provide a written response within 10 school days of the date of receipt. If this is not possible due to exceptional circumstances, for example illness or prolonged absence, we will notify you.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the Governing Body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a Governor will be appointed to complete the actions at Stage 2.

If your complaint is jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair, the entire Governing Body or the majority of the Governing Body, Stage 2 will be escalated to the CEO.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing – Final Stage**

In the unfortunate event that you are dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wish to take the matter further, you can escalate your complaint to Stage 3. This is a panel hearing consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in your complaint.

Requests to escalate to Stage 3 must be sent via the school office addressed to the School Administrator. If your complaint is about the CEO, Trust Chair or a Trustee, it should be addressed to the Clerk to the Trust Board.

Requests must be made within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response. Requests received outside of this period will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

We will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of your request. If this is not possible we will discuss an anticipated date and keep you informed. If you reject the offer of three proposed dates without good reason we will decide when to hold the meeting and it will proceed in your absence.

You may bring someone to the panel meeting to provide support such as a relative or friend. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will not review any new complaints or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint.

Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless disabilities or special needs require it.

The committee will consider your complaint and the evidence presented. They can uphold the complaint in whole/part or dismiss the complaint in whole/part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint and where appropriate, make recommendations.

The Committee will provide their decision within 10 school days of the meeting and any actions taken to investigate the complaint, the decision made and the reason(s) for it.

If your complaint is jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair, the entire Governing Body or the majority of the Governing Body, Stage 3 will be heard by Trustees and an independent panel member.

### **Next Steps**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint at Stage 3 you can contact the ESFA. The ESFA primarily review education legislation and will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by The 1590 Trust.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Student's name:</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil:</b>
<b>Address:</b>  <b>Postcode:</b> <b>Day time telephone number:</b> <b>Evening telephone number:</b> <b>Email address:</b>
<b>Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.</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:**

**By who:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Action taken:**

**Date:**