



# **OASIS COMMUNITY LEARNING COMPLAINTS POLICY**

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## At a glance

Oasis Community Learning (OCL) is totally committed to developing the character and competence of every student and believes that all students should receive an exceptional education. OCL is part of the wider Oasis family with a shared vision for community, a place where everyone is included, making a contribution and reaching their God-given potential.”

Through this policy OCL aims to ensure that it meets its statutory obligations and follows best practice when responding to complaints from parents of students from our academies, and others.

Our approach is underpinned by the Oasis Ethos and 9 Habits and it is vital that we conduct ourselves and do all our work through this lens.

The way in which we handle complaints is a great opportunity for us to remember again that we have a responsibility to ensure that we treat people with respect, openness and care. This desire is borne out of two of our five ethos values – our commitment to treat people equally, respecting differences and our commitment to healthy and open relationships.

To create and maintain healthy, open relationships and to ensure we remain committed to treating people equally, we seek to intentionally focus on being patient, honest, humble and forgiving. For instance, in the process of discussing a complaint, we will need to act humbly and honestly, particularly if we need to recognise that we have not necessarily got something right. Equally, it is our intention that being forgiving will form a central part of the way in which we listen to, discuss and deal with complaints together.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Keep the safety of our pupils, learners and staff at the forefront of our thinking.
- Be open and accountable.
- Act fairly and proportionately.
- Be impartial, unbiased and fair.
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel.
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response.
- Where possible, respect complainants’ desire for confidentiality, but complainants should know that this is not always possible and is often detrimental to achieving a mutually acceptable solution.
- Treat complainants with respect.
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process.
- Consider how the complaint can feed into Academy improvement evaluation processes.

In light of this, we strive to ensure that our handling of complaints is a mark of the importance that we put on honouring and respecting those people that we serve and who work for us. The policy set out below is designed to help us in this task.

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

The Academy will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.

To support this, we will ensure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the Academy website and on OCL's website.

## Checklist

- ❑ Our approach to complaints is underpinned by the Oasis Ethos and 9 Habits. To create and maintain healthy, open relationships and to ensure we remain committed to treating people equally, we seek to intentionally focus on being patient, honest, humble and forgiving. For instance, in the process of discussing a complaint, we will need to act humbly and honestly, particularly if we need to recognise that we have not necessarily got something right. Equally, it is our intention that being forgiving will form a central part of the way in which we listen to, discuss and deal with complaints together.
- ❑ We will be open and accountable in the way we respond to complaints and act fairly and proportionately.
- ❑ We will investigate complaints to understand what happened and what should have happened.
- ❑ Complainants will have access to a three-stage process in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance.
- ❑ We will monitor complaints so that we can learn from them and make improvements to systems and processes.

## In brief

This policy explains the complaints process for OCL. It is based on the DfE best practice guide. The policy has been updated following feedback from those involved in handling complaints within OCL and following changes in DfE guidance.

## Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to [the Education \(Independent Academy Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of students at the Academy.

It is also based on guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on [creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulations](#), and refers to [good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures](#) from the Department for Education (DfE).

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association. In addition, it addresses duties set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework](#) with

regards to dealing with complaints about the Academy's fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

## Decision making

Any decision made by an Academy, must also be made in line with the principles of administrative law. This means a decision is:

- lawful - it complies with education and other law, including human rights and equality law, such as the [Human Rights Act 1998](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#);
- rational;
- reasonable;
- fair;
- proportionate; and
- judgments are based upon a balance of probability.

Decision-makers should also be mindful of [The 7 Principles of Public Life](#).

1. Selflessness.
2. Integrity.
3. Objectivity.
4. Accountability.
5. Openness.
6. Honesty.
7. Leadership.

## Definitions and scope

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint.

A **concern** is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”.

The Academy will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible.

A **complaint** is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”.

Oasis Community Learning intends to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage.

There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.

This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions.
- Academy re-organisation proposals.
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN).
- Safeguarding actions taken.

- Exclusion.
- Whistle-blowing.
- Staff grievances.
- Staff discipline (where a complaint leads to disciplinary action being taken this is usually kept confidential from the complainant).
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use Academy premises or facilities.
- Complaints about the curriculum.
- Complaints about collective worship.
- Withdrawal from the curriculum.

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these issues as well as the DfE Best Practice guide for academy complaints: see below

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-complaints-procedures/best-practice-advice-for-academy-complaints-procedures-2019#complaintsnotinscope>

Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with SEND about the Academy's support are within the scope of this policy.

Such complaints should first be made to the class teacher and/or SENCO; they will then be referred to this complaints policy. The OCL SEND policy and individual Academy's information reports include information about the rights of parents of students with disabilities who believe that our Academy has discriminated against their child.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use Academy premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

### **Who can make a complaint?**

This complaints procedure is for parents of children registered at the academy or those with parental responsibility.

Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

Where parental responsibility has been removed from a parent, where sharing information with a parent may place the child or an adult at risk, or where under UK GDPR legislation the right to ownership of data at the age of 13 if deemed competent is established, a complaint will be considered, but may not be progressed if parties do not consent to progress.

### **Principles for investigation**

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened.
- What should have happened.
- Who was involved.

