

Trainee* Complaints Policy (CTTC 03)

A copy of this policy is published on colchestercttc.org.uk

Aims and Values

Colchester Teacher Training Consortium (CTTC) prides itself on making every effort to provide Trainees with a rewarding and stimulating learning experience but it accepts that there may be occasions when Trainees wish to raise a concern. If Trainees do have a concern it is important that they raise it as soon as possible so that necessary actions can be taken to resolve the situation.

****For the purposes of this policy, the term “Trainee” refers to fee-paying trainees, salaried trainees, Post-Graduate Apprenticeship trainees and Assessment Only Route candidates.***

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A ‘concern’ may be treated as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’. A complaint may be generally recognised as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’.

It is in everyone’s interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many, if not most, issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. CTTC take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

1. Leadership and Management

CTTC Personnel Committee is responsible for:

- Appointing a Complaints Committee, when needed, which consists of two Head Teachers (not from the school where the Trainee is on placement) and will be chaired by a nominated member of the CTTC Steering Group
- Ensuring that the policy is working in practice
- Monitoring the success of the policy
- Identifying any failures of the policy
- Addressing and resolving any failures of the policy

The Complaints Committee is responsible for:

- Implementing the Complaints procedures
- Presenting evidence and recommendations to the CTTC Steering Group

The Course Director is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Trainees are aware of the procedures
- Presenting evidence as required by the Complaints Committee

2. Procedure

Expressing concerns

Trainees have the opportunity to express concerns about any aspect of their training at any time and they should initially express these concerns directly to the person involved.

If difficulties arise when discussing a concern, CTTC will respect the Complainant’s views.

In these cases, the Course Director or a member of the CTTC Personnel Committee will ask a senior member of staff to mediate the meeting between the Complainant and the original staff member, if necessary at a later, mutually agreed date and time.

Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, they can request that the Course Director or another suitable staff member discusses the concern with the

Complainant on their behalf. If there is uncertainty whether or not a concern is relevant or significant, contacting the relevant school or member of staff to clarify a situation will always be welcome.

Resolving complaints

At each stage of the procedure, CTTC wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, CTTC will inform the Complainant if the complaint is upheld wholly or in part. It may also be that the

Complainant may be offered one or more of the following as appropriate:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or in a better way
- an assurance that we will try to ensure that the event complained of will not happen again
- an apology if the event could have been dealt with differently or in a better manner
- an outline of how the school will ensure non-repetition of the event and an indication of the timescales within which any change will be made
- an undertaking to review policies and procedures in the light of the complaint.

Persistent or unreasonable complaints

CTTC will not normally limit the contact that Complainants have with their training programme. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from such behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening. There may also be rare occasions when, despite a complaint being considered under all stages of this Complaints Policy, the Complainant persists in making the same complaint to CTTC. There may also be rare occasions when a Complainant raises unreasonable persistent complaints or raises complaints about matters which do not affect them. There may also be rare occasions when a complaint is made about a matter which is clearly so trivial that it would be a poor use of CTTC resources to deal with it under the formal stages of the procedure. In all of these cases, CTTC reserves the right to regard the complaint as persistent or serial and to refuse to investigate it under the procedure in this Complaints Policy, if it appears reasonable and fair to do so, having regard to the circumstances surrounding the complaint.

This procedure may also be used to manage unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints. Where it is decided that a complaint is persistent or serial and will not be investigated, CTTC will write to the Complainant within 5 working days of the complaint being received to notify them of the decision. If the Complainant is unhappy with the decision not to investigate a persistent or serial complaint, they may write to the Chair of the Personnel Committee to ask for the decision to be reviewed. The Chair of Personnel Committee will review the decision not to investigate the complaint after considering all documentation relating to the complaint, together with the letter from CTTC to the Complainant. The Chair of the Personnel Committee will not investigate the complaint itself during the review. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the Personnel Committee can delegate the authority for the review to the Vice-Chair of this committee. Following due consideration (including taking advice from the CEO), the Chair of the Personnel Committee will confirm the outcome of their review to the Complainant in writing within 10 working days after the receipt of the letter from the Complainant seeking a review. (Please see Appendix A concerning the role of the Chair of the Personnel Committee).

