Complaints Policy

Policy Owner	Principal
Formally endorsed by	Trustees
Endorsement Date	October 2026
Next Review Date	October 2027

Human *Connection* in all we do

Introduction

Our Complaints Policy aims to ensure that current pupils, parents and staff are able to raise a concern, air a grievance or make a formal complaint, following a process that is fair, transparent, timely and designed to maximise the chance of a positive resolution.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014, Michael Hall School will also make available via the school website, details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

This policy applies to parents of pupils currently on roll at the school. It does not apply in respect of past pupils unless the complaint was initially raised whilst the pupil was still on the school roll.

Although this procedure is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them – it may only be used by parents of current pupils. This policy does not cover appeals against exclusion or required removals – please see our separate Exclusion Policy.

This policy also includes any complaints relating to our Early Childhood setting. Our Early Childhood setting believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give timely and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting.

Safeguarding and the promotion of pupil welfare will always be the priority in addressing any concerns or complaints. Concerns or complaints should be managed sympathetically, discretely, efficiently and with due dignity to all parties. Matters raised will be dealt with at the appropriate stage of the complaints process, and resolved as swiftly as possible but without undue haste.

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. Michael Hall School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. Accordingly, this policy endorses openness towards listening to suggestions, addressing concerns and dealing seriously with any complaints raised.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to 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.

All formal complaints should be directed to the Principal via their Personal Assistant: PA@michaelhall.co.uk

Concerns regarding any of the Early Childhood settings (Parent and Child, Saplings or any of our Kindergarten or Afternoon rooms) can also be referred to the Early Childhood Manager.

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, Guardian, Assistant Principal or Principal.

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 Trustees 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.

Anonymous complaints

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

Timescale for making 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.

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.

Safeguarding concerns

Any concern relating to the safety of a child or young person falls under the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and its processes take priority over the Complaints Policy. Such matters should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead: dsl@michaelhall.co.uk

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.

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.

Scope of this complaints procedure

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

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with the relevant 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 East Sussex Children's Single Point of Access (SPoA) on 01323 464 222.
Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-disciplinehttp://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusionsexclusions/exclusions. **complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.*
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if 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.

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 directly 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 directly to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
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 Michael Hall School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Michael Hall School 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 complete.

Withdrawal of a complaint

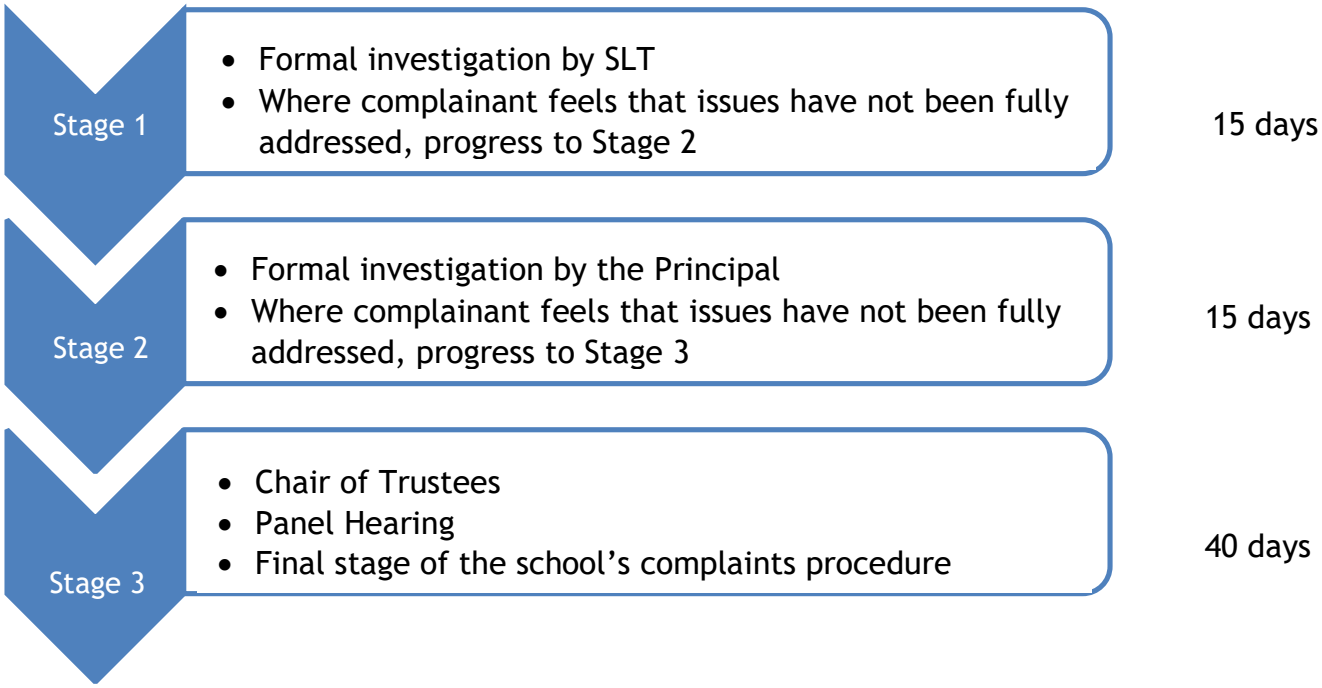
If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

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.