- What the complainant feels would put things right.

We also intend to address complaints as quickly as possible. To achieve this, realistic and reasonable time limits will be set for each action within each stage.

Where further investigations are necessary, new time limits will be set, and the complainant will be sent details of the new deadline with an explanation for the delay.

**The Academy expects that complaints will be made as soon as possible after an incident arises and no later than 3 months afterwards.** We will consider exceptions to this time frame in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

### **Support**

Of course it is important that the complainant has support during the complaints process but also the person being complained about must have access to support from a line manager and / or a colleague during this process.

### **Complaints about our fulfilment of Early Years requirements**

We will investigate all written complaints relating to the Academy's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint. The Academy will keep a record of the complaint (see section 9) and make this available to Ofsted on request. This applies to pre-school provision rather than Early Years provision in our primary or all through academies.

Parents and carers can notify Ofsted if they believe that the Academy is not meeting Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, by calling 0300 123 4666, or by emailing [CIE@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:CIE@ofsted.gov.uk).

We will notify parents and carers if we become aware that the Academy is to be inspected by Ofsted. A copy of the latest Ofsted inspection report will be available on the academy's website or on request from the academy.

### **Legal representation**

In the event that a complaint progresses to a Review Panel, complainants have the right to be accompanied if they wish but neither the complainant nor the school can bring legal representation. These Review Panels are not a form of legal proceedings. The aim of the Review Panels are:

- reconciliation; and
- to put right things that may have gone wrong.

Witnesses such as academy employees will also have the right to be accompanied, by a colleague or union or professional association representative, but not to be legally represented.

## Stages of complaint (not complaints against the Principal)

Please note that routes of complaint that attempt to bypass the stages of complaint such as a direct complaint to Ofsted, the Local Authority or a senior leader within the Trust will always be brought back to the stages process and dealt with through this means.

### Informal

The Academy will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue. We work hard to resolve complaints at this informal stage.

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the Principal as appropriate, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the Academy office. Parents should be directed to the class teacher or pastoral or curriculum leader responsible for the area under complaint initially, rather than the Principal.

The Academy will acknowledge informal complaints within **two** working days and investigate and provide a response within **five** working days. **(Throughout this policy all “days” should be counted as days when the academy is open to learners).**

The informal stage may involve a meeting between the complainant and teacher, pastoral or curriculum leader or a senior leader and the subject of the complaint, as appropriate.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

**At each stage the timescales can be extended, if agreed by both parties.**

### Stage 1:

#### Formal

##### Inform the Principal in writing

The complaint letter should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The Principal (or designated member of the senior leadership team) may call a meeting to clarify concerns and seek a resolution. The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting by a friend or relative and should inform the Academy of the identity of their companion in advance.

In certain circumstances, the Academy may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the Academy will notify the complainant as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange alternative accompaniment.



If further investigation of the complaint is required, the Principal will appoint an investigating officer to undertake this task.

The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within **ten** working days of receipt of the complaint.

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform the Principal in writing within **five** working days of receipt of the outcome letter.

### **Informing the Principal in writing that the complainant wishes to proceed to the second stage**

If the person making the complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome, she/he has the right to request this is moved to Stage 2. S/he should write to the Principal within five school days of receiving the outcome. This letter to move to Stage 2 should set out the details of the complaint including evidence as set out above. The complainant should also specify what outcome / and / or action/s they feel would resolve the complaint, and in what ways the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently. The Principal should now inform the Regional Director

### **Stage 2a: Submit the complaint to the Regional Director**

The letter or email sent to the Principal should provide relevant details and documents and should explain why it is felt that the complaint was not resolved at Stage 1. This should be passed to the Regional Directors Executive Assistant. At this point the Regional Director can meet with the complainant to resolve the complaint. The Regional Director will decide if their direct intervention is required at this point or if the complaint should proceed to Stage 2b.

The Regional Director will write to the complainant acknowledging the complaint within **five academy days** of the date that the written request was received. The acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint will now be investigated under Stage 2a of this Complaints Policy and will confirm the date for providing a response to the complainant.

The Regional Director will meet with the complainant within **fifteen academy days** of the date that the letter was received. If this time limit cannot be met, the Regional Director will write to the Complainant within **five academy days** of the date that the letter was received, explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised date.

If the complainant does not feel the Regional Director's intervention has resolved the complaint, they can request the complaint progress to Stage 2b.

### **Stage 2b: Submit the complaint to the Regional Director's Review Panel**

This letter, sent via the Regional Director's Executive Assistant, should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The review panel consists of two volunteers (e.g. a Hub Council member, a local academy leader) and will be chaired by a Regional Director from another region or phase.

**All of the panel members will be independent from the management of the Academy, which is the subject of the complaint and will not have had any prior involvement in the complaint.**

These individuals will have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress.

DfE guidance states that *"the panel must include at least 3 people who are not involved in matters detailed in the complaint. One member of the panel must be independent of the management and running of the academy"*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy/complain-about-an-academy>

The Regional Director may commission an investigation of the complaint by a person or persons unconnected with the Academy and this report may be used as part of the review panel's evidence for consideration. As is often with complaints, there are many sides to each situation, this independent view will help to clarify the issues.

