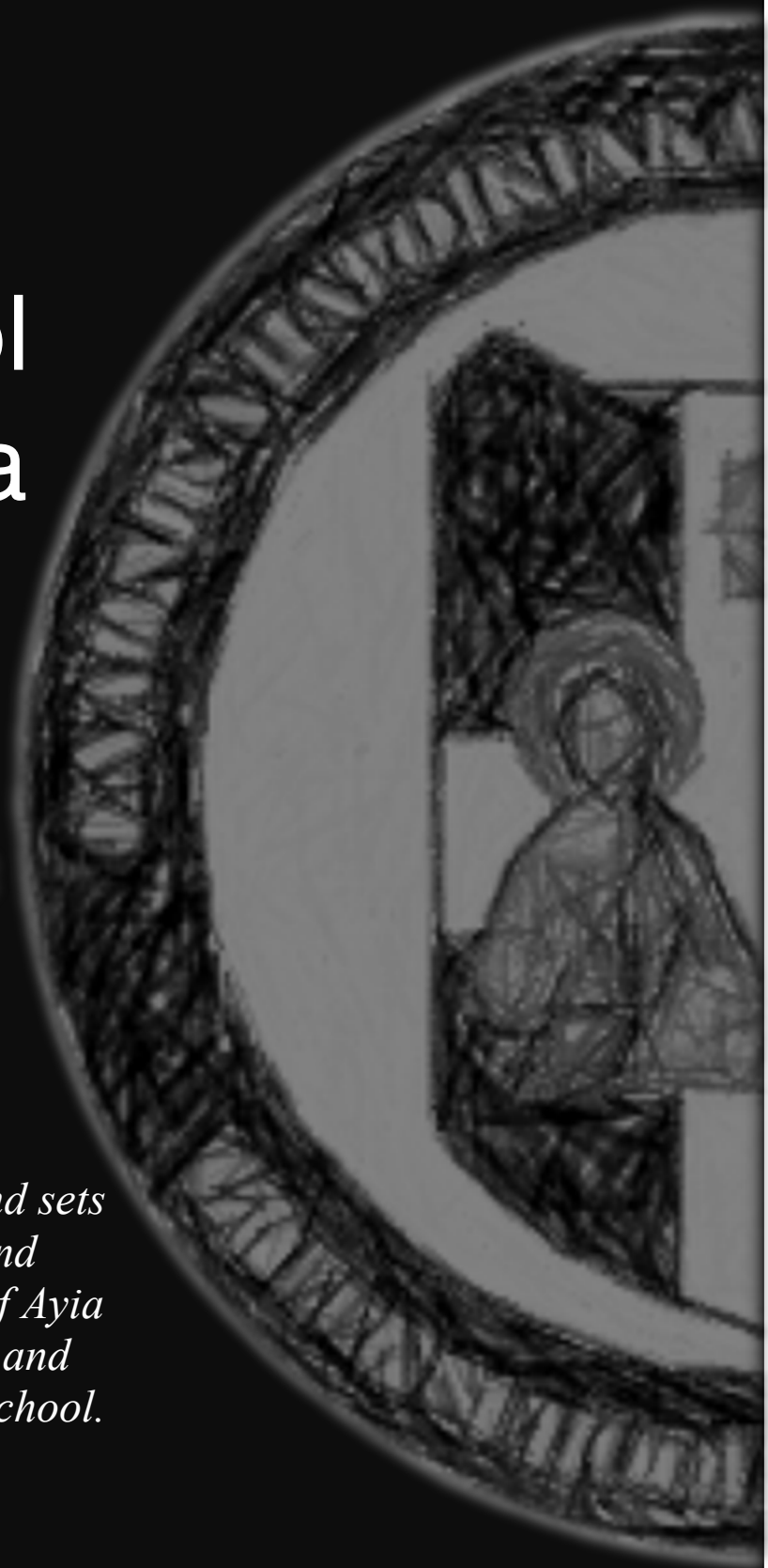


# Greek School *of* Ayia Triada Birmingham

## *Communication & Complaints Procedure*

*This document defines the term and sets out the principles, practices and procedures which Greek School of Ayia Triada will follow in respecting and valuing each child attending the school.*



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## **1. Introduction**

Communication, written or spoken, is valued as part of the partnership between home and school. Collaboration between parents, staff and the Management Board of the Greek School of Ayia Triada Birmingham leads to a shared sense of purpose and a positive school environment. This section explains the procedure that the Greek School of Ayia Triada follows with regards to communication as well as to complaints placed in our school.

