

Complaints Policy

Laetare Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Approved by:	Board of Directors
Date of most recent approval:	24 September 2026 (Implementation Date: 1 October 2026)
Next review due by:	24 September 2028

1. Introduction

Laetare Catholic Multi Academy Trust is committed to providing an education rooted in Christ, animated by the charisms of our founding Religious Orders and inspired by Gospel values. Our principles of respect for distinctiveness, subsidiarity, solidarity and equity shape how we listen and respond when concerns arise.

We value strong relationships between home and school and seek to resolve concerns promptly, fairly and through constructive dialogue. Wherever possible, matters should be resolved at the lowest appropriate level, with schools taking primary responsibility for concerns relating to their day-to-day operation.

Where informal resolution is not possible, this policy provides a clear and fair process for considering complaints. Local Governing Bodies provide appropriate governance oversight, while the Trust becomes directly involved where the complaint concerns the Trust, governance or other matters requiring Trust-level consideration.

The Trust will use concerns and complaints to identify learning and improvement where appropriate. Not every concern, disagreement or request for information constitutes a formal complaint, and this policy ensures that matters are directed to the appropriate process.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply.

2.1 Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction alleging that the Trust or one of its schools has acted unfairly, unreasonably, improperly or unlawfully, or has failed to follow its policies, procedures or legal responsibilities.

2.2 Concern

A concern is an issue, query or expression of dissatisfaction that can reasonably be resolved through clarification, discussion or informal action without the need to invoke the formal complaints procedure.

2.3 Complainant

A complainant is a parent or carer of a current pupil making a complaint regarding their child under this policy.

2.4 Responsibility

Responsibility will normally rest with:

- the school, for requests for information, concerns and the investigation of formal complaints relating to the day to day operation of the school

- the Local Governing Body, where this policy provides for a review of the outcome of a formal complaint by a Local Governing Body Complaints Panel;
- the Trust, where the complaint concerns the Trust itself, the Chief Executive Officer, the governance of a school, the Local Governing Body, or another matter reserved to the Trust under this policy.

The complainant will be informed which person or body is responsible for considering the matter at each stage of the procedure.

2.5 Representative

A complainant may be accompanied or represented by another person at any meeting held under this policy. The school or Trust, as appropriate, may require written confirmation that the representative has the complainant's authority to act on their behalf.

2.6 Working Day

A Working Day means any day, Monday to Friday, on which the Trust is open for normal business. Working Days exclude Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays and periods of school closure during published school holidays.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to complaints made by parents and carers of current pupils regarding their child, in accordance with Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014.

This formal complaints procedure does not apply to complaints from former pupils, members of the public or other individuals who are not parents or carers of a current pupil. There is no statutory entitlement for such individuals to have a complaint considered under this procedure.

The Trust and its schools will nevertheless consider concerns raised by non-parental complainants respectfully and expediently and will determine the appropriate means of responding. Such concerns will be managed outside this formal complaints procedure and do not carry an entitlement to progress through its formal investigation or Local Governing Body Complaints Panel stages.

For complaints falling within this policy, it applies to the actions, decisions or omissions of the Trust, its schools, employees, Local Governors, Directors and others acting on behalf of the Trust.

Consistent with the principle of subsidiarity, concerns and complaints relating to the day-to-day operation of a school will normally be managed by that school. Where a complainant remains dissatisfied following a formal investigation, they may request consideration by a Local Governing Body Complaints Panel.

The Trust will normally become directly involved where a complaint concerns the Trust, the Chief Executive Officer, the governance of a school or its Local Governing

Body, or where a conflict of interest or other exceptional circumstances make Trust involvement necessary. The Trust may also assume responsibility for a complaint where necessary to ensure that it is handled fairly, lawfully and in accordance with this policy.

The Trust encourages concerns to be resolved through explanation, clarification and constructive dialogue wherever possible, using the least formal process appropriate to the matter.

3.1 Matters Covered by this Policy

This policy may be used where concerns or complaints relate to matters such as:

- the application of Trust or school policies or procedures;
- the quality of education or other services provided;
- communication with parents or carers;
- administrative processes;
- the conduct of employees, Local Governors or Directors (except where separate procedures apply); or
- any other matter for which there is no separate statutory or Trust procedure.