The Regional Director will organise the review panel and call a meeting to clarify concerns and seek a resolution. The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or relative to this meeting and should inform the Regional Director of the identity of their companion in advance.

If a member of staff is the focus of the complaint, then they should be encouraged to bring another adult with them to act as support.

In certain circumstances, the Regional Director may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the Regional Director will notify the complainant as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange for an alternative companion to attend.

The complainant must have reasonable notice of the date of the review panel. The complainant will be offered a maximum of three dates and times for the review panel meeting however, the review panel reserves the right to convene at their convenience rather than that of the complainant.

At the Regional Director's review panel meeting, the complainant and representatives from the Academy, as appropriate, will be present. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting. **The panel should aim to meet within fifteen academy days of the complaint being received.**

At least **five** academy days before the meeting, the Clerk to the review panel will:

- confirm and notify the complainant 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

- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least **five** academy days before the meeting. After this deadline, no further information is allowed to be shared with the panel.

At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence along with any independent investigation report.

The panel, the complainant and the Academy representative will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and Academy representatives have completed the presentation of their cases, the panel will adjourn and the evidence will then be considered.

Complainants must be discouraged from adding additional items or issues to the original complaint. It is the role of the chair of the panel to ensure that the complainant remains focused on the original complaint.

The panel must then put together its findings and recommendations from the case. The panel will also provide a copy of the findings and recommendations to the complainant and, where relevant, the subject of the complaint, and make a copy of the findings and recommendations available for inspection by the Principal.

The remit of the panel is to, based upon the principle of a balance or probability:

- Dismiss the complaint in part or as a whole.
- Uphold the complaint in part or as a whole.
- Recommend changes to the Academy's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
- Suggest ways forward to resolve the complaint.

Minutes will be kept of the meeting and kept on file in the Academy. **The Regional Director will inform those involved of the decision in writing within five academy days of the panel meeting.** When informing those involved of the outcome of the review panel, it is important to consider the timing of this. For example, the chair and clerk should be wary of sending information that is negative before a weekend. Also, all parties must be informed at the same time to be fair to all parties.

See Appendix B for sample letter inviting complainant to the Review Panel meeting.

## **Complaints against the Principal or a Hub Councillor**

Complaints made against the Principal should be directed to the Regional Director.

Where a complaint is against any member of the Hub Council, it should be made in writing to the Head of Hub Councils.

The policy outlined above should then be followed from Stage 2.

Contact details:

- Any complaint addressed to the Principal should be addressed c/o the Academy.
- The appropriate Regional Director can be contacted through [oclcomplaints@oasisuk.org](mailto:oclcomplaints@oasisuk.org)
- The Head of Hub Councils can be contacted via this email address: [esther.foster@oasisuk.org](mailto:esther.foster@oasisuk.org)

## Complaints escalated about the Trust, CEO or Trustee

### If a complaint is escalated to the CEO of OCL

If a complaint is escalated to the CEO of OCL or if a complainant wishes to complain directly about OCL, then the complaint should be sent to the CEO to be investigated. The CEO will write to the complainant acknowledging the complaint within **five academy days** of the date that the written request was received.

The acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint will now be investigated under Stage 1 of this Complaints Policy and will confirm the date for providing a response to the complainant.

Following the investigation, the office of the CEO will write to the complainant confirming the outcome within **fifteen academy days** of the date that the letter was received. If this time limit cannot be met, the CEO will write to the Complainant within **five academy days** of the date that the letter was received, explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised date.

### If the complaint is about the CEO

If the complaint is about the CEO, the complaint should be investigated by the Chair of the OCL Board.

*NB. Where the Chair of the OCL Board has investigated the complaint, they will write the letter of outcome to the complainant and provide a copy to the CEO.*

### If the complaint is about a Trustee

If the complaint concerns a Trustee, the complaint should be investigated by the Chair of the OCL Board. If a complaint is made about the Chair of the OCL Board then this will be referred to the Chair of our Group Oasis Charitable Trust (OCT) Board for investigation.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the previous stage, the complainant should write to the Clerk/Company Secretary to the OCL Board asking for the complaint to be heard before a Complaint Panel, within **five academy days**.

The Clerk/Company Secretary will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **five academy days**.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within **15** academy days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair;
- the entire OCL board; or
- the majority of the OCL board,

Stage 2 will be heard by a completely independent committee panel.

The Complaint Panel will consist of three members. None of the three members of the Complaint Panel will have been involved in the incidents or events which led to the complaint or have been involved in dealing with the complaint in the previous stages, or have any detailed prior knowledge of the complaint.

One of the Complaint Panel members will be independent of the management and running of the Academy Trust. This means that the independent Complaint Panel member will not be a Trustee or an employee of OCL.

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least **five** academy days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant 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;
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least **five** academy days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least **five** academy days before the date of the meeting. 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 also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The hearing will be held in private. **Electronic recordings** of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken. These recordings are disclosable on request for anyone attending, as it is their personal data.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented using the principle of the balance of probability. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in 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.
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the academy's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues arising in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Oasis Community Learning with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within **five** academy days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education (DfE) if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Oasis Community Learning.