## **2. Policy Statement**

It is in everyone's best interests in our school and community to communicate well with one another and to ensure that any concerns and complaints are dealt with as quickly and appropriately as possible. In addition, concerns and complaints brought to the attention of the school can be an opportunity to inform, review and help improve school procedures.

This policy has been developed after consulting:

- Department for Education (DfE) School Complaints Guidance
- Best practice from local authorities of our school and its Branches
- Guidance by Cypriot Ministry of Education and Cyprus Educational Mission

## **3. Aims and Principles of the policy**

This policy aims to:

- Describe our Communication Principles and the roles and responsibilities.
- Describe Complaints procedure and related aspects of this
- Encourage the resolution of concerns and complaints by informal means wherever possible.
- Ensure that concerns are dealt with quickly, fully and fairly and within defined time limits where possible.
- Provide effective and appropriate responses to concerns and complaints.
- Maintain good working relationships between the school and all those involved.

All staff, members of Management Board, parents and carers at the Greek School of Ayia Triada School are made aware of this complaints policy and any other policies that may be inter-related (e.g. Behaviour, Health & Safety etc).

Key principles of the policy are:

- The legal context of the Complaints Policy.
- Accessibility – useable format, free from jargon, assuming no specialist knowledge.
- Good communication – clarification of the process involved in dealing with complaints.
- Clear and adhered to recommended timescales (where appropriate)
- Clarity over roles and responsibilities of those involved in the process
- Appropriate confidentiality which must be maintained by all involved in the process (including any school staff, administrative staff and governors).

## **4. Communication: Roles and Responsibilities**

We firmly assert that effective communication transcends mere information exchange. It serves as a conduit for transmitting information, fostering understanding, building trust, upholding confidentiality, and coordinating action. Communication is not solely about the message itself but also encompasses the manner in which it is conveyed. Through robust communication, partnerships are nurtured.

At the Greek School of Ayia Triada Birmingham, our communication objectives are multifaceted. To ensure the thriving success of our school, it is imperative that we engage in effective communication among ourselves, with our students, their parents, and other stakeholders within the community. We strive for clarity, professionalism, timeliness, and appropriateness in all communications among members of our school community.

### **a. All communications at GSAT aim at:**

- Keeping staff, pupils, parents, Management Board and other stakeholders well informed.
- Being open, honest, ethical, and professional.
- Using jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all.
- Being actioned within a reasonable time.
- Using the methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Taking account of relevant school policies.
- Being compatible with our core values and School Improvement & Development Plan.

## **b. Responsibilities**

This section details the responsibilities of the different individuals within the school.

### **Headteacher and Management Board**

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.
- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comment from all staff.
- To keep governors informed of developments and concerns.
- To ensure the use of trusted online spaces when communicating between governors or with the school
- Using a variety of communication methods to promote & explain the work of the governors
- Listening to people online to hear what is being said about the school
- To ensure the posting of minutes of meeting in appropriate places

### **All staff**

- To communicate regularly with each other, face to face and in writing, to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the classroom and working environment.
- To ensure they are informed and have access to information in order to be as effective as possible in their role and to support their work within the school.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and colleagues informed.

## **c. External Communication**

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. Our aim is to have clear and effective communications with all parents and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner.

We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial

discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions to our society by all cultural groups represented in our school. The following are possible methods of communication across our school:

- **Letters:** Staff will respond to parents' letters within 48 hours (2 school days). Any letter of complaint must be referred to the Head Teacher immediately. Letters to parents must be approved by the Head Teacher before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents will be placed in the *Incidences Folder or Behaviour Folder*. A copy of general letters will be in the *Communication Folder*.
  
