

## COMPLAINTS POLICY FOR THE FIRST FEDERATION TRUST

<b>Adopted:</b>	<b>23 April 2026</b>
<b>Review cycle:</b>	<b>Three years</b>
<b>Next review due by:</b>	<b>April 2029</b>

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## **1. Policy statement**

We are a strong, inclusive Trust whose purpose is to work together to provide the best possible education for all. Our vision is that every individual within our Trust will aspire, flourish and achieve.

This policy is based on our values of inspiring learning for all, developing the individual and growing positive relationships, and contributing positively to all the communities we are part of. We are committed to complaint resolution and reconciliation at the earliest opportunity.

The Trust values its relationships with parents, carers and our local communities. We aim to resolve any concerns informally in a timely manner. We are open to feedback and comments about our work, both positive and negative, as these provide us with valuable information about our effectiveness and how we can better meet our aims.

## **2. Scope and purpose**

### **2.1. Complaints from parents and carers of pupils**

This policy sets out the framework for how complaints from parents and carers of pupils are managed for all the schools within the First Federation Trust.

The Trust reserves the right to substitute this policy for an alternative, shorter process in circumstances outlined in [Appendix 7](#) or other exceptional circumstances.

### **2.2. Complaints from other sources**

The Trust will also usually follow this policy when dealing with complaints from people who are not parents or carers but reserves the right to substitute this policy for an alternative process where it is appropriate to do so.

### **2.3. Anonymous complaints**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Head of School, a member of the Trust Senior Leadership Group or the Chair of the Trust board, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

### **2.4. Time scales**

2.4.1. We encourage complaints to be raised informally at the earliest opportunity in a constructive manner. We will make every effort to resolve the matters brought to our attention informally and as quickly as possible. However, if this is not possible, the procedure in this policy should be followed.

2.4.2. We consider three months to be an acceptable timeframe in which to raise a complaint. This means 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.

2.4.3. We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period. Timescales in this policy refer to 'school term days'. These are days when the school is open and staff and pupils are required to attend.

2.4.4. Where normal published time scales cannot be met, we will set new time limits, and send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay,

## **2.5. Complaints outside the scope of this policy**

Some complaints are dealt with under other statutory policies and therefore do not fall within the scope of this policy, as set out in Appendix 6 under the headings:

- Admissions to schools
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs
- Matters likely to require a child protection investigation
- Suspension and exclusion of children from school
- Whistleblowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff conduct complaints
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities
- Withdrawal from the curriculum
- From June 2026, data protection complaints. A separate policy will be available for complaints about data protection, reflecting the recent changes in legislation and ICO advice.

Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaint policy. Any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Outcomes of disciplinary procedures will not be shared with complainants, because sharing that information would breach the data privacy rights of the employee.

## **2.6. Duplicate complaints, group complaints and complaint campaigns**

If after close a complaint at the end of the resolution process, a duplicate complaint is received from someone connected to the original complainant (e.g. family member), the new complainant will be informed that the complaint has already been considered and the Trust complaint process has concluded. The complainant will be advised to contact the DfE if they are dissatisfied with the handling of the original complaint.

Group complaints will not be addressed. Parents' rights to complain are linked to their position as the parent of an individual pupil. Complainants cannot raise a complaint or concern on behalf of other parents or groups of parents.

If the school/Trust receives a large number of complaints all based on the same subject and/or from complainants unconnected to the school/Trust, we may address the complaints by:

- Sending a template response to all complaints and/or
- Publishing a single response on the website of the school/Trust.