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 Oasis Community Learning will take to resolve the complaint.

The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the academy premises by a representative of the OCL Board or by the Principal.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of at which stage the complaint was resolved, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

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 Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

## Who's who?

You may find it useful to use the “Who We Are” section of the OCL website to identify colleagues mentioned in this policy. This section of the website can be found at:

<https://www.oasiscommunitylearning.org/about-us/who-we-are>

## Complaints about staff

Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

## Referring complaints on completion of the Academy's or OCL's procedure

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Academy's complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to the Department for Education (DfE). The DfE will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the Academy.

It is important to note that the **DfE will not overturn an Academy's or the Trust's decision about a complaint**. However, it will look into a complaint if the Academy:

- does not have a complaints procedure;
- did not provide a copy of its complaints procedure when requested;
- does not have a procedure that complies with statutory regulations;
- has not followed its published complaints procedure; or
- has not allowed its complaints procedure to be completed.

The DfE cannot change an academy's decision about a complaint. Their role is to make sure the academy handles your complaint properly by following a published procedure. For more information or to refer a complaint to the DfE, see the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy/complain-about-an-academy>

The DfE is not able to help with complaints about:

- a child or young person's [statement of special educational need](#).
- the quality of education or leadership, or concerns affecting the academy as a whole, which are addressed through OFSTED inspections (see the [academy's inspection guide for parents](#)).
- discrimination. You can raise complaints about this with [Equality Advisory Support Service](#).
- data protection. You can raise complaints about this with OCL's Data Protection Officer or with the [Information Commissioner's Office](#).
- exam malpractice or maladministration. Any complaints should be raised with the [Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation \(Ofqual\)](#) or the relevant awarding body.

- child protection (safeguarding). Issues should be raised with your local authority designated officer (LADO) and/or the Director of Children’s Services using the [report child abuse to local council](#) GOV.UK page).
- criminal cases. Please report these to the police.

## Persistent or vexatious complaints

Where a complainant tries to re-open the issue with the Academy after the complaints procedure has been fully exhausted and the Academy has done everything it reasonably can in response to the complaint, the Principal, supported by the Regional Director, will inform the complainant that the matter is closed.

If the complainant subsequently contacts the Academy again about the same issue, the Academy can choose not to respond. The normal circumstance in which we will not respond is if:

- The Academy has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant’s needs; *and*
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the Academy’s position and their options (if any); *and*
- The complainant is contacting the Academy repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time.

However, this list is not intended to be exhaustive.

The Academy will be most likely to choose not to respond if:

- We have reason to believe the individual is contacting the Academy with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience; *and/or*
- The individual’s letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive; *and/or*
- The individual makes insulting personal comments about, or threats towards, Academy staff.

Unreasonable behaviour which is abusive, offensive or threatening, is entirely unacceptable and will not be tolerated, and may also constitute an unreasonably persistent or vexatious complaint.

Once the Academy has decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, the complainant will be informed in writing, either by letter or email. This decision is not taken lightly and will be made in discussion with the Regional Director following a Stage 2 intervention.

Academies must not stop responding just because an individual is difficult to deal with or asks complex questions, The Academy will ensure when making this decision that complainants making any new complaint are heard, and that the Academy acts reasonably.

## Unreasonably persistent complaints

1. Whenever possible, the Principal or Regional Director will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an ‘unreasonable’ marking.



2. If the behaviour continues, the principal will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact one of our Academies causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and there might be an assigned 'single point of contact' to avoid repeated or defamatory comments being sent to several recipients and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.
3. In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the Academy.

### **Barring from the Academy Premises**

The public has no automatic right of entry to our academies. Academies will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for students, staff and other members of their community.

If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, an Academy can ask him/her to leave Academy premises. In serious cases, the Principal or OCL can notify them in writing that their implied license to be on Academy premises has been temporarily revoked, subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make. Academies should always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views in writing on the decision to bar them.

Please first see the Parental Code of Conduct that sets out the Oasis approach to how an Academy deals with these incidents.

The Principal's decision to bar entry should be reviewed by the Regional Director. They should take into account any representations made by the individual and decide whether to either confirm or lift the bar. If the decision is confirmed, the individual should be notified in writing, explaining:

- how long the ban will be in place.
- when the decision will be reviewed.

Once the Academy's appeal process has been completed, individuals may be able to apply to the Courts. Individuals wishing to exercise this option should seek independent legal advice.

[Controlling access to academy premises](#) provides more guidance on access to Academy premises.

See Appendix C for sample banning letters and letters from the Regional Director to uphold or dismiss the ban.

## Information about students

Regardless of the application of any communication strategy or stage of the complaint process, academies must provide parents and carers with the information they are entitled to under The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005, within the statutory time frame.

## Duplicate complaints

After closing a complaint at the end of the complaints procedure, there may be a duplicate complaint from:

- a spouse;
- a partner;
- a grandparent; or
- a child.

If the complaint is about the same subject, the academy can inform the new complainant that the academy has already considered that complaint and the local process is complete. The complainant should be advised to contact the DfE if they are dissatisfied with the academy's handling of the original complaint.