This list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

3.2 Matters Outside the Scope of this Policy

Certain matters are governed by separate statutory or Trust procedures and will not normally be considered under this Complaints Policy. These include, but are not limited to:

- admissions
- statutory assessments and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- exclusions where there is a statutory right of review or appeal
- safeguarding and child protection concerns, which will be managed under the school's safeguarding procedures, although a complaint about the way in which the Trust or a school has handled such a concern may fall within this policy
- whistleblowing
- staff disciplinary, capability or grievance matters
- complaints by employees relating to their employment
- subject access requests and other rights under data protection legislation
- Freedom of Information requests
- procurement or commercial disputes
- matters for which there is an alternative statutory appeal or review process, or which are the subject of current legal proceedings where consideration under this policy would prejudice or duplicate those proceedings.

Where a matter falls outside the scope of this policy, the school will, wherever reasonably practicable, advise the complainant of the appropriate alternative procedure.

Complaints about services provided by an external organisation using school premises or facilities should normally be raised under that organisation's own complaints procedure.

3.3 Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated under this policy.

Where an anonymous complaint raises concerns relating to safeguarding, criminal activity, serious misconduct or another matter of significant public interest, the information provided will be considered and, where appropriate, referred for consideration under the relevant Trust, school or statutory procedure.

3.4 Historic Complaints

Complaints should normally be raised as soon as reasonably practicable after the events giving rise to them.

The school or trust will not normally consider complaints about matters that occurred more than three months before the complaint was raised, unless there are exceptional circumstances which justify the delay. In determining whether to exercise this discretion, it will have regard to the nature of the complaint, the reasons for the delay and whether it remains possible to investigate the matter fairly.

3.5 Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

Where a complainant repeatedly raises the same issues after the complaints procedure has been exhausted, or behaves in a manner that is unreasonable, vexatious or abusive, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Trust's Managing Vexatious Complaints Policy.

The existence of previous complaints will not, of itself, prevent the school or trust from considering a new complaint that raises materially different issues or presents significant new evidence.

4. Determining the Appropriate Procedure

The Trust recognises that not every question, concern or expression of dissatisfaction constitutes a formal complaint. Many matters can be resolved more effectively through explanation, clarification, discussion or informal action without the need to invoke the formal complaints procedure.

Where correspondence is received from a person who is not entitled to use this formal complaints procedure, the school or Trust will determine the appropriate means of responding outside this policy.

Accordingly, upon receiving correspondence or a concern, the school or Trust, as appropriate, will determine the procedure through which the matters raised should be considered. In making that determination, regard will be had to the substance of the matters raised rather than the description applied to them by the complainant.

Where a matter falls within the categories set out in Section 7.1, it will be referred to the Trust for consideration. The Trust may also assume responsibility for a complaint where it considers that the nature of the matter, a conflict of interest or other exceptional circumstances make Trust-level consideration appropriate.

A complainant's decision to describe correspondence as a "formal complaint", "appeal" or "request for investigation" does not, of itself, determine the procedure that will be followed.

The school will determine the appropriate procedure through which the matters raised should be considered.

The allocation of a matter to an appropriate procedure will not be used to prevent a complainant from pursuing an eligible complaint through the formal stages of this policy.

The Trust expects everyone involved in raising or responding to concerns and complaints to communicate respectfully and constructively. Correspondence should focus on the matters of concern and the resolution being sought. References to possible escalation to external bodies or other organisations will not affect the consideration of a complaint. Where communication or behaviour becomes abusive, threatening, persistent or otherwise unreasonable, the Trust may apply its Managing Vexatious Complaints Policy.

4.1 Requests for Information, Explanation or Clarification

A request for information, explanation or clarification is not a complaint.

Many enquiries arise because a parent or carer wishes to understand how or why a decision has been reached. Where the substance of the correspondence is a request for information, explanation or clarification, the matter will normally be managed through the school's usual communication processes.

Providing an explanation or clarification does not constitute the investigation of a complaint and does not prevent a complainant from subsequently pursuing a formal complaint where they remain dissatisfied.

4.2 Concerns

A concern is an issue that can reasonably be resolved through discussion, clarification or informal action.

Concerns should normally be raised with the person or service most directly responsible for the matter so that they may be addressed promptly and at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

The Trust encourages concerns to be raised before they develop into formal complaints. Early discussion, clarification and constructive dialogue will often provide the quickest and most effective means of resolving concerns whilst maintaining positive relationships between families and schools.