In the event that the Chair of the Personnel Committee review indicates that the decision not to investigate the concern or complaint should be quashed, it will be referred to the appropriate staff member to be dealt with under the procedure in this Complaints Policy in the usual way. In the event that the Chair of the Personnel Committee's review indicates that the decision not to investigate the concern or complaint should be upheld, the Complainant may refer the concern or complaint. Please also see Appendix D – Unreasonable Complaints.

2.1 Stage One – Informal Complaint

2.1.1 Notification

CTTC expects that most concerns, where a trainee seeks intervention, reconsideration or some other action to be taken, can be resolved informally. Examples might include dissatisfaction about an aspect of training, assessment or school placement, a timetable clash or any other aspect of CTTC's systems or provision.

The concern should be raised initially with the Lead Subject Mentor, Professional Tutor, Training Manager or Course Director, as the complainant feels appropriate.

Complainants should not approach individual governors/headteachers to raise concerns or complaints. Governors, and Trustees, have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at the formal stage of the complaints procedure.

2.1.2 Timescale

All informal complaints will be dealt with within 15 Working Days from receipt of the complaint. CTTC will inform the complainant of the action taken (within the boundaries of confidentiality).

2.1.3 Unresolved concerns

CTTC expect that before seeking to use the formal section of this policy the Complainant will have made all reasonable attempts to arrive at an informal resolution.

A concern which has not been resolved by informal processes within 15 Working Days should be notified in writing as a formal complaint which will be dealt with in accordance with Stage 2 below.

2.2 Stage Two - Formal Complaint

2.2.1 Notification

An unresolved concern under Stage 1, or a complaint which needs investigation, or a dissatisfaction with an aspect of a CTTC's policies, procedures, management, data handling or administration should be set out in writing, providing full details and documentation relating to the complaint, and sent with full contact details in an envelope addressed to the Course Director and the Chair of the Personnel Committee. The complaint will be acknowledged by telephone, e-mail or letter within two Working Days, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely timescale for resolution.

2.2.2 Investigation

The Course Director and the Chair of the Personnel Committee may either deal with the matter personally, or delegate the matter to a senior member of staff from Alpha Trust, data protection officer or one or more of the Partnership Head teachers who will act as investigators ("Investigators"). The Investigators may request additional information from the complainant and may wish to speak to the complainant personally and to others who have knowledge of the particular circumstances. The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the Course Director and Chair of the Personnel Committee, who will then notify the complainant by telephone, email or letter of their decision and the reasons for it. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. They will be stored in a secure location.

2.2.3. Timescale

The Course Director will inform any complainant of the outcome of an investigation and the resolution to the complaint within 28 Working Days from receipt of the complaint. However, if any complaint is received less than 28 Working Days before the end of term or half term, the complainant may receive a response after the school holidays.

2.1(e) Response

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 any actions that will be taken by the school to resolve the complaint. (The response will also advise the Complainant of how to proceed their complaint if they remain dissatisfied).

2.2.4. Unresolved concerns

Where a complaint has not been resolved by formal means within 28 Working Days, the complainant may request that a Panel Hearing is convened for the complaint to be considered.

Complaints relating to information handling may be referred to the Information Commissioner's Office (the statutory regulator), www.ico.gov.uk or telephone 0303 123 1113.

2.3 Stage Three: Complaints Panel Hearing

2.3.1. Notification

To request a Complaints Panel Hearing ("Hearing"), complainants should write to the Chair of The Personnel Committee (*who may delegate to a Senior Leader from Alpha Trust or CTTC Partner Headteacher to oversee the process*) within 10 Working Days of the disputed decision. A copy of all relevant documents and the complainant's full contact details must accompany any letter to the Chair of The Personnel Committee (*or appointed Senior Leader from the Alpha Trust/ CTTC Partner School*). The letter should state the desired outcome and detail all the grounds for complaint. The Chair of The Personnel Committee (*or appointed Senior Leader from the Alpha Trust/ CTTC Partner School*) must also be sent a list of the documents which the complainant believes to be in CTTC's possession and that they wish the Complaints Panel to see.