Care must be taken not to overlook any new aspects to the complaint that may not have been previously considered. The academy will need to ensure these are investigated and dealt with to the full extent of the complaints procedure.

## Complaint campaigns

If an Academy becomes the focus of a campaign and receives large volumes of complaints:

- all based on the same subject; and
- from complainants unconnected with the Academy.

The Academy will respond by using the following strategies:

- sending a template response to all complainants;
- publishing a single response on the Academy website.

And will notify the OCL Leadership team so that similar events can be tracked across the OCL estate in case of an organised national campaign.

## Third parties

Third party providers using the Academy premises to provide community facilities or services should have their own complaints procedures in place that mirrors the ethos and approach of OCL.

## Parental responsibility

Conflict between estranged parents over the application of parental responsibility is a common cause of complaints made to academies. [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#) contains specific advice about how to approach issues concerning parental responsibility.

Where a parent requests information or reports on their child as part of an ongoing complaint, seeking to build evidence about the parenting capacity of another parent following a separation or divorce, the Academy will maintain a neutral position and supply all requested data to both parties holding parental responsibility.

## 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 academy in seeking a solution 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 establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
  - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved;
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint;
  - considering records and other relevant information; and
  - analysing information.
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting.
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal.
- be mindful of the timescales to adhere to.

- prepare a comprehensive report for the Principal or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.
- The Principal or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

## **Complaints Co-ordinator**

(This could be the Principal or CEO / trustee or other staff member providing administrative support)

The Complaints Co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure.
- liaise with staff members, Principal, CEO, Chair of OCL or the Clerk and to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure.
- be aware of issues regarding:
  - sharing third party information.
  - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint, including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person.
- keep records.

## **Clerk to the OCL Board**

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee 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 academy complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the UK 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 (for example: stage 1 paperwork, academy and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale.
- record the proceedings.
- circulate the minutes of the meeting.
- notify all parties of the committee's decision.

## **Committee Chair**

The Committee's Chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting.
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy.
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease.

This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person.

- the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant.
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or the UK GDPR.
- If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting.
- both the complainant and the academy are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself.
- the issues are addressed.
- key findings of fact are made.
- the committee is open-minded and acts independently of the academy.
- no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure.
- the meeting is minuted.
- they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator if the academy has one).

## Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial and should be seen to be so. No one may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the academy 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.
- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated. The committee 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 committee 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 committee 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 committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

## Record-keeping

The Academy will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and held in the relevant academy or in the national office and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

Records will 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.

In line with the UK GDPR, records of complaints should be kept following the guidance outlined in the OCL Data Retention Policy which is held on the OCL Policy Portal.

There may be occasions where complaints are made or continue to be escalated after a child has left the school. On changing schools, the pupil's educational record is transferred to the new school and no copies are retained. Schools can consider holding records of complaints separate to their pupil records (while a complaint is ongoing) so that access to them can be maintained. As information generated by a complaint may not form part of the pupil record, you should consider how best to store this information.

Personal data should only be kept for as long as is necessary for the immediate purpose of processing. The data should be stored securely and, where appropriate, encrypted to maximise security.

## Recording meetings

The hearing will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken. These recordings are disclosable on request for anyone attending, as it is their personal data.

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.

## Learning lessons

The Regional Director will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Principal where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the Academy can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

## Monitoring arrangements

The Regional Director will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly.

At a national level OCL records the details of all complaints that go to panel reviews so that we can analyse these every six months and learn from these processes and make changes to systems accordingly. The logging of complaints is completed by the regional Executive Assistant.

This policy will be reviewed by the National Education Team regularly.

## Links with other policies

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints/appeal/representations include:

- OCL Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Admissions Policy.
- OCL Exclusions Policy.
- Staff grievance procedures.
- Staff disciplinary procedures. OCL SEND policy and information report.
- Parental Code of Conduct.

## Training

Based on the level of need, Academy leaders will organise training for colleagues in dealing with complaints so that all staff feel confident in solving issues and working positively with parents and others.

## Complaint meetings / hearings

Investigators can speak to complainants and witnesses over the telephone or via a video conference during investigations, as long as an appropriate record is made with the date and time noted.

We can hold Complaint Panel Hearings by remote access as video conferences. Although "hybrid" hearings should be avoided wherever possible, as clearly participants attending in person, by telephone or via video conference will have entirely different perspectives and experiences to each other.

Academies must ensure that the process is fair and transparent, and that all parties are able to see and be seen and/or hear and be heard, and properly engage in the process. Wherever possible, academies should try to accommodate the wishes of parents when making the arrangements, rather than imposing a decision and date/time upon them.