Where appropriate, schools should make reasonable efforts to understand the concern, the outcome being sought and whether the matter can be resolved before it progresses to a formal complaint.

Where a concern cannot be resolved informally, the complainant may request that the matter be considered as a formal complaint.

4.3 Matters Subject to Other Procedures

Some matters are governed by separate statutory or Trust procedures.

Where the substance of the issues raised falls within another statutory or Trust procedure, school will normally direct the complainant to that procedure rather than consider the matter under this Complaints Policy.

Where reasonably practicable, the complainant will be informed of the reasons for that decision and the procedure that applies.

4.4 Professional Judgement

Schools and the Trust exercise professional judgement every day in relation to teaching and learning, behaviour, attendance, curriculum, safeguarding, pastoral support, staffing and the organisation of school life.

A disagreement with the exercise of professional judgement does not, of itself, provide grounds for a complaint to be upheld.

The purpose of this policy is not to substitute the professional judgement of school leaders or the Trust with that of the complaints process. Rather, it is to consider whether decisions have been reached fairly, reasonably, lawfully and in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.

Where concerns are raised regarding the exercise of professional judgement, consideration will normally be given to whether there is evidence that:

- relevant policies or procedures were not followed
- the decision-making process was procedurally unfair
- the decision was unreasonable in the circumstances
- there was maladministration
- there was a failure to comply with a legal or statutory duty.

Where the issue amounts solely to disagreement with a professional decision, the school may provide an explanation of the decision and the reasons for it without commencing a formal complaint investigation.

The complaints procedure is not intended to provide a mechanism for parents or carers to determine or substitute the professional or operational decisions of the Trust or its schools. Decisions relating to the curriculum, teaching methods, behaviour management, pastoral organisation, staffing, timetabling, educational visits, rewards, sanctions, grouping of pupils and the day to day operation of the

school remain matters for the professional judgement of school leaders and staff, provided those decisions have been taken lawfully, fairly and in accordance with relevant policies and statutory requirements.

4.5 Formal Complaints

Before commencing a formal investigation, the school will seek to ensure that the matters complained of and the outcome sought by the complainant are clearly understood. This enables the school to consider whether the issues can be resolved without the need for a formal investigation and ensures that any investigation is directed towards the matters that are genuinely in dispute.

A formal complaint should identify:

- the matters giving rise to the complaint
- the outcome sought
- why the complainant believes that the Trust or school has acted unfairly, unreasonably, improperly, unlawfully or contrary to its policies or procedures.

Complainants are encouraged to keep their complaint focused on the matters they wish the school to investigate and to provide only information which is relevant to those matters. The complaint should accurately reflect the complainant's concerns and the outcome they are seeking.

A complaint form is provided at Appendix 1 to assist complainants in setting out their complaint clearly, including the matters complained of and the outcome sought. Use of the form is encouraged but is not mandatory.

Formal complaints should normally be submitted in writing. Where a complainant is unable to do so because of disability, communication needs or another sufficient reason, the school will provide reasonable assistance or make an appropriate adjustment.

Where the matters complained of or the outcome sought are unclear, the school may ask the complainant to clarify these before commencing the substantive investigation. This is to ensure that the school and complainant have a common understanding of the matters to be investigated. A complaint will not be rejected solely because it has not been submitted on a particular form or because the complainant has difficulty expressing it in writing.

Where a formal complaint is accepted under this policy, it will proceed to investigation in accordance with Section 5.

5. Formal Investigation

Where the school determines that a matter should proceed as a formal complaint, whether following the consideration of a concern or because the nature of the issues raised warrants formal investigation from the outset, the complaint will be investigated fairly, objectively and proportionately.

The purpose of a formal investigation is to establish the relevant facts, consider the issues raised by the complainant and determine whether the school has acted fairly, reasonably, lawfully and in accordance with its policies and procedures.

The investigation will not ordinarily reconsider the merits of a professional decision simply because the complainant disagrees with it. Rather, it will consider whether the decision-making process was fair, reasonable and consistent with the school's legal and procedural responsibilities.