In line with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 the complainant has a right to request information held about them by CTTC (Subject Access Request), including any information relevant to the complaint. CTTC must respond within one calendar month of clarification of the information sought. Please see the Colchester County High School for Girls' Data Protection Policy for further information.

2.3.2. Acknowledgment

The Chair of The Personnel Committee (*or appointed Senior Leader from the Alpha Trust/ CTTC Partner School*) will acknowledge the complainant's request in writing within 2 Working Days of receipt, and will confirm to the complainant that the complaint has been passed to an appropriate Partnership Head teacher. This Head teacher will convene the members of the Complaints Panel and determine a date for the Hearing.

If assistance is required with a request, for example, due to disability, the complainant should contact the Chair of The Personnel Committee (*or appointed Senior Leader from the Alpha Trust/ CTTC Partner School*) who will make appropriate arrangements.

2.3.3. Timescale

The Hearing will be within 30 Working Days of receipt of any request for a Hearing and the complainant will be notified by the Partnership Head teacher convening the Hearing of the date of the Hearing not less than 10 Working Days prior to the Hearing.

2.3.4 Members of the Panel

There will be at least 3 members of the Complaints Panel, and the Complaints Panel will usually consist of 2 Partnership Head teachers and a senior member of staff from the Colchester County High School for Girls.

The members of the Complaints Panel will have no detailed prior knowledge of the circumstances of the complaint.

When the complainant receives notification of the Hearing date, they will also receive brief information on who has been appointed to sit on the Complaints Panel. This would consist of the name and role or individuals, indicating any connection with the particular school.

2.3.5. The Role of the Complaints Panel

The Complaints Panel is tasked with establishing the facts surrounding the complaint that has been made by considering:

- The documents provided by both parties; and
- Any representations made by the complainant, the Course Director and the Chair of the Personnel Committee

The Complaints Panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint; and
- Recommend changes to the consortium's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not reoccur.

It is not within the powers of the Complaints Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions. The Complaints Panel may make recommendations to the Course Director or Steering Group on what they consider appropriate sanctions or on any other issues.

2.3.6. Attendance

The complainant may attend the Hearing and may be accompanied by one other person such as a relative or a friend. The complainant must notify the Chair of The Personnel Committee (*or appointed Senior Leader from the Alpha Trust/ CTTC Partner School*) convening the Hearing at least 5 working days before the Hearing, of the name of anyone accompanying the complainant and in what capacity they are known to the complainant.

The Course Director may attend the Hearing, and at the discretion of the Complaints Panel, any other person may attend the Hearing if they have a reasonable and just interest in the outcome of the complaint; the panel should be given five working days' notice of this.

2.3.7. Evidence

The Chair of the Complaints Panel will conduct the Hearing in such a way as to ensure that all those present have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments in an appropriate manner, as defined below in Point 2.3.9.

All parties may submit written evidence to the Complaints Panel in support of their position, and the Complaints Panel will consider all evidence provided. Such evidence should be provided to the Chair of The Personnel Committee (*or appointed Senior Leader from the Alpha Trust/ CTTC Partner School*) not less than 5 days prior to the Hearing.

The Chair of The Personnel Committee (*or appointed Senior Leader from the Alpha Trust/ CTTC Partner School*) will distribute all written evidence to the parties not less than 3 days prior to the Hearing date.

The Hearing is not a legal proceeding and the Complaints Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses.

2.3.8 The Hearing

The Hearing will be chaired by one member of the Panel and will be conducted in an informal manner. CTTC will be represented by the Course Director, unless the complaint is against the Course Director. If the complaint is against the Course Director, a representative nominated by the Chair of Personnel Committee will represent CTTC.

All statements made at the Hearing will be unsworn. All persons present will be entitled, should they so wish, to write their own notes for reference purposes. A handwritten minute of the

proceedings will be taken during the Hearing. All notes and statements containing any personal or sensitive information must be kept secure, be accurate and be disposed of securely as soon as they have served their purpose.

2.3.9. Conduct

All those attending the Hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the Hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chair. If the Hearing is terminated due to the conduct of the parties, the Complaints Panel may either make their final decision if they are confident they have heard enough information to come to a decision, or they can arrange another Hearing.