## DfE details

- call the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288
- use the DfE's [contact form](#)
- write to the DfE at the address below

Department for Education Schools Complaints Compliance Unit,  
2nd Floor,  
Piccadilly Gate,  
Store Street,  
Manchester,  
M1 2WD



## Appendix A: Complaints form

Please complete and return to a leader who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</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 academy about it.</b>

<b>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</b>
<b>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.</b>
<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Official use</b>
<b>Date acknowledgement sent:</b>
<b>By whom:</b>
<b>Complaint referred to:</b>
<b>Action taken:</b>
<b>Date:</b>

## Appendix B: Letter inviting complainant to the Regional Director's review panel hearing

ADDRESS

DATE

Dear NAME

Thank you for bringing your concern to my attention. I would like to reassure you that I will endeavour to deal with your complaint fairly and in line with the OCL complaints policy. Oasis has a passion to include everyone, a desire to treat everyone equally and a commitment to healthy and open relationships. We shall endeavour to ensure that these values are reflected throughout this complaints procedure.

A meeting of the Regional Director's Complaints Review Panel will take place on **DATE AND TIME** at **VENUE AND ADDRESS** to consider your complaint. Upon arrival, please go to the main Academy entrance.

You are welcome to attend the meeting together with a friend or representative. Those present at the meeting will include a panel of three, including two Hub Councillors / an academy leader from **DELETE AS APPROPRIATE** - and will be chaired by the Regional Director from outside the region. You are entitled to call witnesses should you wish, but if it is your intention to do this, please contact me as soon as possible.

Any further information you wish to provide together with the names of any witnesses you intend to call needs to be sent to me no later than **ENTER DATE (A WEEK BEFORE THE MEETING DATE)**. All this information will then be forwarded by myself to members of the committee, prior to the hearing.

Please can you contact me using the details at the end this letter to confirm your attendance on the **DATE OF MEETING (MUST BE NO LATER THAN 15 WORKING DAYS AFTER COMPLAINT WAS RECEIVED)**, no later than **DATE (5 DAYS BEFORE THE MEETING DATE)**.

### General Principles

The following should be observed during the hearing:

- The aim of the hearing is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the Academy and complainant.
- It is the responsibility of the review panel to ensure the hearing is properly minuted.
- The panel understands that people making complaints may not be used to dealing with groups in formal situations and the chair will try to ensure the meeting is run as informally as possible.
- In the interest of fairness and justice, the introduction of previously undisclosed evidence or witnesses would be reason to adjourn the meeting so that the other side has time to reconsider and respond to the new evidence.

- To ensure the success of the meeting, all those in attendance must behave appropriately at all times. Should behaviour become aggressive or threatening, the meeting would be adjourned to ensure the safety of all those involved.

#### The Decision

The remit of the panel is to:

- Dismiss the complaint in part or in whole.
- Uphold the complaint in part or in whole.
- Recommend changes to the academy's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
- Suggest ways forward to resolve the complaint.

The Academy will inform those involved of the decision in writing within five academy days. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is any further information you require.

Yours sincerely,

EA to the Regional Director

## Appendix C: Letters for use in barring from the Academy premises

### Letter 1 Warning (sent by Principal)

Special delivery

Dear .....

Oasis Community Learning promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do.

However, I have received a report about your conduct at the Academy on **(enter date and time)**.

**(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, students, and other parents.)**

I must inform you that Oasis Community Learning will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its students and staff. We aim to treat all those we are in contact with in a respectful manner, because anything else goes against our ethos and the way we work.

Therefore if, in the future, I receive any reports of conduct of this nature I will be forced to consider removing your licence to enter the Academy grounds and buildings. If you do not comply with that instruction, I will be able to arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Nevertheless, I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report which I have received about your conduct.

These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter at an early point, you are asked to send me any written comments you wish to make by **(state date ten working days from the date of letter)**.

Yours sincerely,

Principal  
cc: Regional Director

## Letter 2 Withdraw permission pending review (sent by the Principal)

Special delivery

Dear

Oasis Community Learning promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do.

However, I have received a report about your conduct on ..... at.....

**(Add summary of incident and its effect on staff and students)**

**(Optional reference to first letter from Principal)**

I must inform you that we will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the Academy premises and will act to defend Academy staff and students. Oasis Community Learning aims to treat all those we are in contact with in a respectful manner, because anything else goes against our ethos and the way we work.

I am therefore instructing you that until I have reviewed this incident, you are not to reappear on the Academy premises. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of £500.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the Academy premises takes effect immediately and will be in place for 15 Academy days in the first instance.

**In the case of a primary Academy include:**

For the duration of this decision you may bring your son(s)/daughter(s) (**complete as appropriate**) to Academy and collect them/him/her (delete as appropriate) at the end of the Academy day, but you must not go beyond the Academy gate.

**In the case of EY/KS1 children, also insert**

Arrangements have been made for your (**delete as appropriate**) son(s)/daughter(s) (insert child/rens names) to be collected, and returned to you, at the Academy gate by a member of the Academy's staff. I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to your conduct on the Academy site. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct.

Your letter will enable me to take a decision on whether or not you will be allowed on the Academy premises after the 15 days. Please send me any written comments you wish to make by (**date 10 WORKING days from date of letter**).

If on receipt of your comments, I consider that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of your case.



Yours sincerely

Principal  
cc: Regional Director

### Letter 3a Withdrawal of permission confirmed (sent by the Principal)

Special delivery

Dear

Oasis Community Learning promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do. However, on ..... I wrote to inform you that I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of Oasis Academy .....