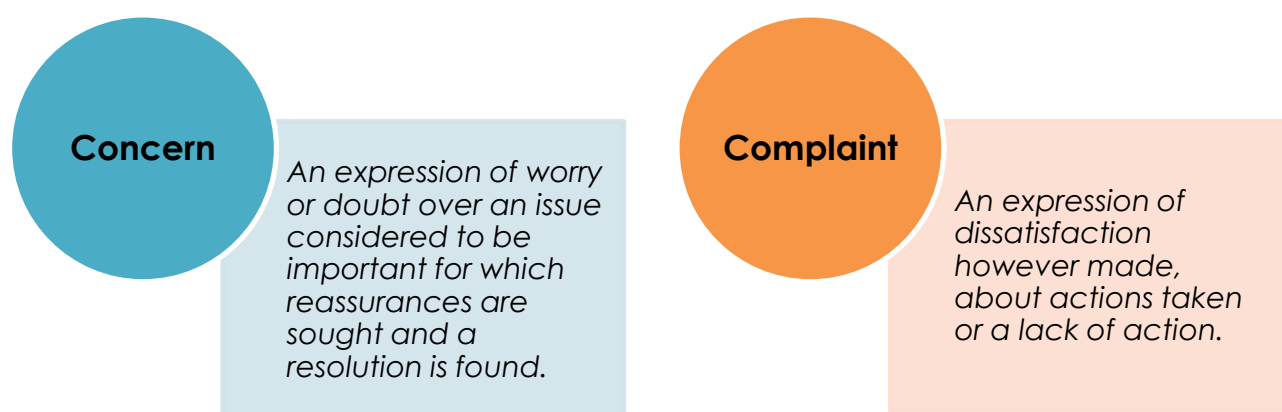
## **3. Legal framework**

3.1. The First Federation Trust is required to have a complaints procedure for complaints from parents/carers of pupils in place for all the schools within the Trust by the Education (Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2014 Schedule 1, Part 7. This policy reflects the Department for Education best practice guidance for academies complaints procedures.

3.2. The complaints resolution process takes place in line with administrative law principles. This means that decisions made need to be lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

#### 4. The difference between a concern and a complaint

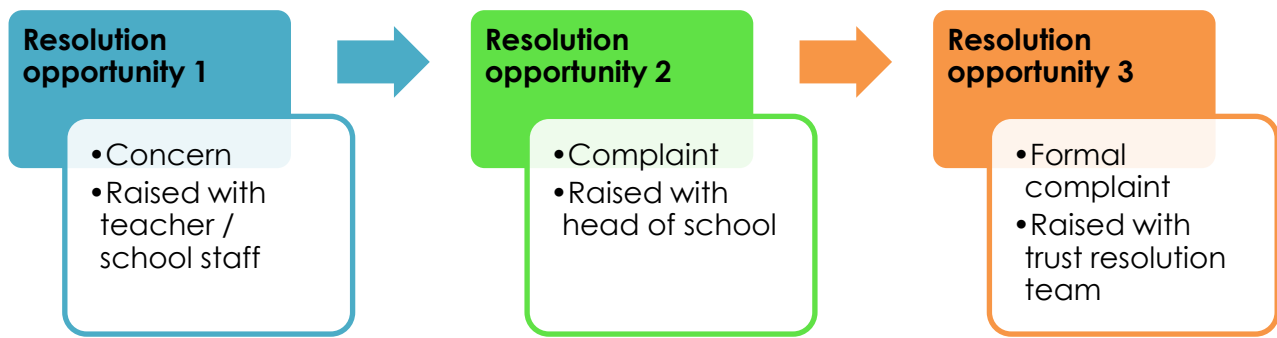
4.1. It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally. A conversation with the school can often facilitate resolution without the need to follow further steps within this policy. Those who know your child and the school most closely are best placed to answer your questions and resolve concerns. Only if the school cannot address your concern quickly and to your satisfaction does the wider Trust become involved.



The Trust and its schools take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. At any stage information resolution can be found and the complaint process closed.

4.2. In the first instance, any concerns should be raised directly with the class teacher or a member of school staff.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, please contact the school office so you can be referred to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with the concern, the school will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The staff member must have the ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially and this is more important.



4.3. If resolution is not found from raising your concerns in this way, this should be with the Head of School. The school will endeavour to resolve the issue using this process.

We understand, however, that there are occasions where, due to the nature of the complaint, people need to raise their complaint to the Head of School without having used resolution opportunity 1.

## 5. How to raise a concern or make a complaint

The [Parentkind parent guide to school complaints](#) contains useful tips to help you when you wish to raise a concern or complaint.