5.1 Responsibility for the Investigation

Formal complaints about the day-to-day operation of a school will normally be investigated by the Headteacher or a suitably senior member of staff with no prior involvement. Complaints about the Headteacher will normally be investigated by the Chief Executive Officer or another suitably experienced person appointed by the Trust.

Complaints about an individual Local Governor will normally be managed by the Chair of the Local Governing Body, in consultation with the Trust Governance Professional. An external investigator may be appointed where appropriate.

Complaints about the Chair of the Local Governing Body, the Local Governing Body collectively, the Chief Executive Officer, the Board of Directors or the Trust will be managed by the Trust.

The Trust Governance Professional will coordinate the administration of Trust-level complaints and provide procedural advice. Responsibility for investigating and determining the complaint will remain with the person or body appointed to do so.

The Trust may vary these arrangements where necessary to ensure a fair, impartial and appropriately experienced investigation.

5.2 Scope of the Investigation

At the outset of the investigation, the school will identify the matters to be investigated and the outcome sought by the complainant. Where appropriate, the school may seek to resolve the complaint before completing a full investigation if a proportionate and mutually acceptable resolution can be achieved.

The investigation will normally be confined to those issues identified at the commencement of the complaint.

Where additional matters are raised after the investigation has begun, the school may determine that they should:

- be incorporated within the existing investigation where this is reasonable and proportionate; or
- be considered separately under this or another appropriate procedure.

The complainant will be informed of that decision.

5.3 Conduct of the Investigation

The investigator will determine the most appropriate method of investigating the complaint, having regard to its nature, complexity and the issues to be determined.

The investigation may include:

- reviewing the complaint and any supporting information;
- examining relevant records, policies and documentation;
- seeking further information or clarification from the complainant;
- meeting or corresponding with those involved;
- obtaining written or verbal accounts from relevant individuals; and
- considering any other evidence reasonably required to determine the complaint.

The extent of the investigation will be proportionate to the matters under consideration. Not every complaint will require every investigative step.

The investigator will consider all relevant evidence before reaching findings and may attach such weight to the evidence as is considered appropriate, taking account of its relevance, reliability and credibility.

Where evidence is conflicting, findings will be reached on the balance of probabilities.

5.4 Timescales

The school will seek to conclude formal complaints as promptly as reasonably practicable and will normally provide a written outcome within 20 Working Days of acknowledging the complaint.

Where this is not reasonably practicable because of the complexity of the complaint, the availability of key individuals, school closure periods or other exceptional circumstances, the complainant will be informed before the expiry of the twenty Working Day period.

The update will explain:

- the reasons for the delay;
- the progress made to date; and
- the revised anticipated timescale for concluding the investigation.

Where further delay becomes unavoidable, the complainant will receive further progress updates at appropriate intervals.

Failure to meet the published timescales will not, of itself, invalidate the complaints process, provided the school has acted reasonably and kept the complainant informed of progress.

5.5 Outcome

Following completion of the investigation, the complainant will receive a written outcome.

The outcome will normally include:

- the issues investigated;
- the findings reached;
- the reasons for those findings;
- whether the complaint is upheld, upheld in part or not upheld;
- any action taken, or proposed, where appropriate; and
- details of the complainant's right to request that the complaint be reviewed by a Local Governing Body Complaints Panel if they remain dissatisfied.

Where a complaint is upheld, or upheld in part, the outcome will explain any remedy or corrective action the school considers appropriate. This may include an explanation, an apology, the correction of an error, reconsideration of a decision, a review of policy or practice, staff guidance or training, or another proportionate response.

The school will not normally disclose confidential information relating to individual pupils, members of staff or third parties, nor information arising from disciplinary, safeguarding or employment processes where disclosure would be inappropriate or unlawful.

Where the complainant remains dissatisfied, the school may, where appropriate, offer a further opportunity to discuss the outcome and consider whether the complaint can be resolved without referral to the Local Governing Body Complaints Panel. This will not affect the complainant's right to request consideration by the Panel within the timescale set out in Section 6.

5.6 Learning and Improvement

The Trust and its schools are committed to learning from concerns and complaints.

Where a complaint identifies opportunities to improve policies, procedures or practice, consideration will be given to what action is appropriate.

A complaint being upheld does not necessarily indicate misconduct or negligence. Equally, a complaint that is not upheld may nevertheless identify opportunities for learning, reflection or service improvement.