- **E-mail/Text:** The school has an e-mail/text system which it uses to communicate with parents. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the Head Teacher. If a parent communicates with the school using email or website contact form with a complaint or a matter that requires an action. Staff should forward relevant emails from parents to the Head Teacher and should always do so if the content is a complaint. All e-mails requiring an answer should be responded to within 48 hours (2 school days). E-mail communications concerning a child are kept for the academic year in a digital folder unless they are required for evidence trailing, in which case a copy should be printed.
  
- **Telephone calls:** Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency.
  
- **Written Reports:** Once a term, we provide a full written report to each child's parents on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress.
  
- **Newsletters:** Newsletters are e-mailed out approximately monthly. Parents must register their emails for receiving newsletters. If parents cannot do so then they are registered to receiving the newsletter by a member of staff after request.
  
- **Parents Evenings:** Are planned for once a term for providing progress reports and for discussing progress, attendance, and the learning and progress of students  
Parents meet their child's teacher/s twice times during the year for a one-to-one consultation at a Parents' Evening. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. When children have particular education needs, or if they are making less than expected progress, parents will be invited to meet with their child's teacher more regularly.
  
- **School Website:** The school website provides an opportunity to share information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

## 5. Complaints Procedure: Legal context

From September 2003, Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 has required governing bodies of all maintained schools and nursery schools in England to have procedures in place to deal with complaints. This applies also to any out of school educational settings. The Management Board of the Greek School of Ayia Triada aims to establish and publish procedures for dealing with complaints relating to the school, other than those covered by legislation and formal procedures elsewhere (a list of these can be found on the following pages).

## 6. Monitoring and Recording Complaints

At all stages of the complaints procedure the following information should be recorded:

- Name of the complainant
- Date and time at which complaint was made
- Details of the nature of the complaint
- Desired outcome of the complainant
- How the complaint is being investigated (including written records of any interviews held)
- Results and conclusions of investigations
- Any action taken
- The complainant's response
- Record of any subsequent action if required

The Management Board of our School monitors the general nature of complaints over each academic year to inform practice and potential improvements to procedures and policies within the school.

## 7. Upholding or not upholding complaints

At each stage of the complaints procedure the conclusion will be either:

- That the complaint is upheld (in part or full) and where appropriate some form of action is taken **OR**
- That the complaint is not upheld and reason(s) for this, where appropriate, are clearly given

In the first instance of receiving a complaint it may be appropriate to resolve the issue by offering to the complainant one or more of the following:

- An emphatic response

- An explanation of events
- A recognition that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to endeavour that it will not happen again. However, this must not include any information or detailed action taken involving a member of staff
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the findings of the complaint

The complainant may choose to take no further action or take their complaint to the next stage.

## **8. The Stages of the Complaints Process**

### **Stage 1 (Informal Stage)**

The complainant raises and discusses their concerns/issues with child/young person's class teacher. Even if the complaint concerns the teacher the first step is to discuss the concerns with the teacher (only if the concerns are with regards to communication or progress.) In case the concerns are about a member of staff and the concerns are relating to safeguarding then complaint must be forward to the relevant member of the Management Board (see *Parents Information Booklet*). Most concerns can be resolved satisfactorily at this stage. However, the staff member may feel that it is more appropriate to refer the complainant to a more senior or experienced member of staff who will try to resolve the concern informally. Any concern or complaint which is considered serious should be presented to the school in written within 3 days from occurrence.

### **Stage 2**

If the complainant remains unhappy, they should then contact the headteacher either by arranging an appointment to see them or putting their concerns in writing. The headteacher (or their nominated representative) will then investigate the concerns and respond within agreed timescales. An acknowledgement will be made of the concern/complaint within five school working days. The headteacher will respond to the issues raised within 15 school working days of receiving the complaint. If it is not possible to meet these timescales, then the headteacher will contact the complainant to discuss reviewing these.

If the concern or complaint is against the headteacher, in the first instance the complainant will need to write in confidence to the chair of Management Board. The chair of Management Board will seek to resolve the issue informally before, if necessary, moving to Stage 3.