5.1. **A concern** can be made in person, in writing or by phone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of the complainant, as long as the complainant has provided consent for them to do so.

Concerns are taken seriously, and we pledge to acknowledge all concerns raised within three school days.

All safeguarding concerns will be dealt with as a matter of priority and in accordance with school and Trust safeguarding policies.

5.2. **A complaint** must be made in writing and whenever possible via the **complaint form** which can be found [here](#).

We encourage complainants to use the complaint form because it helps us to fully understand the complaint and the resolution sought. You will be asked to fill in the following information in the form:

[add list]

If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

5.3. Complaints that relate to how effectively an individual has responded to the concern/complaint raised will be addressed under this complaints policy. However, if the complaint is in relation to an individual 's conduct, whilst this would be investigated, any outcome would be addressed under the relevant HR policies and procedures as noted in Appendix 6 and the outcomes of those will not be shared with the complainant.

5.4. Complaints should not be made to hub board members or trustees as the school is best placed to investigate and resolve any concerns or issues. Should a hub board member or trustee get involved, it would prohibit their involvement in formal resolutions opportunities as they would be familiar with the complaint being presented.

5.5. If the school or Trust receives complaints as part of a focused campaign and/or receives large volumes of complaints based on the same subject or from complainants with no connection to the school or Trust, a single response will be published on the school or Trust website or the same template response sent to all complainants.

## **6. Information for the person complained about**

When a complaint or concern has been received, the person(s) complained about will be informed a complaint has been made about them. The full details of the complaint will be shared with the person(s) complained about unless there is a good reason why this should be the case. Where full details are not shared, the rationale for this will be documented. In any event, the person(s) complained about will know the scope of the investigation and the issues that are to be addressed.

## **7. Resolving complaints**

7.1. Parents, schools and the Trust share the same goal: supporting children's education. We will work with complainants with the aim to resolve complaints at every resolution opportunity, fairly and efficiently.

7.2. 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 of 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

## **8. Mediation**

8.1. Mediation can be very useful when there has been a breakdown in communication between the school/Trust and parents/carers. It can help to resolve differences and find an agreed way forward. The school/Trust or the parents/carers may suggest mediation and both parties need to agree to it.

8.2. Mediation can be sought at any point during the complaint process and should be focussed on finding a resolution and rebuilding positive and amicable relationships between the school/Trust and parents/carers.

8.3. Mediation does not prevent the complaint procedure from continuing, but the process may be paused to allow time for mediation to take place.

## **9. Managing unreasonable behaviour from those raising concerns / complaints**

9.1. The First Federation Trust and its schools are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain.

9.2. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our schools or offices. 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.

9.3. [Appendix 7](#) defines what is meant by serial and unreasonable complaints and the actions that will be taken in this case. This will only be used by exception based on the complaint meeting the criteria outlined in Appendix 7.

## **10. Withdrawal of a Complaint**

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

## **11. Meetings with complainants**

We will offer to meet with complainants when we feel this would help us to clarify the issues raised, what remains unresolved or the outcome the complainant wishes for. Alternatively, we will offer a phone conversation or seek to clarify matters in writing as appropriate.

We will follow the principles of the CLEAR approach set out in the [Parentkind school guide to parental complaints](#):

- Categorise – what type of issue is it?
- Listen – why is this an issue?
- Empathise – how does this feel?
- Ask – where can we agree?
- Respond – when can we action?

Complaint meetings will normally take place in person but may be held virtually at the school/Trust's discretion. When deciding whether to hold a complaint meeting virtually, the Trust will consider whether or not:

- all participants agree to the use of remote access;
- all participants have access to the technology which will allow them to hear and speak throughout the meeting, and to see and be seen, if a live video link is used;
- all participants will be able to put across their point of view or fulfil their function; and
- the meeting can be held fairly and transparently via remote access.

Where there are concerns about any of these points, the Trust will aim to hold the meeting in person and/or facilitate access to appropriate technology.

## **12. Equality adjustments**

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if requested, 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 an easily accessible room.