6. Local Governing Body Complaints Panel

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied following the outcome of the formal investigation, they may request that the complaint be considered by a Local Governing Body Complaints Panel.

A request for Panel consideration should normally be submitted in writing within 10 Working Days of the date of the written outcome and should explain why the complainant remains dissatisfied.

The Local Governing Body Complaints Panel will normally represent the final stage of the school's complaints procedure. The Trust will become directly involved only where a complaint falls within a category reserved to the Trust under Section 7 of this policy.

The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the request within five Working Days. The Panel will normally meet within 25 Working Days of receiving the request. Where this is not reasonably practicable, the complainant will be informed of the reasons for the delay and the revised anticipated timescale.

6.1 Purpose of the Panel

The purpose of the Local Governing Body Complaints Panel is to review the school's handling of the complaint and determine whether the complaint has been investigated fairly, reasonably and in accordance with this policy.

The Panel will not ordinarily undertake a complete reinvestigation of the complaint or substitute its own professional judgement for that of the investigator merely because it might have reached a different operational decision.

In reaching its decision, the Panel will consider whether:

- the complaint was investigated fairly, impartially and proportionately
- the relevant evidence was identified and properly considered
- the school's policies and procedures were followed
- the findings were reasonably supported by the available evidence
- the outcome was fair, reasonable and proportionate
- any further action or recommendation is appropriate.

Where the Panel concludes that the investigation was materially flawed or insufficient to determine the complaint fairly, it may direct that further enquiries be undertaken before reaching its decision or, where appropriate, determine the complaint on the evidence available.

6.2 Constitution of the Panel

The Panel will normally comprise three members appointed by the Local Governing Body who have had no prior involvement in the complaint and who are able to consider the matter fairly, objectively and impartially.

At least one member of the Panel will be independent of the management and running of the school, in accordance with Department for Education guidance.

Where the Local Governing Body is unable to constitute a compliant Panel because of conflicts of interest, insufficient eligible governors or other exceptional circumstances, the Trust may appoint suitably qualified governors from another Local Governing Body or other appropriately independent persons to ensure that the Panel is properly constituted.

Panel members must declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest before participating in the hearing.

The Clerk to the Local Governing Body, or another suitably appointed person, will act as Clerk to the Panel.

6.3 The Hearing

The Chair of the Panel will determine the conduct of the hearing, ensuring that it is conducted fairly, proportionately and with respect for all participants.

The Panel may consider:

- the complaint and supporting documentation
- the investigation report and written outcome
- relevant policies and procedures
- any additional information the Panel reasonably considers necessary
- representations made by the complainant and by the investigator or another appropriate representative of the school.

The complainant and the school will normally exchange any written information to be considered by the Panel no later than five Working Days before the hearing, subject to any lawful and necessary redactions.

Neither party should ordinarily introduce significant new evidence at the hearing unless there is good reason why it could not reasonably have been provided earlier. Where new evidence is admitted, the other party will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider and respond.

The hearing may take place in person or remotely. The complainant will be given reasonable notice of the hearing together with a reasonable opportunity to attend, present their case and be accompanied by a representative or companion if they wish.

Where the complainant chooses not to attend, or does not attend after reasonable arrangements have been offered, the Panel may determine the complaint on the written information available.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where required to ensure that all participants are able to participate effectively.

6.4 Decision of the Panel

Having considered all of the available information, the Panel may:

- uphold the complaint;
- uphold the complaint in part; or
- not uphold the complaint.

Where appropriate, the Panel may recommend that:

- further enquiries be undertaken;
- an appropriate remedy be offered to the complainant;
- a decision be reconsidered;
- policies, procedures or practices be reviewed;
- lessons identified through the complaint be shared within the school; or
- any other proportionate action be taken to improve practice.

The Panel will not normally make operational decisions on behalf of the school, direct disciplinary action against individual members of staff or substitute its own professional judgement where it is satisfied that the original decision was reached fairly, reasonably and in accordance with the school's policies and procedures.

6.5 Outcome

The complainant will normally receive the Panel's written decision within 10 Working Days of the hearing.

The written decision will set out:

- the Panel's findings
- the reasons for its decision
- any recommendations made to the school
- confirmation that the school's complaints procedure has now been completed.