## Stage 3 (Formal Stage)

If the headteacher is unable to resolve the concern to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant may write to the chair of Management Board of Greek School of Ayia Triada. The chair of Management Board will acknowledge the complaint within five school working days and arrange a panel of board members to be formed to hear the complaint (within agreed timescales). The members who will deal with this complaint will have no previous involvement or knowledge of the case. The chair/clerk of the complaints panel will contact the complainant with the arrangements.

Once the panel has been held the complainant and school will be informed of their decision within five school working days. If it is not possible to meet these timescales then the chair of the panel will contact both parties to discuss a mutually convenient date. For further details about how the panel should operate see Appendix 1.

## Stage 4

If the complainant remains unsatisfied by the response and outcome of the complaint by Headteacher and the Management Board may contact the (CEM)<sup>1</sup> in written, who will investigate if the school's complaints process has been carried out appropriately. Where a complainant chooses to escalate the complaint to CEM it must directly be related to the actions of a member of staff which is directly appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture Cyprus. Please note that, the CEM cannot overturn a GSAT panel's decision on a complaint, unless the complaint refers to serious malpractice of members of staff or Management Board's actions.

The local authority/ governing authority contact is:

Cyprus Educational Mission  
22 Stuart Crescent  
London  
N22 5NN  
kea@schools.org.uk

Any complaints forwarded to CEM may consider first the following:

- To specify what the concern/complaint is about and to provide grounded reasons that prove that their concern hasn't been dealt appropriately by the school Headteacher and Management Board.
- The nature of employment of the member of staff that they are raising concerns about (- that if the complaint concerns a specific member of staff-all members of staff apart from the headteacher and two teachers are employed by the School Management Board, and therefore CEM is

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<sup>1</sup> Cyprus Educational Mission which is the local authority. CEM may not uphold complaints where they do not directly refer to member of staff appointed by Ministry of Education.

- not responsible for dealing with concerns directed to these members of staff, One member of staff is employed by Greek Educational Mission).
- Cyprus Educational mission can uphold complaints about specific issues that are related to member of staff appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus.

The CEM will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five school working days. They will then have a duty to inform the school that there is a complaint escalated to them and that they will start investigation recording all the facts relating to the incident/incidences of the complaint. They will inform the complainant and the school of the outcome of their investigation of the process within 25 school working days of receiving the complaint. If it is not possible to meet the timescales then the local authority officer will contact the complainant and school to discuss reviewing these.

## Stage 5

If the complainant is unsatisfied at the end of Stage 4 they can contact the Local Council where the school is based:

## 9.Important Notes

Concerning Upholding and Reporting Complaints forwarded to the Headteacher of the School or the Chair of the Management Board:

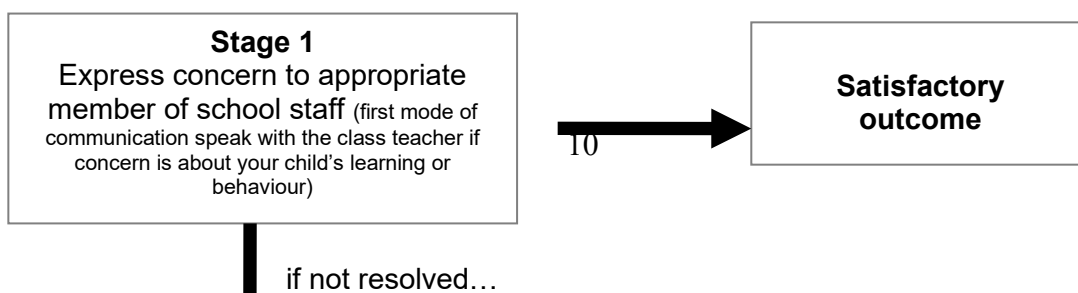
### Upholding:

- The School has the right to refuse upholding a complaint if the stages of complaints process are not fully met as well as if the mode of complaint is considered inappropriate.
- All written or verbal complaints/ concerns raised to the Headteacher of our school are forwarded to the Management Board of the School and all general complaints that are directed to the Management Board of the School are discussed with the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher has a duty to share with the Management Board all the complaints (written or verbal)
- The content of all complaints forwarded to the school will be assessed for initial response. Response concerning upholding or not complaints must be sent to complainant within 5 working days.
- The school will ensure to exhaust all options for resolving concerns in the best possible manner.
- The Headteacher and the Management Board will always seek for legal advice in order to deal with serious complaints or allegations forwarded to the school.
- The headteacher always reaches decisions following a full investigation and discussion with the Management Board of the School

### Reporting:

- The school will ensure all appropriate steps are taken in order to investigate and resolve a complaint.
- The school will provide brief description to the complainant of how a decision was reached concerning a complaint, however no internal procedures will be reported. Content of meeting minutes, means of investigation such as interviews, recordings, and statements should not be disclosed to the complainant under no circumstances, unless complaint concerns a criminal offense or investigation concerns serious allegations about misconduct or safeguarding issues.

## 10. Complaints Procedure Model



## **Appendix 1**

### **11. Decision**

After completing all stages of investigation and addressing a complaint, the responsible panel of the Management Board and the Headteacher convenes to discuss findings and render a decision. Subsequently, the decision is communicated in writing to the complainant. Complainants retain the right to

appeal. The Management Board reserves the authority to review the case and scrutinize all investigative steps taken. Upon thorough examination and exhaustively exploring both available means and legal avenues to address the matter, the school retains the right to conclude the case if all involved parties concur that the investigative outcome is conclusive and devoid of ambiguity.

## **12. Unresolved Complaints and Leaving School**

The school commits to exhausting all available means, both within the school and legally, to resolve all complaints and achieve the most positive outcome for all parties involved.

In the event that a complaint remains unresolved, or parents are unsatisfied with the outcome, resulting in the decision to withdraw their child from the school, it is imperative to note that parents are fully liable for the payment of all outstanding fees. This policy ensures accountability and upholds the financial obligations agreed upon upon enrollment.

# **Appendix 1**

## **How the Complaints Panel of the Management Board will run**

Although the panel will follow formal procedures, the hearing should be conducted as informally as possible. Extra care will need to be taken if the hearing involves a child or young person being present.

1. Both the complainant and the school are invited to attend the panel and arrive at the same time.
2. The chair of the panel will introduce everyone and set out that the remit of the panel is to investigate the complaint. They will do this by allowing each party the opportunity to put their case without undue interruption.
3. Any witnesses or representatives are only required to attend to give their supporting information and may leave once they have done so.  
Representatives and Witnesses will not be permitted to express their views over the case, only to represent facts they witnessed
4. The complainant is given the opportunity to state their case. The panel and the headteacher have the opportunity to ask any questions.
5. The headteacher is given the opportunity to state the school's case. The panel and the complainant have the opportunity to ask any questions.
6. The complainant is invited to sum up their complaint.
7. The headteacher is invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
8. The chair lets both parties know how they will be notified of the panel's findings, within agreed timescales. The chair draws the meeting to a close.
9. Both parties leave at the same time and the panel withdraws to make their findings.

## Appendix 2

### The Complaints Panel of the Management Board: Roles and Responsibilities of those involved in the process

#### The Clerk to the Panel

The panel must be clerked. The clerk organises the complaints panel and must:

1. Send acknowledgement on behalf of the Chair of Complaints Panel of the written complaint within **five school working days**, outlining the next steps
2. Arrange membership of the panel, in discussion with the chair of Management Board, which should be three governors who have no prior knowledge of the complaint
3. Set the date, time and venue of the panel, ensuring the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible. The hearing should be set within **15 school working days after receiving the complaint**. If the timescales cannot be adhered to the chair of the panel should discuss with the school and the complainant the next most appropriate date
4. Write to all parties, detailing the following:
  - Date, time and venue of hearing
  - Aims and objectives of the hearing and how it will be conducted
  - A request for any documentation that either party wishes the panel to consider. This must be with the clerk so that it can be sent to all parties **at least five school working days** before the hearing
  - The rights of equal access, accompaniment and representation for both the complainant and the school, ensuring that everyone is notified as to who will be attending the panel, in advance of the hearing
  - How and when the panel will reach their decision
5. At the hearing, meet and welcome the parties as they arrive ensuring there is appropriate separate waiting space
6. Ensure that both parties arrive at the panel at the same time
7. Record the proceedings and send the typed version to the chair of the panel for checking
8. Notify all parties of the panel's decision within **five school working days**