## **13. Record keeping**

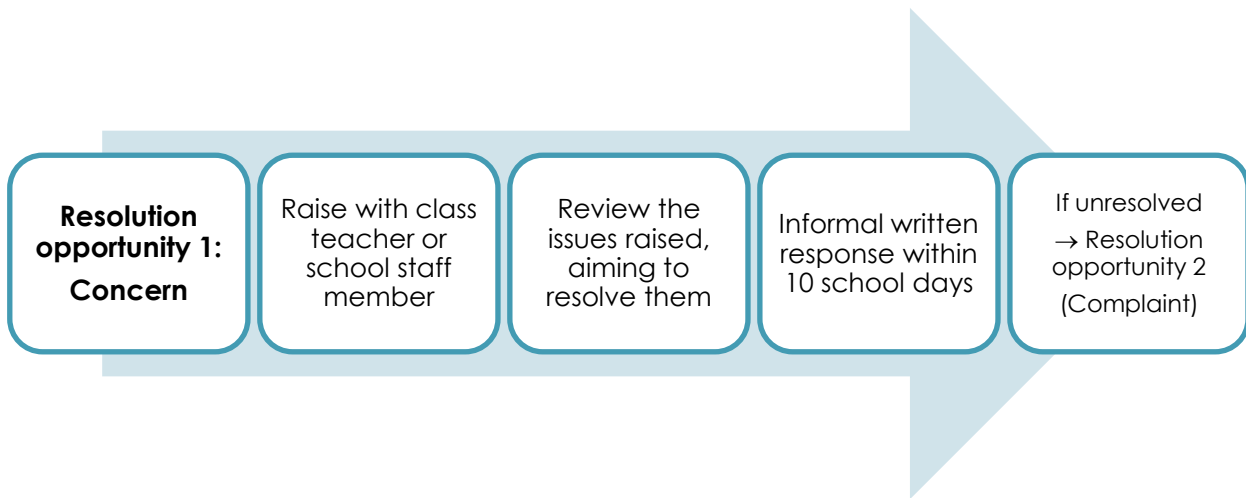
13.1. A written record will be kept of all complaints, when they are resolved (including at which resolution opportunity they were resolved), along with the key actions taken regardless of the decision.

13.2. All 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 2008 Act requests access to them. Records will be kept in line with the Trust data protection policies and procedures.

#### **14. Approval and review**

This policy was approved by the directors of the First Federation Trust on [date].  
This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner to reflect changes in regulations and/or recommendations arising from complaints raised.

## Appendix 1 – Resolution opportunity 1 – resolving concern (school level)



We hope that most concerns can be shared and resolved on an informal basis at school level.

### Process:

- Concerns should be raised with the class teacher or other suitable staff (e.g. SENDCo, parent support advisor, etc), as these are the people who know your child best and are the most likely to be able to offer a timely resolution.
- In some circumstances, the school may ask another member of staff to work on your concerns, or the school may handle the concern as a complaint (stage 2) due to the serious nature of the concerns raised.
- Mediation may also be considered if there is a breakdown in communication or trust.

