

Creating the very best school environments to enable pupils and staff to excel, fostering links with wider communities.



Complaints Policy

Responsibility for approval: Fusion Board
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Contents Page

1.0	Policy Statement	3
2.0	Scope and Purpose.....	3
3.0	Definition.....	3
4.0	Legal Framework.....	3
5.0	Who can make a complaint?.....	3
6.0	The difference between a concern and a complaint	3
7.0	How to raise a concern or make a complaint	4
8.0	Complaints form	5
9.0	Resolving Complaints	5
10.0	Anonymous complaints	5
11.0	Timescales.....	5
12.0	Complaints received out of term time.....	5
13.0	Managing unreasonable behaviour of those raising concerns/complaints.....	6
14.0	Withdrawing a complaint.....	6
	Appendix 1 – Stage 1 informal complaint.....	6
	6
	Appendix 2 – Stage 2 Formal complaint	7
	7
	Appendix 3 – Soft Services Manager / Board of Directors Panel.....	8
	8

1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 This policy is based on the Fusion School services Ltd. values of collaboration and building trust within the school and wider community we serve.
- 1.2 Fusion School Services Ltd. are committed to a transparent complaint resolution and reconciliation at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.3 Fusion School Services Ltd. value the relationship with Schools and the wider community. We aim to address any concerns informally in a timely manner wherever they are raised and are happy to receive suggestions and comments outside of this complaints policy, as this can help us to identify areas of success and where we can make improvements.

2.0 Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 This policy sets out the framework for how Fusion School Services Ltd. manage complaints. We reserve the right to alter this process in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.2 We encourage complaints to be raised informally at the earliest opportunity and in a constructive manner, and every effort will be made to resolve the matters as quickly as possible before progressing. However, if this is not possible the procedures in this policy should be followed.
- 2.3 Some complaints are dealt with under statutory policies and therefore not included in this policy:
 - Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation
 - Whistleblowing
 - Staff grievances
 - Staff conduct.
- 2.4 We consider 7 working days to be an acceptable time frame in which to raise a complaint.

3.0 Definition

- 3.1 For the purposes of this document, Fusion School Services Ltd. will be referred to as Fusion or Fusion Services.

4.0 Legal Framework

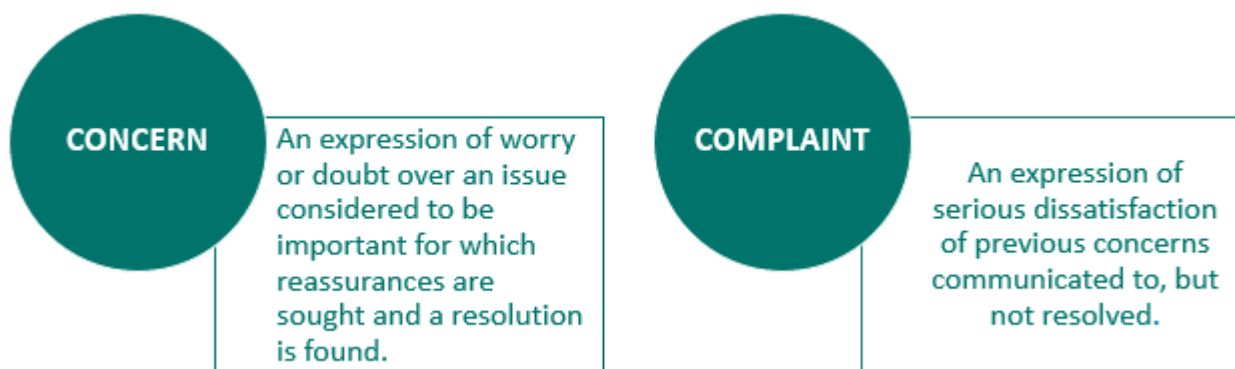
- 4.1 There is no legal framework for the complaint procedures, they are in accordance with administrative law principles and is a mechanism for conflict resolution and decisions made are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate.
- 4.2 For the avoidance of doubt and reference, Fusion will publish the complaints policy on the company website.

5.0 Who can make a complaint?

- 5.1 Any person may make a complaint to Fusion about any provision of service that it provides.
- 5.2 The complaints procedure will be followed with the exception of those where we have to adopt a separate statutory procedure as outlined in section 2.3 above.

6.0 The difference between a concern and a complaint

- 6.1 It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, a conversation held with a member of Fusion staff can often facilitate resolution prior to complaints procedure being enacted.



6.2 In the first instance, any concerns should be raised directly with a Fusion Services Manager. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, please contact the Business Administrator, who will refer you to a new staff member to deal with your concern. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Business Administrator will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior, but does not have to be.

The staff member must have the ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially. Mediation may also be considered at any stage if trust in a relationship has broken down.



6.3 If resolution is not found from raising a concern, this complaints procedure framework is in place to enable the process to progress to stage 2, for the attention of the Business Administrator. The company will aim to resolve the issue using this process.

However, it is understood that there are occasions, due to the nature of the complaint when there is a need to raise a formal concern at stage 2.