Any person who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the Hearing is being conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and such comments will be recorded.

2.3.10 Adjournment

The Chair of the Complaints Panel may, at his / her discretion, adjourn the Hearing for further investigation of any relevant issue. This may include an adjournment to take legal advice. The Hearing will however, be reconvened within 10 Working Days of the adjournment.

2.3.11. Decision

After consideration of the matters discussed at the Hearing, the Complaints Panel shall come to a decision, which will be communicated to the parties in writing within 10 Working Days, together with the reasons for the decision. If you do not wish to receive the decision by electronic mail, a copy will be given or posted to the complainant.

The decisions, findings and any recommendations will be available for inspection by the CTTC Steering Group.

2.3 Record Keeping

A written record of all complaints made in accordance with these formal procedures will be kept and will include whether the complaints were resolved following a formal procedure or were proceeded to a panel hearing. The written record will also detail action taken by the school/CTTC as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).

The decisions, findings and any recommendations of the Panel will be available for Inspection for the CTTC Steering Committee Board/ Executive Principal/Principal/Headteacher/Head of School. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential and secure except to the extent required by paragraph 3.

Where the complaint is related to a medical incident or a safeguarding concern, these details will be retained, in accordance with CTTC data protection policies and GDPR.

2.4 Stage Four: Appeal to the Chief Executive Officer

The complainant has the right to appeal to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Alpha Trust.

To request an appeal complainants should write to the CEO outlining the grounds for the appeal.

The CEO will review all available documentation and will make the decision as to the most appropriate actions to investigate the appeal. She may either deal with the matter personally, or delegate the matter to a senior colleague from another MAT school to act as investigator on her behalf (they will not have been involved in this issue previously). The CEO / investigator may request additional information, may speak to the complainant personally and others who have knowledge of the particular circumstances of the case. The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the CEO, Steering Group and the trustees of the Alpha Trust. The CEO will then inform the complainant of their decision and the reason for it. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the appeal.

The CEO will decide if it is appropriate to convene an Appeal Panel Hearing. If this should happen, it will follow the process outlined in the Stage Three: Complaints Panel Hearing.

The decision of the CEO is final. The decisions, findings and any recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the trustees and Steering Group.

If properly followed, this complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, no matter how good the concerns and complaints policy, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedure having been correctly followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome and/or or the process. The complainant, in this case, may contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

3. Confidentiality

The outcome of the Hearing and all documents and evidence presented at the Hearing are private and confidential as between the parties to the complaint, and should at all times, be treated as such. GDPR guidelines will be followed.

A written record will be kept of all correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints for a minimum of 1 year from the date of the complaint.

In accordance with the General Data Protection regulations 2018, details of individual complaints will normally be destroyed following each investigation. However, where the complaint is related to a medical incident or a safeguarding concern then these details will be retained.

4. Unreasonable and Persistent Complaints

Please see Appendix C of CCHSG's Concerns Complaints Policy which is available on the CCHSG.com website for examples of behaviour that will not be tolerated by CTTC or the Alpha trust.

5. Monitoring

The **CTTC Steering Group** will monitor the implementation of the policy by:

- Ensuring Trainee awareness of the policy, if required
- Ensuring criteria are clear and are applied consistently

6. Publishing Policy

This Policy will be made available to all Partnership Schools and their staff and a copy will be kept on the VLE.

This policy is implemented in line with the **CCHSG Equality and Diversity Policy (May 2018)** and the **Alpha Trust Concerns and Complaints Policy (September 2019)**.

Last reviewed: January 2020
 To be reviewed: Autumn 2021

APPENDIX A – Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a 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
- consideration of records and other relevant information
- 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 respond
- 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 Chair of Personnel 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 designated Headteachers of the Personnel Committee / designated complaints governor 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, Couse Director, Headteachers (if appropriate) 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.

The Chair of the Personnel Committee

Anonymous Complaints

The Chair of the Personnel Committee may be asked by the Course Director/Executive Principal/Associate to the Cep and Principal to help them determine whether an anonymous complaint warrants an investigation.