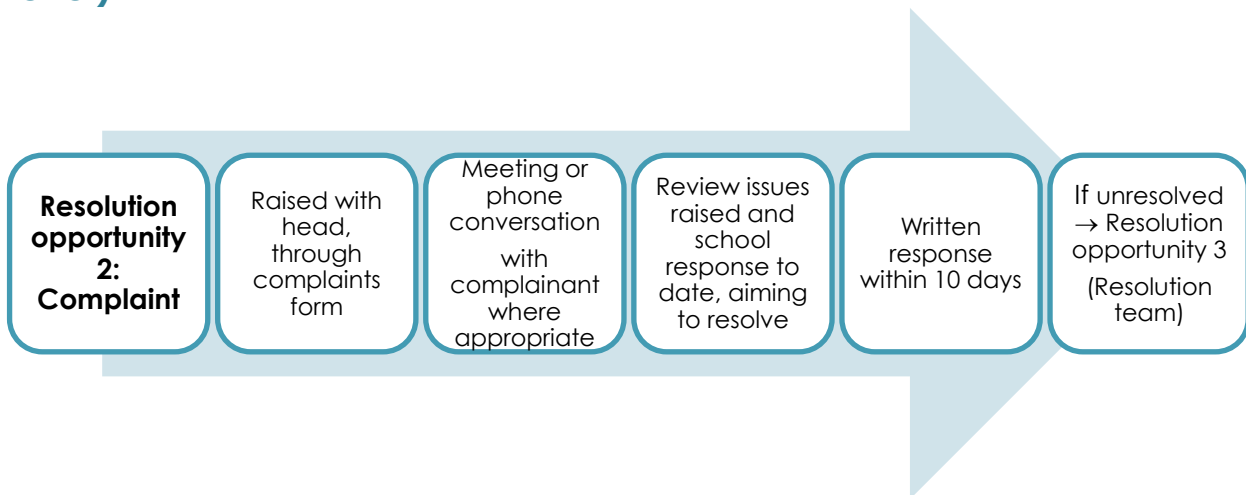
### Response:

- At the conclusion of the review, the appropriate staff member reviewing the issues you have raised will provide an informal written response normally **within 10 school term time days** of the date of the receipt of the complaint.

### Please note:

- Complainants should not approach the Trust, hub board members or trust directors/trustees to raise concerns or complaints. Hub board members and trust directors/trustees do not have the power to act on an individual basis. In addition, approaching these individuals may prevent them from considering complaints further on in the process.
- If the issue(s) remain unresolved, the next step is to make a complaint (see [Appendix 2 – Resolution opportunity 2 – resolving complaint \(school level\)](#))

## Appendix 2 – Resolution opportunity 2 – resolving complaint (school level)



### Process:

- Where possible, complaints must be raised in writing to the school. We encourage complainants to use the complaint form ([Appendix 8](#)) because it helps us to fully understand the complaint and the resolution sought.
- If there is a reason why you cannot complete the form, please contact the school office so we can discuss alternative options.
- The school may offer a meeting or phone conversation when they feel it would be helpful to clarify the issues raised, what remains unresolved or the outcome the complainant wishes for. Alternatively, written clarification may be sought.
- The school will acknowledge the complaint within 3 school term days
- A member staff will be nominated to review the issues raised, the response of the school to date and what would help to resolve the complaint. This could be the head or another appropriate member of staff.

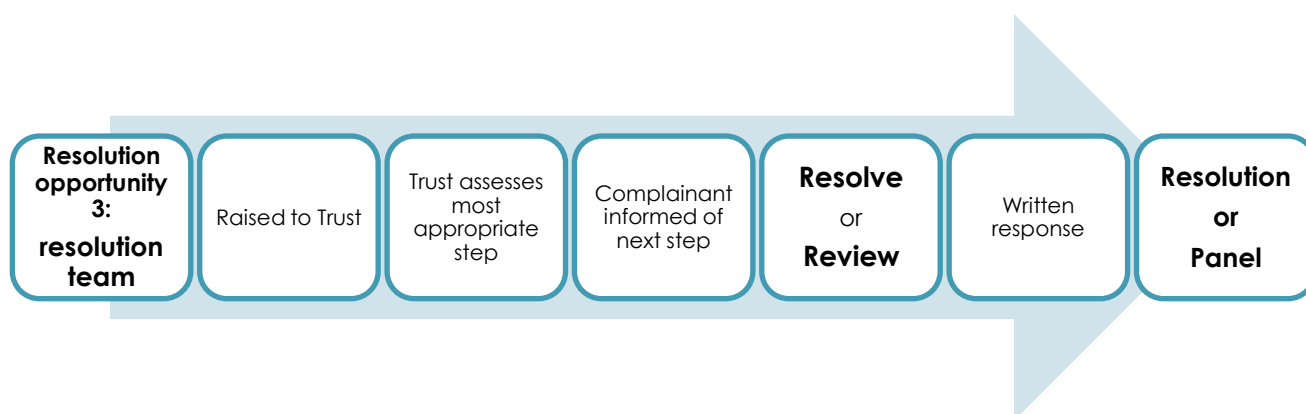
### Response:

- The head will provide a written response to the complainant normally **within 10 school term time school days** of the date of the receipt of the complaint.
- If the deadline of 10 school term days cannot be met, the school will provide the complainant with an update and a revised response date.
- The written response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision(s) made and reason(s) for it.
- The school may uphold all aspects of the complaint, some aspects of the complaint or no aspect of the complaint depending on the evidence found while the matters raised were reviewed.