To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by ..... I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ....., the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the incident of poor conduct, I have determined that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto Academy premises should be confirmed. I am therefore instructing that, until further notice, you are not to come onto the premises of the Academy without my prior knowledge and approval.

If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises of the Academy. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises, you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Even though we have taken this decision, we remain committed to the education of your child/ren, who must continue to attend Academy as normal.

#### **In the case of a primary Academy include:**

For the duration of this decision you may bring your son(s)/daughter(s) (**complete as appropriate**) to Academy and collect them/him/her (delete as appropriate) at the end of the Academy day, but you must not go beyond the Academy gate.

#### **In the case of EY/KS1 children, also insert**

Arrangements have been made for your (**delete as appropriate**) son(s)/daughter(s) (insert child/rens' names) to be collected, and returned to you, at the Academy gate by a member of the Academy's staff.

This decision will be reviewed again .....(**insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months**).

When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the Academy premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the Academy in other respects.



Finally, I would advise you that your complaint is being considered under the appropriate stage of the Academy's parental complaints procedure. The Academy will contact you about this in due course. **(delete as appropriate)**

Yours sincerely

Principal  
cc. Regional Director

### Letter 3b Restore permission after review (sent by the Regional Director)

Special delivery

Dear

Oasis Community Learning promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do.

On ..... Mrs/Miss/Mr .....(Principal's name) wrote to inform you that he/she had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of ..... Academy.

To enable her/him to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, you were given the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by .....

We have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ....., the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, I have decided that it is not necessary to confirm the decision and I am therefore restoring to you permission to come onto the Academy premises, with immediate effect.

**(Optional)** I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the Academy premises once again.

Yours sincerely

Regional Director  
cc. Principal

## Letter 4a Continue ban after second review (sent by the Regional Director)

Special delivery

Dear

Oasis Community Learning promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do.

On ..... Mrs/Miss/Mr .....(Principal's name) wrote to inform you that he/she had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of ..... Academy.

To enable her/him to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, you were given the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by .....

We have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ....., the contents of which I have carefully considered.

You were also advised that we would take steps to review this decision by .....

I have now completed the review. However, I have determined that it is not yet appropriate for me to withdraw my decision. **(Add brief summary of reasons).**

I therefore advise that the instruction that you are not to come onto the premises of Oasis Academy....., without my prior knowledge and approval remains in place ..... (insert date)

If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

I shall undertake a further review of this decision by .....**(insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months).**

In the meantime, you can write to me with a statement of your views, which I will consider.

Yours sincerely

Principal  
cc: Regional Director

## Letter 4b Restore permission after later review (sent by the Principal)

Special delivery

Dear

Oasis Community Learning promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do.

I wrote to you on ..... confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of Oasis Academy ..... had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by .....

I have now completed the review. I have decided that it is now appropriate to restore permission for you to come onto the Academy premises with immediate effect.

I trust that you will now work together with the Academy and there will be no further difficulties of the kind which made it necessary to restrict your access to the Academy premises.

**(Optional)** I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the Academy premises once again.

Yours sincerely

Principal  
cc: Regional Director

## Appendix D: Letter for use following persistent complaints

### MODEL LETTER INFORMING A COMPLAINANT THAT HIS/HER BEHAVIOUR IS NOW CONSIDERED TO FALL UNDER THE TERMS OF THE POLICY FOR DEALING WITH PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS

#### BY SPECIAL DELIVERY POST

Dear

Oasis Community Learning promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do.

However, I am writing to inform you that in view of your behaviour on **[date]**, when you **[describe actions/behaviour]** it has been decided that the section in our Complaints Policy for dealing with “unreasonably persistent” complaints will apply.

In the circumstances I have made the following arrangements for your future contact with the Academy:

*[\*Delete as applicable]*

\*For the foreseeable future, should you wish to meet with a member of staff, I would ask you to note the following:

- (a) An appointment will be arranged and confirmed in writing as soon as possible;
- (b) A third party from the Academy will be present;
- (c) In the interests of all parties, formal notes of this meeting may be made.
- (d) The number of times that you can make contact with the Academy are limited to XX (complete as necessary) per half term.

\* For the foreseeable future, all routine communication with the Academy should be by letter only.

Please address letters to ..... at the Academy. We shall respond as quickly as possible.

E-mail correspondence will not be responded to.

Exceptionally, these arrangements do not apply to any emergency involving *[insert name of student]* – in which case you should contact the Academy in the usual way – or to parents’ evenings, which will continue as in the past, but with a third party from the Academy present.

These arrangements take effect straightaway. If you wish to make a representation about the contents of this letter, which may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct, you can do so by writing to me at the Academy by **[state ten working days from the date of the letter]**.

If on receipt of your comments I consider that the arrangements outlined above should continue, you will be supplied with details of how to review a circumstance of your case.

I do hope that the difficulties we are currently experiencing can soon be resolved.