The findings and recommendations of the Panel will be reported to the Local Governing Body and to the Trust for the purposes of governance assurance, organisational learning and the monitoring of complaints across the Trust, subject to appropriate requirements of confidentiality and data protection.

Where the Panel considers that the complaint falls within a category reserved to the Trust under this policy, it may refer the matter to the Trust for consideration in accordance with Section 7.

7. Trust Complaints

The Trust will not ordinarily investigate complaints relating to the day to day operation of its schools where those matters can properly be considered through the school's complaints procedure.

The Trust will become directly responsible for the management of a complaint only where the subject matter falls within the Trust's statutory, governance or strategic responsibilities, or where there are exceptional circumstances which make it inappropriate for the complaint to be managed solely at school level.

Complaints managed by the Trust will be considered in accordance with the principles and procedures set out in this policy, subject to any modifications necessary to reflect the nature of the complaint.

7.1 Complaints Managed by the Trust

The Trust will normally manage complaints concerning:

- the Chief Executive Officer
- the Board of Directors
- a committee of the Board of Directors
- the conduct or decisions of the Trust itself
- the exercise of powers or responsibilities reserved to the Trust under the Scheme of Delegation
- allegations that raise significant governance, financial, regulatory or compliance concerns affecting the Trust
- complaints involving more than one school where it is appropriate for the Trust to coordinate the response.

7.2 Referral by the School or Local Governing Body

A school or Local Governing Body Complaints Panel may refer a complaint to the Trust where:

- the complaint raises issues that fall within the Trust's responsibilities
- the complaint cannot reasonably be determined at school level because of conflicts of interest or other exceptional circumstances
- the complaint identifies matters presenting a significant risk to the Trust.

Referral of a complaint to the Trust does not of itself invalidate any investigation or decision already undertaken by the school or Local Governing Body.

7.3 Investigation

The Trust Governance Professional will normally coordinate the administration of complaints managed at Trust level and advise on the application of this policy. Responsibility for investigating and determining a complaint will remain with the person or body appointed in accordance with this section.

The Trust will determine the appropriate arrangements for considering a complaint referred or managed under this section, having regard to the stage already reached, the nature of the complaint and any investigation already undertaken.

A complaint arising directly under Section 7.1 will normally be formally investigated by the Trust.

Where a complaint is referred under Section 7.2, the Trust may determine whether further investigation is required or whether the matter can properly proceed on the basis of the investigation and evidence already available. The Trust will not unnecessarily repeat an investigation that has already been conducted fairly and adequately.

The complaint may be investigated by the Chief Executive Officer, another suitably qualified officer of the Trust or, where appropriate, an independent investigator appointed by the Trust.

Where the complaint concerns the Chief Executive Officer, the investigation will be commissioned by the Chair of the Board of Directors or another Director nominated for that purpose.

Where the complaint concerns the Chair of the Board of Directors, the investigation will be commissioned by another Director appointed by the Board.

No person who is the subject of a complaint, or who has had prior involvement in the matters under consideration, will participate in determining the outcome of that complaint.

7.4 Outcome

The Trust will seek to conclude complaints as promptly as reasonably practicable and will normally provide a written outcome within 20 Working Days of acknowledging the complaint. Where this is not reasonably practicable because of the complexity of the complaint, the availability of key individuals or other exceptional circumstances, the complainant will be informed before the expiry of the twenty Working Day period of the reasons for the delay, the progress made and the revised anticipated timescale.

The complainant will receive a written outcome setting out:

- the issues considered
- the findings reached
- the reasons for those findings
- any action taken or proposed where appropriate
- details of the complainant's right to request consideration by a Trust Complaints Panel if they remain dissatisfied.

Nothing in this policy prevents a complainant from referring a complaint to the Department for Education, Ofsted or any other appropriate statutory or regulatory body where that body has jurisdiction to consider the matters raised.

7.5 Trust Complaints Panel

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied following the Trust's formal consideration of a complaint under this section, they may request that the complaint be considered by a Trust Complaints Panel. A request should normally be submitted in writing within 10 Working Days of the date of the written outcome and should explain why the complainant remains dissatisfied.

The Panel will normally comprise three members who have had no prior involvement in the complaint and who are able to consider the matter fairly, objectively and impartially. At least one member will be independent of the management and running of the school concerned.