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

Formal complaints
Summary of timeline for formal complaints



Stage 1 SLT Investigation

- Acknowledgement of receipt of complaint to be sent within 3 days of receipt of the complaint.
- Complaint to be investigated and written response to be received by complainant within 15 days of receipt of the formal complaint.

Stage 2 Principal 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 days of the receipt of the outcome letter at stage 1.
- Acknowledgement of receipt of complaint to be sent within 3 days of receipt of the complaint.
- Complaint to be investigated and written response to be received by complainant within 15 days of receipt of the stage 2 formal complaint.

Stage 3 Trustee 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 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 days.
- Hearing to be held within 30 days of receipt of request to go to stage 3.
- Paperwork for Stage 3 hearing to be received from all parties at least 10 days before the hearing.
- Paperwork for Stage 3 hearing to be sent to all parties at least 5 days before the hearing.
- Outcome letter from panel to be received by complainant within 10 days of the hearing.

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

<u>Stage 1 SLT investigation</u>

Formal complaints must be made to SLT (unless they are about SLT), using the Complaint form (see Appendix A for the contact details of SLT, 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 investigating member of SLT 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 SLT member will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The SLT member can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The Principal will delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the 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 member of SLT will provide a formal written response within **15 school days** of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the member of SLT 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 Michael Hall School will take to resolve the complaint.

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

If the complaint is about SLT, a member of the Board of Trustees (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled Trustee will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2.

Complaints about the Principal or member of the Board of Trustees must be made to SLT (see Appendix A for contact details).

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire Board of Trustees or
- the majority of the Board of Trustees

the complaint will move to Stage 2 and will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Board of Trustees. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response to the complainant with a copy to the Principal.

Stage 2 Principal investigation

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

The Principal may choose to delegate the investigation of the complaint to a Nominated Trustee who may, at the sole discretion of the Chair of Trustees, be independent of the school. The investigating Trustee 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 Principal at the outset of the Stage 2 process. The aim of this meeting is to enable the Principal to understand the scope of the complaint and desired outcomes prior to commencing their investigation.

The Principal 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 Principal 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 Principal 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 Principal 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 that their complaint has not been fully addressed, providing them with the contact details of the Chair of Trustees (Appendix A). Should the complaint not be resolved, impartial mediation should be considered.

Stage 3 Trustee 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 Trustees who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint or in any previous investigation into this complaint, with consideration being given to at least one of these being an independent Trustee. 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 school's complaints procedure.

Timeline

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Chair of Trustees, via the school office, within **10 school days** of receipt of the Stage 2 response. This should be done in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form (see Appendix A for the contact details of the Chair of Trustees, and Appendix B for a copy of the form).

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply and are explained to the Chair of Trustees at the same time that the request for a Stage 3 hearing is made.

The Chair of Trustees 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 Chair of Trustees 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 Chair of Trustees will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed. If the complainant rejects the offer of the three proposed dates, without good reason, The Chair of Trustees will decide when to hold the meeting. In this case the Panel will meet, with The Chair of Trustees 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 Chair of Trustees 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 evidence 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 Chair of Trustees 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.

Attendees at the meeting

The Chair of Trustees will invite the following parties:

- a panel of three Trustees, one or more of whom may be independent of the school
- the complainant
- the Principal
- investigating member of SLT (if appropriate)
- 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, and the Clerk will seek agreement from the chair of the Panel. 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.

Conduct of the meeting

The Panel will:

- Consider those aspects of the complaint which the complainant believes have not been fully addressed at the previous stages in the complaints procedure and where the complainant believes that the school has not followed its complaints policy.
- Consider the effectiveness of the investigation process at Stage 1 and 2
- Consider ways to resolve the complaint and, if possible, 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 meeting 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 Michael Hall 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 for Education if they believe that their complaint has been handled unreasonably or unlawfully by Michael Hall School

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 Michael Hall School 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 Principal.

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. 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 Regulations (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 s 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 may request access to complaints documentation.*

Complaints about Trustees

If the complaint is: jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair, the entire Board of Trustees or the majority of the Trustees, Stage 3 will be heard by a committee of Trustees who are independent of the school.

Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school 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 Michael Hall School. They will consider whether Michael Hall School 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.

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.

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 resolution 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 Chair of Trustees 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 Regulations (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 Panel hearing
- 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
- No 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

Procedure for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

Michael Hall School 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. Sometimes, it may well be a case of not being able to resolve all of a parent's concerns or meeting all of their wishes. Sometimes it is simply a case of 'agreeing to disagree' and moving on. 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.

Michael Hall School 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 Principal or Chair of Trustees will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before determining that they may be acting "unreasonably".

If the behaviour continues, the Principal will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Michael Hall School, 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 Michael Hall School.

Persistent Correspondence

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this may be regarded by the School as vexatious and outside the scope of this procedure.

Recording Complaints and use of personal data

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at Stage 1 (informal stage), the formal stage (Stage 2) or proceed to a Panel hearing (Stage 3) and any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

The school processes data in accordance with our GDPR policy, which is available on the school website. When dealing with complaints, the School (including any panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

- Any completed Complaint Form
- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name and contact details of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Notes/minutes of the hearing
- The Panel's written decision

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice and/or Data Protection Policy, but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's GDPR Policy.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. All records relating to complaints shall be treated as confidential.

In addition to where requested by the Secretary of State or an inspector (see above), there may be other circumstances where disclosure of the substance of a complaint or particular confidential records relating to it is required, for example, where there is a legal, regulatory, safeguarding or data protection obligation (e.g. in response to a subject access request) which prevails over the requirement to maintain the records as confidential.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)

Parents of children within the any of the Early Childhood settings should follow the three stages of this Complaints Procedure.

If parents remain dissatisfied and their complaint is about the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements (allowing for our school's recognised exemptions), then parents may take their complaint to the ISI or Ofsted. Parents will be notified by ISI or Ofsted of the outcome of the investigation into their complaint within 28 working days of the complaint being received.

Michael Hall School will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept in accordance with its Privacy Notice.

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements (allowing for our school's recognised exemptions). Schools must make available details of how to contact Ofsted and/ or the ISI:

Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

ISI can be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net
ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

Records

- A record of complaints against our setting and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaints Summary Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

- Parents will be notified of an inspection once the school has been notified. The final report will be provided to parents of children who attend the school.

- All complaints are kept on record for at least 6 years.

How we may use personal information

The School processes data in accordance with its GDPR policy.

When dealing with complaints the School (including any Panel members appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include:

- This completed complaint form
- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent(s) and pupil(s)
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations
- Pupil records (as appropriate)
- Witness statements (as appropriate)
- Name and contact details of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Notes/ minutes of meetings including the Panel hearing
- The Panel's written decision

As part of the complaints process, we may also process 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's GDPR Policy, but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's GDPR Policy.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation.

Appendix A – School contact details

Michael Hall School
contact@michaelhall.co.uk

Principal
Stuart McWilliams
Stuart.McWilliams@michaelhall.co.uk

Chair of Trustees
Ms Tali Michaels
Tali.michaels@michaelhall.co.uk

SLT
SLT@michaelhall.co.uk

Appendix B: Complaint Form

Please read the School's **Complaints Policy** before completing this form. It provides information on when and how this form should be completed.

To be completed by those with **parental responsibility**[1] for a current pupil and returned to the Principal via PA@michaelhall.co.uk or, if the complaint is against the Principal, the Chair of Trustees via Tali.Michaels@michaelhall.co.uk

PLEASE USE **BLOCK** CAPITALS

Your name(s)	
Name of pupil(s), class) and your relationship to them	
Contact address	
Contact telephone day	
Contact telephone mobile	
Contact email address	
Details of the complaint [2]	
Action taken to date (including staff member(s) who has/have dealt with it so far) and solutions offered	

[1] Parental responsibility is defined in the Children Act 1989 as "*all rights, duties, powers and responsibilities and authority which by law* ***a parent*** *of a child has in relation to the child and his or her property*". It equates to legal responsibility for the child. If you have any doubts about whether you do or do not have parental responsibility for the child you may wish to seek legal advice.

[2] Please provide details of the nature of your complaint. If you have more than one ground of complaint we suggest numbering them so that each is considered in turn. If you require more space you may wish to attach an additional page setting out your complaint.

The reason(s) that this was not a satisfactory resolution for you
What action(s) would you like to be taken to resolve your complaint?
Signature(s): **Date:**

School use			
Stage in the complaints procedure (circle as appropriate):	**1**	**2**	**3**
Date acknowledgement sent:			
By whom:			
Complaint referred to:			
Action taken:			
Date:			