Yours sincerely

Principal

Cc: Regional Director

## Appendix E: Sample agenda for face-to-face meeting between Complainant and Review Panel at Stage 2b

1. Welcome and introduction by the Review Panel Chair  
Chair to outline the procedure to be followed and explain roles and responsibilities of individuals
2. Complainant to present their case  
Any witnesses are called or any paperwork to be considered in support of complainant's case
3. Questions to complainant from panel members and Principal
4. Academy to present their case  
Any witnesses are called or any paperwork to be considered in support of Academy's case
5. Questions to Academy from panel members and complainant
6. Discussion of complainant's desired outcomes or discussion of any possibilities of redress
7. Closing remarks by the Chair of the Review Panel – including an outline of the next steps
8. All parties to withdraw except panel members and clerk
9. Panel to decide on its recommendations including any redress measures

The decisions and recommendations of the Review Panel will be sent in writing to all parties.

An administrator will be present throughout to minute the meeting. These will be shared with all participants.

Witnesses will be invited to join the meeting at the appropriate time. They will be asked to leave when both parties have questioned them.

## Appendix F: Complaint outcome letter template

Sent via email: [email](#) address

Date

Dear ,

Thank you for your email dated \*\*\*, confirming that you wished to escalate a complaint regarding incidents which occurred at Oasis Academy \*\*\* **over the course of this academic year/specify dates.** I also appreciate your time in bringing this to our attention and for attending the panel meeting on \*\*\*, **virtually.**

The panel are very sorry and concerned to learn of the **distress and upset you and your son/daughter feel** and we have very carefully considered your complaint (in line with the Oasis Community Learning Complaints Policy).

You explained that your complaint was about:

- **Summary of the complaint**

The panel understood that:

- **What the panel have heard and understood**

Finally, you told us that your desired outcome would be that \*\*\*\*\*

### Decision

The panel has decided to **uphold your complaint in full/in part/dismiss your complaint in full/in part;**

- **Clarify any explanations if needed if not fully upheld.**

The panel recommends:

- **Recommendations for the academy**

I do hope this enables your complaint to reach a satisfactory conclusion and that you and your **son/daughter** are able to continue to move forward positively with Oasis **Academy \*\*\*.**

As per the OCL Complaints Policy, should you feel dissatisfied with this decision, you can refer your complaint to the DfE. The DfE will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the academy. The DfE will not overturn an academy's decision about a complaint but will look into the procedures undertaken.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy>



As mentioned, a copy of the minutes from the panel meeting are **included with this letter/will be shared with you in due course**. Do feel free to let me know if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

**Name**

Regional Director

Encl: minutes from [date] meeting.

Cc: \*\*\*. Principal (OA \*\*\*)  
\*\*\* (Panel member, Hub Councillor: \*\*\*)  
\*\*\*\* (Panel member, \*\*\*)

## RACI matrix

“R” for anyone who is “Responsible” for a task listed in the policy, an “A” for anyone who is “Accountable”, a “C” for anyone who must be “Consulted” under the policy and “I” for anyone who must be “Informed” about aspects of the policy.

Policy Element	Board	Leadership				Academy	
		OCL CEO	OCL COO	Director of OD & L&D	Regional Director	Academy Principal	Principals PA
Policy is in place	R	R					
Complaint process followed appropriately					A	R	
Record keeping completed					A	R	C
Monitoring		A	A		A	R	
Training for staff		A	A	A	A	R	
Model letters		R					

## Document Control

### Changes History

Version	Date	Owned and Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1.0	3rd January 2018	Chris Chamberlain	All OCL Principals	Updated legislation
1.1	11 <sup>th</sup> February 2019	Chris Chamberlain	All OCL Principals	Updated legislation
1.2	July 2020	Chris Chamberlain	All OCL Principals	Updated legislation
1.3	January 2022	Chris Chamberlain	All OCL Principals	Updated legislation
1.4	February 2024	Chris Chamberlain	All OCL Principals	Updated guidance
1.5	April 2024	Chris Chamberlain		Final amendments

### Policy Tier

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4

### Owner

Chris Chamberlain

### Contact in case of query

[chris.chamberlain@oasisuk.org](mailto:chris.chamberlain@oasisuk.org)

### Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Position	Date Approved	Version
John Murphy	CEO, OCL	3rd January 2018	1.0
John Murphy	CEO, OCL	11 <sup>th</sup> February 2019	1.1
National Education Team	NET	February 2019	1.1
CSG	CSG		1.2
Director's group and OPD	All OCL Principals	January 2022	1.3
NDs group	NDs	2024	1.5

### Position with the Unions

Does the policy or changes to the policy require consultation with the National Unions under our recognition agreement?

- Yes
- No

If yes, the policy status is:

- Consulted with Unions and Approved
- Fully consulted (completed) but not agreed with Unions but Approved by OCL
- Currently under Consultation with Unions
- Awaiting Consultation with Unions

Date & Record of Next Union Review

### Location

Tick all that apply:

- OCL website
- Academy website
- Policy portal
- Other: state

### Customisation

- OCL policy
- OCL policy with an attachment for each academy to complete regarding local arrangements
- Academy policy
- Policy is included in Principals' annual compliance declaration

### Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Position	Date	Version
All OCL Principals	Principal	3rd January 2018	1.0
All OCL Principals	Principal	11 <sup>th</sup> February 2019	1.1
All OCL Principals	Principal		1.2
All OCL Principals	Principal	January 2022	1.3
All OCL Principals	Principal	2024	1.5