The Panel will operate in accordance with the principles and procedures set out in Sections 6.1 to 6.5 of this policy, adapted as necessary to reflect that the complaint has been managed at Trust level.

The decision of the Trust Complaints Panel will represent the final stage of the Trust's complaints procedure.

7.6 Learning and Governance

The Board of Directors will receive appropriate information regarding complaints managed by the Trust to enable it to discharge its responsibilities for governance, assurance, organisational learning and continuous improvement.

In doing so, the Trust will have due regard to the requirements of confidentiality, data protection and the rights of all individuals involved in the complaints process.

8. Record Keeping, Confidentiality and Review

The Trust is committed to ensuring that concerns and complaints are managed fairly, consistently and in accordance with the principles of good governance. Appropriate records will be maintained to support the effective administration of this policy, organisational learning and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

8.1 Records

The school or Trust, as appropriate, will maintain an accurate record of each formal complaint, including:

- the complaint received
- correspondence and evidence considered
- the investigation undertaken
- the findings and outcome
- any recommendations or actions arising
- the date on which the complaint was concluded.

Records will be retained in accordance with the Trust's Records Management and Data Retention Policy. The Trust Governance Professional will maintain appropriate central oversight records of formal complaints across the Trust, including their nature, stage, outcome and any significant recommendations or actions arising. Individual schools will remain responsible for maintaining the detailed records relating to complaints managed at school level.

8.2 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Complaints will be handled with appropriate sensitivity and confidentiality.

Information relating to a complaint will only be shared with those who need it in order to investigate, determine or administer the complaint, or where disclosure is required or permitted by law.

The Trust will process personal data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

Nothing in this policy requires the Trust or its schools to disclose confidential information relating to pupils, members of staff or third parties where disclosure would be unlawful or inappropriate.

8.3 Monitoring and Learning

The Trust recognises that concerns and complaints provide an important source of assurance and organisational learning.

Each Local Governing Body will receive periodic information regarding complaints relating to its school to enable it to discharge its responsibilities for governance, oversight and continuous improvement.

The Board of Directors will receive periodic reports regarding complaints across the Trust, including themes, trends, outcomes and any significant risks or lessons identified. Reports will normally be presented in a manner that protects confidentiality and personal data.

The Trust Governance Professional will coordinate the collation and reporting of complaints information to support Local Governing Body and Board oversight, identify themes or emerging risks and support consistent application of this policy across the Trust.

Where complaints identify opportunities to strengthen policies, procedures, systems or professional practice, appropriate action will be taken to support continuous improvement across the Trust.

8.4 Review of the Policy

The Board of Directors is responsible for approving this policy and ensuring that it remains effective, legally compliant and aligned with the Trust's governance framework.

The policy will normally be reviewed every two years, or sooner where required by changes in legislation, statutory guidance or operational experience.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are maintained to support its consistent application across the Trust.

Appendix A – Complaint Form

This form may be used to submit a formal complaint under Laetare Catholic Multi Academy Trust's Complaints Policy. Use of the form is encouraged but is not mandatory.

Name	
Pupil's name (where applicable)	
Relationship to pupil (where applicable)	
School	
Email address	
Telephone number	

Please explain the matter you wish to complain about

Please identify the specific matters you would like the school or Trust to consider.

--

What steps have already been taken to try to resolve the matter?

--

Why do you remain dissatisfied?

--

What outcome are you seeking?

--

Relevant documents

Please list or attach any documents you consider relevant to your complaint.