Unreasonable Complaints

If the Complainant is unhappy with the decision not to investigate a persistent or serial complaint, they may write to the CEO of Alpha trust to ask for the decision to be reviewed. The Chair of the Personnel Committee will review the decision not to investigate the complaint after considering all documentation relating to the complaint, together with the letter from the School to the Complainant. The Chair of the Personnel Committee will not investigate the complaint itself during the review. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the Personnel Committee can delegate the authority for the review to the Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee. Following due consideration (including taking advice from the CEO), the Chair of the Personnel Committee will confirm the outcome of their review to the Complainant in writing within 10 working days after the receipt of the letter from the Complainant seeking a review.

Formal Procedure - Stage 2

The Chair of the Personnel Committee may be asked by a Complainant, in writing, to review the investigation at Stage 1 of the Formal Procedure. The Chair should ask for all the documentation concerning the original complaint and the subsequent investigation and consider whether the investigation was conducted thoroughly and fairly and that the decision was unbiased and in line with school policies.

Clerk to the Governing Body

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 school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school 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 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 school 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

- 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 school 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 governor 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 school and the complainant

We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting.
- 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.

APPENDIX B - Unreasonable Complaints

CTTC is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. CTTC will not normally limit the contact Complainants have with a school. However, the trust does not expect staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from such behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

CTTC defines unreasonable Complainants as “those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with one of its schools, hinder that school’s consideration of their or other people’s complaints”.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint, or the outcome(s) sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process whilst still wishing for the complaint to be resolved;
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the Complainant expects to be taken into account;
- Raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered immediately or to their own timescales;
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where CTTC complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed.
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome; or makes excessive demands on a school’s time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either in person, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information; or
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications they have with CTTC whilst their complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Executive Principal/Principal/Headteacher/Head of School or Chair of CTTC Personnel Committee will discuss any concerns with the Complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the CEO or Associate to the Principal and CEO if Alpha Trust will write to the Complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to refrain from such behaviour. For Complainants who excessively contact a partner school/ CTTC and cause a

significant level of disruption, CTTC may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

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. Actions may include asking the trainee to leave the course.

APPENDIX C – Procedure for the Hearing at Stage 3

Introduction

The Chair of the Committee will introduce the parties and explain the procedures the purpose of the meeting and confidentiality.

Case for the Complainant

The Complainant may make an oral statement.

The Complainant may call witnesses to supplement their written submission

The Respondent may ask questions of the Complainant and any witnesses.

The panel members may ask questions.

The Case for the Respondent (Chair of CTTC Personnel Committee)

The Respondent may make an oral statement.

The Respondent may call witnesses and ask them questions.

The Complainant may ask questions of the Respondent and any witnesses.

The panel members may ask questions.

The Independent Investigator / Complaints co-ordinator / Chair of Personnel Committee

The Independent Investigator / Complaints co-ordinator / Chair of Governors may make an oral statement.

The Complainant may ask questions.

The Respondent may ask questions.

The panel members may ask questions

Final Statements

The Complainant and the Respondent to make final statements if they so wish.

Consideration of the Case

All parties to the meeting will then withdraw.

The Committee, advised by the Clerk, will then deliberate. If it is necessary to recall either party or any witnesses to assist with clarifying any particular point of uncertainty, this may only be done with all parties present.

Once the panel are satisfied they have all the information necessary to make a decision the parties may leave.

The complainant should be informed that the panel's decision is final and that they will be advised of further recourse in the letter that they will receive within 5 working days of the meeting.

Notification of the Committee's decision

The Chair of the Panel needs to ensure that the Complainant is notified of the Panel's decision in writing, including the reasons for the decision. This will usually be within 5 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent this, in which case the complainant will be notified of this and the reason for the delay.

Either party may request an adjournment of the hearing at any stage and this may be allowed on the grounds that further inquiries are necessary, but it should also be borne in mind that a speedy resolution of the complaint is usually desirable and advantageous.

Both parties are asked to notify the Clerk of any witnesses to be called in advance of the hearing and establish the relevance of their evidence to the complaint under consideration. Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.