9. *Keep paper minutes at the school with the governing body files (Information are withheld and not disclosed unless legal procedures are involved requesting the lift of Data Protection Rights) ---this may also apply to information collected during internal investigation*

### **The Chair of Management Board**

- If the formal stage is required the chair of Management Board will notify the clerk to the panel to arrange the Appeal Panel
- If the complaint is about the headteacher the chair of Management Board will investigate informally the issue, taking advice from the Management Board. Educational Advisors where appropriate, and will inform further that a complaint has been made
- The chair of Management Board will need to ensure that general nature of complaints over the academic year are appropriately monitored by the governing body to inform practice and potential improvements to procedures and policies within the school

### **The Chair of the Panel**

The chair of the panel has a key role and will need to ensure that:

- The hearing is as informal as possible
- After introductions the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption
- The complainant is given the opportunity to state their case – the panel and school then have the opportunity to ask questions and clarify points
- The school is given the opportunity to state their case – the panel and complainant then have the opportunity to ask questions and clarify points
- Any witnesses or representatives are only required to attend to give supporting information
- Both parties have the opportunity to sum up
- The meeting is drawn to a close and both parties leave the panel **at the same time**
- The issues are discussed fully, fairly and are addressed
- The key findings of the facts are made



The chair should also aim that:

- The complainant and headteacher feel at ease
- The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- The panel is open minded and acting independently
- No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcomes of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- Written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises the chair can give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it

### **Notification of the Panel's Decision**

The chair of the panel must ensure that the complainant and the school are notified of the panel's decision. This is usually within a set deadline that is published in the Complaints Policy or mutually agreed.

**The panel will either:**

- **Uphold the complaint**
- **Reject the complaint**
- **Uphold the complaint in part**

The letter must explain any further rights of appeal and if so, who to contact.

The complainant may move to Stage 4 and write to the CEM. However, the local authority-or the schools governing authority which is CYPRUS EDUCATIONAL MISSION will not reinvestigate the decision of the panel but will check that the complaints process has been carried out appropriately. (Stage 5). The school has the right to close the case after exhausting all means and legal ways to deal with the matter, if through the procedure all involved parties agree that the outcome of the investigation procedure is concrete and there is no doubt about the decision that it has been reached.

## Version Control

Version Name	Date	Reason for Update
Draft Complaints Procedure (1 <sup>st</sup> version)	01/12/2007	Not in place, needed to Create Equal Opportunities. Feedback Dr Riaz Farooq – Birmingham City Council-Local Supplementary School Officer
Draft Complaints Procedure (2 <sup>nd</sup> Version)	October 2009	More amendments agreement in School Committee to change the Equal Opportunities Policy and make it more comprehensive
Draft Complaints Procedure	17/11/2010	Feedback from Karen Gardiner NRC-ContinuYou
Updated and changed to Communication and Complaints Procedure Policy	10/09/2013	Ratified by Management Board Signed by the Management Board
Updated	06/08/2014	Ratified by Management Board Signed by the Management Board
Udated and amended	01/09/16	Some minor amendments were made, mainly typos and some irrelevant information removed
Reviewed	01/07/2017	Reviewed and approved by MB no changes
Reviewed	01/09/2018	Reviewed and approved by MB no changes
Reviewed	01/09/2019	Reviewed and approved by MB no changes
Reviewed	01/09/2021	Reviewed and approved by MB no changes
Reviewed	20/09/2022	Reviewed and approved by MB no changes
Reviewed	01-04-2024	Reviewed section 12 added, amendments in all sections- clarifications