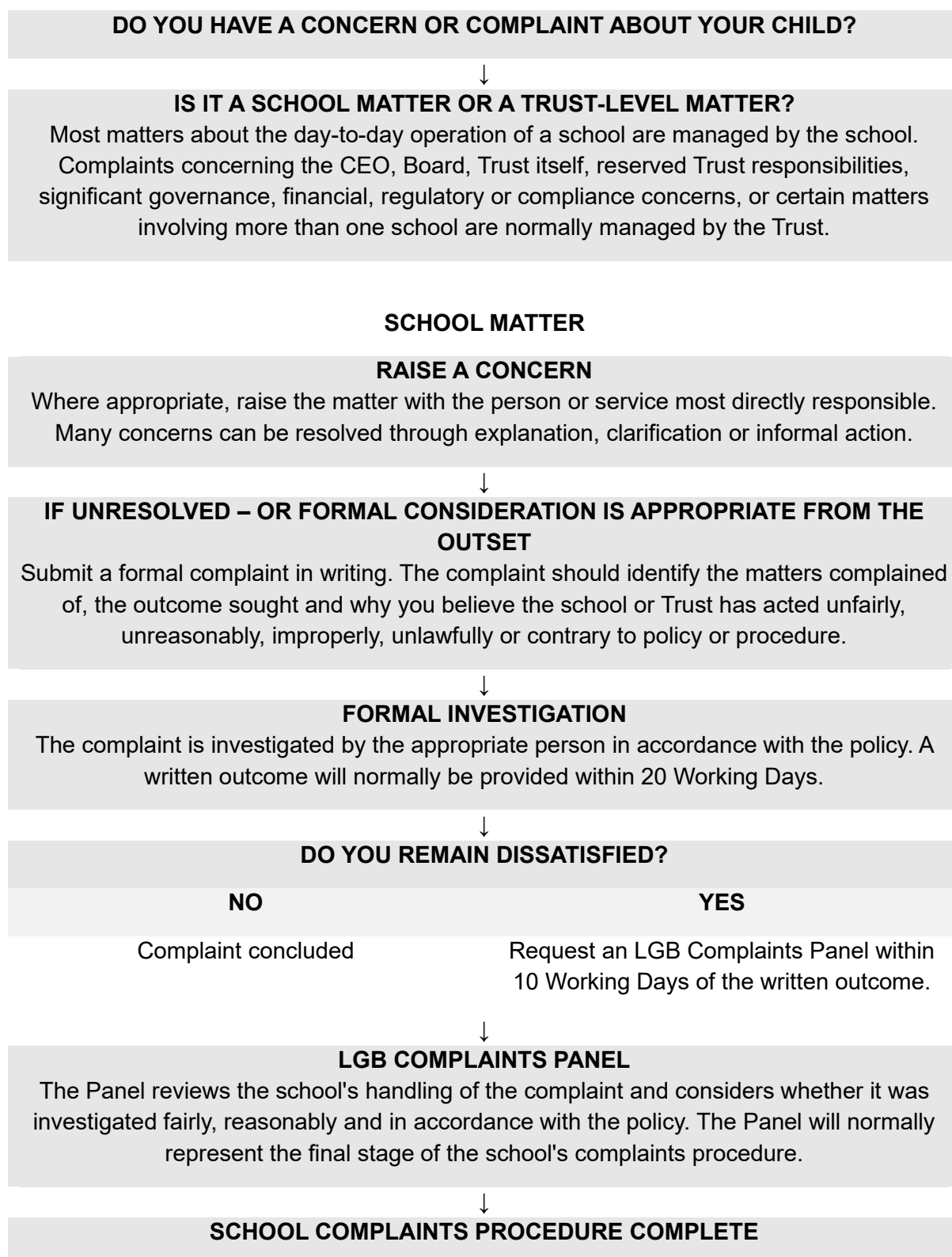
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Signature	
Date	

Please return this form to the relevant school or Trust, as appropriate.

Appendix B: Complaints Process

This formal complaints procedure is for parents and carers of current pupils in relation to their child.



TRUST-LEVEL MATTER

TRUST CONSIDERATION / INVESTIGATION

A complaint arising directly at Trust level will normally be formally investigated by the Trust. Where a school or LGB matter is referred to the Trust, the Trust may decide whether further investigation is required or whether the existing investigation and evidence are sufficient.



WRITTEN OUTCOME

The Trust will normally provide a written outcome within 20 Working Days.



DO YOU REMAIN DISSATISFIED?

NO

Complaint concluded

YES

Request a Trust Complaints Panel within 10 Working Days of the written outcome.



TRUST COMPLAINTS PANEL

The Panel considers the complaint in accordance with the principles and procedures set out in the policy. Its decision represents the final stage of the Trust's complaints procedure.



TRUST COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE COMPLETE

Important

- Some matters, including admissions, statutory SEND processes, exclusions and safeguarding, may need to be dealt with under a different procedure.
- A disagreement with a professional decision does not, by itself, provide grounds for a complaint to be upheld.
- Concerns raised by people who are not parents or carers of current pupils may be considered appropriately, but they do not enter this formal complaints procedure.