7.0 How to raise a concern or make a complaint

- 7.1 **A concern or informal complaint** can be made in person, in writing, by email or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have provided appropriate consent to do so. Concerns are taken seriously and fusion pledge to acknowledge all concerns raised within **3 school term time days**. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with as a matter of priority in accordance with the Fusion safeguarding policy.
- 7.2 **Formal complaints** must be made in writing and where possible via the Fusion concern/complaint investigation record, which can be found on the [website](#) or by emailing hr@fusionschoolservices.co.uk
- 7.3 Complaints that relate to how effectively an individual has responded to the concerns raised will be addressed under the complaints policy. However, if the complaint is in relation to an individual's conduct, whilst this will be investigated, any outcome would be addressed under HR policies and procedures as noted in section 2.3
- 7.4 Complaints should not be made to the Soft Facilities Manager or the Board of Directors, as the Business Administrator will be best placed to coordinate the investigation and resolve any concerns or issues. Should the Soft Facilities Manager or Directors be involved it would prohibit their involvement at Stage 3 as they would be familiar with the complaint being presented.
- 7.5 If Fusion Services receive complaints as part of a focused campaign, and receive large volumes of complaints based on the same subject, or from complainants unconnected with the service provided,

Fusion Services will publish a single response on the Fusion Website or send a template response to all complainants.

8.0 Complaints form

- 8.1 To ensure we fully understand the complaint, we encourage complainants to use the concern/complaint investigation record, which can be provided by emailing hr@fusionschoolservices.co.uk or visiting the Fusion School Services [website](#).
- 8.2 You will be asked to provide details of your complaint in which you should include:
- Actions taken to try and resolve your complaint
 - Timeline and sequence of events leading to the complaint
 - Actions you feel will resolve your complaint
- 8.3 If you require help in completing the form, please contact hr@fusionschoolservices.co.uk. You can also ask a third-party organisation, e.g., Citizens Advice, to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint, holding meetings in accessible location and providing translation and/or interpreter services where needed.

9.0 Resolving Complaints

- 9.1 At each stage of the process, Fusion Services will want to resolve the complaint.
- 9.2 If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:
- An explanation
 - An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
 - An assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not reoccur
 - An explanation of the steps that have been taken or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes, if required, will be made
 - An undertaking to review Fusion policies in light of the complaint
 - An apology

10.0 Anonymous complaints

- 10.1 We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, However, if appropriate, we will determine whether the complaint warrants an internal investigation

11.0 Timescales

- 11.1 **You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident, or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents.**
- 11.2 We will consider complaints made outside of this timeframe in exceptional circumstances only.

12.0 Complaints received out of term time

- 12.1 As a school service, we may not be able to consider complaints outside of term time within 3 working days, unless it is exceptional circumstances.

12.2 Complaints received outside of term time will be acknowledged within 14 working days.

13.0 Managing unreasonable behaviour of those raising concerns/complaints

- 13.1 Fusion services are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who raise a complaint.
- 13.2 We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our business. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will act to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

14.0 Withdrawing a complaint

- 14.1 If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, the Business Administrator will ask them to confirm this in writing

Appendix 1 – Stage 1 informal complaint



- It is to be hoped that most complaints can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis
- Complaints should be raised with a member of Fusion staff where holding that conversation can produce timely resolution.
- **In some circumstances, Fusion Service may enter the complaint as a formal complaint (stage 2) due to the serious nature of the concerns raised. The complaints co-ordinator will confirm this when the complaint is acknowledged.**

At the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide an informal written response within **14 working days** of the date of receipt of the complaint.

Complainants should not approach the Soft Facilities Manager or Directors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at stage 3 of the procedure.