### Please note:

- Where the complaint is about a hub board member or central team member, it must be sent to the Trust resolution team (see [Appendix 3 – Resolution opportunity 3 – resolving formal complaint \(trust resolution team level\)](#) ).
- Should you be dissatisfied with the outcome set out in the written response from the head, the next step is to contact the Trust resolution team (see [Appendix 3 – Resolution opportunity 3 – resolving formal complaint \(trust resolution team level\)](#))

## Appendix 3 – Resolution opportunity 3 – resolving formal complaint (trust resolution team level)



### Process:

- Formal complaints should be sent to the Trust resolution team at [admin@firstfederation.org.uk](mailto:admin@firstfederation.org.uk) . Complainants should include the complaint form (see [here](#)) and the letter sent by the head.
- Where the complainant does not include the complaint form or the complaint form is not fully completed, the Trust resolution team may contact them to ensure the team has enough information to assess the next step.
- The Trust Senior Leadership Group will assess which option is appropriate: resolve or review.
- The resolution team will acknowledge the complaint and inform the complainant which option will be followed normally **within five school term days** of receiving the complaint. Where the team has requested more information, the five school term day deadline will start from when the information has been received.
- A resolution team member will be nominated and will make contact with the complainant. This may include offering to meet with the complainant, discussing potential actions or explaining that they will be reviewing the complaint in more detail.

### Response:

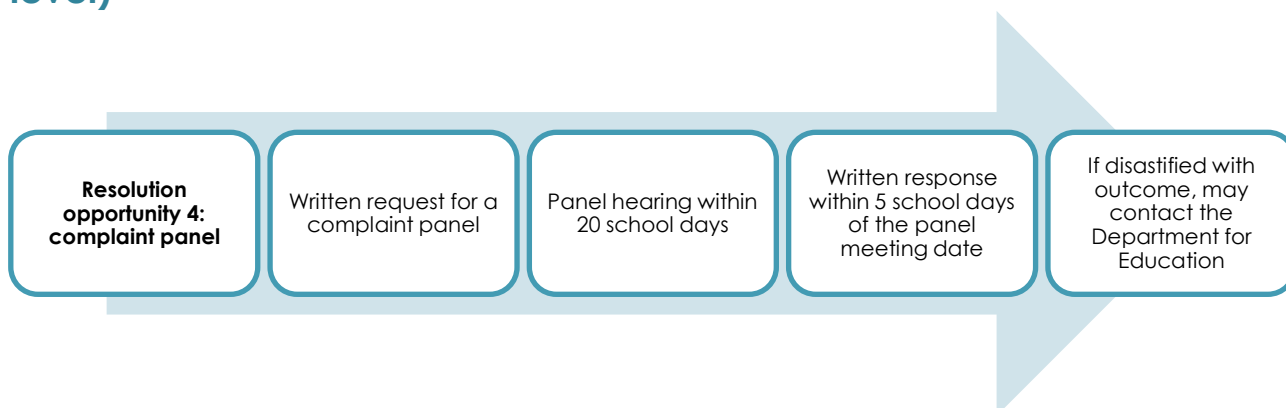
Resolve option	Review option
Resolution team is able to offer action to resolve the complaint.	Resolution team member nominated to look into the complaint in more depth and provide written response.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nominated team member will confirm in writing the proposed actions normally within <b>10 school term days</b> of meeting the complainant or talking to them or within <b>15 school term days</b> from first contacting them.</li> <li>• The letter will set out proposed actions in details and where appropriate dates to follow up whether the actions have had the impact anticipated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nominated team member will provide a written response to the complainant normally <b>within 20 school term school days</b> of the date of the receipt of the complaint/clarification of the complaint.</li> <li>• The written response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision(s) made and reason(s) for it.</li> <li>• The nominated team member may uphold all aspects of the complaint, some aspects of the complaint or no aspect of the complaint depending on the evidence found while the matters raised were reviewed. They may make recommendations regardless of whether complaint points were upheld or not.</li> </ul>

Where the deadlines stated above cannot be met, the nominated team member will provide the complainant with an update and a revised response date.

**Please note:**

- Should you be dissatisfied with the outcome set out in the written response from the resolution team, the next step is to request a panel meeting (see [Appendix 4 – Resolution opportunity 4 – complaint panel \(governance level\)](#))

## Appendix 4 – Resolution opportunity 4 – complaint panel (governance level)



### Process:

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the resolution team step and wishes to take the matter further, they can request a complaint panel.
- This must be done by writing to the governance team via [admin@firstfederation.org.uk](mailto:admin@firstfederation.org.uk), stating which aspects of the outcome they wish to appeal against. This must be done **within ten school term days** from the date of the resolution team outcome letter. Requests that fall outside of this timeline will only be considered when exceptional circumstances apply.
- A panel meeting will include at least three panel members who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The majority of panel members will be Trust governance volunteers with at least one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school. The independent panel member will normally be someone external to the Trust with relevant expertise but may be a hub board member from a hub board who does not oversee the school.
- The panel will not consider any new complaints or any additional evidence to the initial complaint presented to the resolution team unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- A nominated member of the governance team will acknowledge receipt of the complaint normally within three school term days.
- The nominated governance team member will contact the complainant about the arrangements for the panel and explain the process.
- The nominated governance team member will aim to convene the panel within twenty school term days from the receipt of the appeal request. Where this cannot happen, the complainant will be kept informed and will be given an anticipated date.
- If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the governance team will decide when to hold the panel meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.
- The complaint panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence provided and can uphold the complaint (fully or in part), or dismiss the complaint (fully or in part) and may make recommendations in all cases.

### Response:

- The panel will send a letter explaining their findings and any recommendations to the complainant within five school days of the panel meeting.

- The panel will copy the letter to the head, the nominated resolution team member, and where relevant to the person(s) complained about.
- The letter will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head.

**Please note:**

- The complainant and the investigating officer will normally be invited to attend the panel meeting together. The panel may, at their discretion, choose to invite the complainant and investigating officer to present their complaint/investigation separately to the panel, or to hold the panel meeting using written evidence/submissions only, for example when complaints fall within the scope of [Appendix 7 \(Policy for managing serial and/or unreasonable complaints\)](#).
- The complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. The complainant should notify the nominated governance team member of the name of their companion and their role in advance of the meeting. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting as this is a reconciliation hearing and does not adopt a legalistic approach.
- Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- The panel should not accept as evidence recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and/or without the consent of all parties being recorded.
- CCTV or mobile videos cannot be submitted without parental consent and the Trust has no facility to edit CCTV recordings.
- This is the final stage within the Trust complaints policy for responding to a complaint. The complaint is either resolved or closed at this stage. There is no further right of appeal within the Trust.
- If the complainant believes the school/Trust have not followed the process in handling their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education (DfE) once the panel stage has concluded. The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of the complaints or overturn any decisions made by the panel. They will consider whether the Trust has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and whether they have followed Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- Complainant can refer their complaint to the DfE using their [enquiry form](#).

## Appendix 5 – Complaints against the Trust

Complaints about the Trust central team, hub board members or trustees should be addressed to [admin@firstfederation.org.uk](mailto:admin@firstfederation.org.uk). The Trust will follow the same process and the same timelines will apply.

An appropriate Trust staff member or governance volunteer will act in a similar role to the head in the resolution two opportunity. Where the complaint is about the CEO, the complaint will be reviewed by the chair of the trust (or another trustee nominated by the chair). Where the complaint is about the Chair, the complaint will be reviewed by the vice-chair of the Trust (or another trustee nominated by the vice-chair).

At the panel stage, where the complaint is about both the chair and the vice-chair of the trust board, the majority of the trust board or the entire trust board, the panel will consist of independent academy trustees or other parties independent from the Trust with relevant experience (e.g. diocesan staff).

## Appendix 6 – Scope of this Complaints Procedure

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

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admissions to schools</li> <li>Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with the relevant Local Authority for the school (Devon County Council, Dorset Council or Plymouth City 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 child protection and 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).</p> <p>For Devon schools, it is MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub):            Tel: 0345 155 1071 (out of hours: 0345 6000 388)            Email: <a href="mailto:mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk">mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk</a>            LADO enquiries: 01392 384 964            Website: <a href="https://new.devon.gov.uk">https://new.devon.gov.uk</a></p> <p>For Plymouth schools, it is Plymouth Children Social Care Pathway Multi Agency Hub:            Tel: 01752 668 000 (out of hours: 01752 346 984)            Email: <a href="mailto:gateway@plymouth.gov.uk">gateway@plymouth.gov.uk</a>            LADO enquiries: 01752 306 340            Website: <a href="http://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/managing-allegations">www.plymouthscb.co.uk/managing-allegations</a></p> <p>For Dorset schools, it is Dorset Children Social Care Pathway, Children's Advice and Duty Service:            Tel: 01305 228 558  <a href="mailto:childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk">childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk</a>            LADO enquiries: 01305 221 122</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspension / 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>A complaint panel cannot direct that a pupil is suspended, excluded or reinstated, or that the school reviews or rescinds a suspension or exclusion. Complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through this complaints procedure.</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. Please refer to:  <a href="http://www.firstfederation.org/whistleblowing-2/">www.firstfederation.org/whistleblowing-2/</a>            The Secretary of State for Education is the</p>

	<p>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>.  School volunteers who have concerns about our schools should complain through the Trust complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (<a href="#">DfE enquiry form</a>), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Trust's internal grievance procedures. Please see: <a href="http://www.firstfederation.org/other-policies-2/">www.firstfederation.org/other-policies-2/</a></p>
<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. Please see: <a href="http://www.firstfederation.org/other-policies-2/">www.firstfederation.org/other-policies-2/</a>  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 data protection</li> </ul>	<p>From June 2026, data protection complaints. A separate policy will be available for complaints about data protection, reflecting the recent changes in legislation and ICO advice. This will be published on the Trust website <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</li> </ul>	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about their service. Please contact them directly.</p>

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 a complainant commences legal action against the First Federation Trust 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.

## Appendix 7 - Policy for managing serial and/or unreasonable complaints

The First Federation 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 schools or offices. 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.

The First Federation 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 schools and/or Trust, 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 DfE,
- seeks an unrealistic outcome,
- sends lengthy or AI-generated content (communications that are excessively long, often generated using AI tools, making it unreasonably time-consuming for staff to read, summarise, and respond),
- 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,
  - records staff (audio or video) without prior consent, unless otherwise agreed by the school/Trust or permitted by law.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school and/or office 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 Head of School or a member of the Trust Senior Leadership Team or a governance volunteer will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Head of School or a member of the Trust Senior Leadership Team or a nominated member from the governance team will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable, why and ask them to change it.

For complainants who excessively contact the Trust schools and/or offices 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. The Trust also reserves the right to request a concise summary of the core issues complained about. In addition, correspondence that attempts to re-open matters already concluded or repeats previously addressed claims may be filed without further action or reply.

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 Trust premises.

## Appendix 8 – Complaint form



School Name:	
Complainant's Name:	
Pupil's Name:	
Complainant's relationship to pupil:	
Address of Complainant:	
Telephone number(s):	E-mail:
Please describe what your complaint is and when it arose	
What do you think the school/trust did wrong or did not do?	
Please provide details about the consequences of what did / di not happen:	
What action(s), if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint:	
What do you think should be done to resolve matters at this stage?	
Please list copies of any documents you are attaching to this complaint:	