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

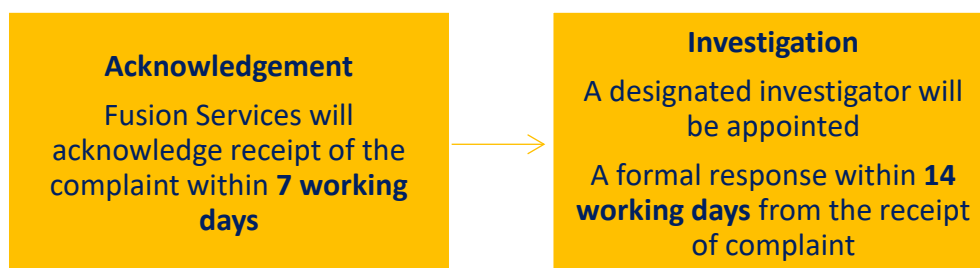
Appendix 2 – Stage 2 Formal complaint



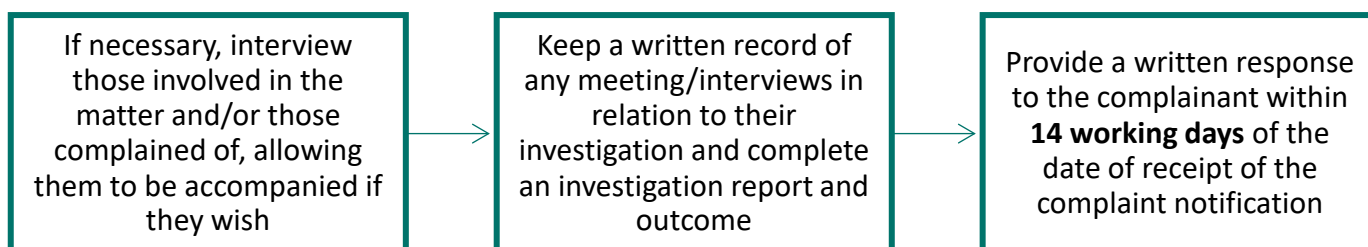
Where possible formal complaints must be submitted in writing, using our complaints form, which can be found here: [Complaint Form](#). Completing this form will enable us to deal with your complaint as efficiently as possible.

If there is any reason why you cannot complete this form, please discuss an alternative written method with the Business Administrator.

Face to face meetings are always the preferred and most appropriate way of establishing the details of the complaint, (what remains unresolved and the preferred outcome from the complaint). Resolution at the earliest stage of this process is encouraged.



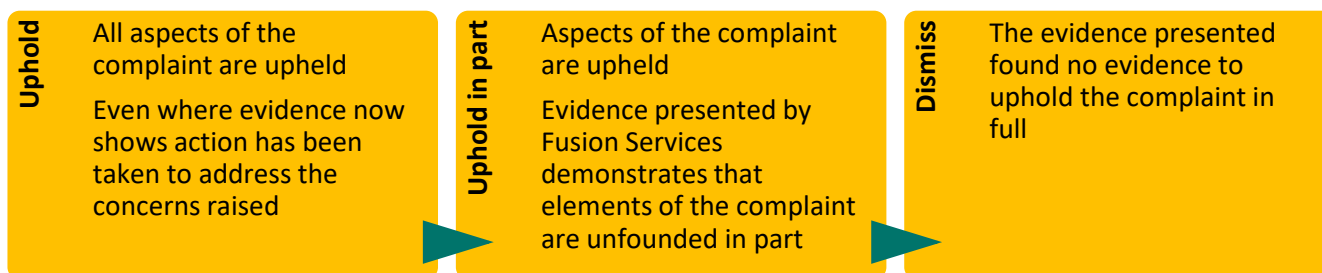
The Business Administrator, or other appropriate person, may delegate the **investigation** to another member of Fusion Staff. **During the investigation**, the designated investigator will:



If the deadline of 14 working days cannot be met, the investigator will provide the complainant with an update and a revised response date.

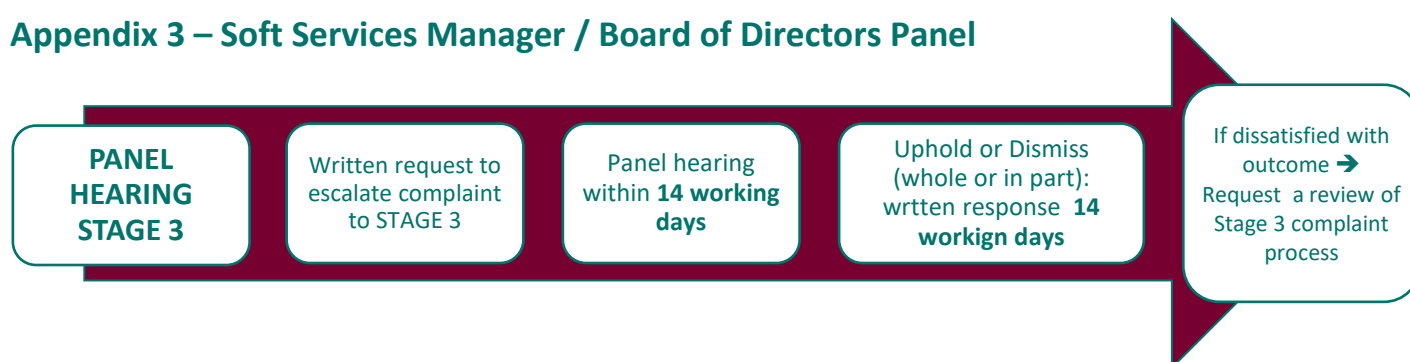
The written response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Fusion Services will take to resolve the complaint.

The outcome of any complaint will be set out under three possible outcomes:



The Business Administrator will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.

Appendix 3 – Soft Services Manager / Board of Directors Panel



- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to stage 3 (a Panel Hearing) setting out which aspects of the outcome they wish to appeal against.
- The request to escalate to stage 3 panel hearing must be made to the Business Administrator, **within 14 working days** from the date of the stage 2 outcome letter. Requests that fall outside of this timeline will only be considered where exceptional circumstances apply.
- A panel hearing consists of at the Soft Facilities Manager and 1-2 members of the Board of Directors who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Directors of Fusion Services may join remotely for this meeting.
- The panel will not consider any new complaints or any additional evidence to the initial complaint presented at Stage 2.

This is the final stage of the complaint procedure

A complainant may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting as this is a reconciliation hearing and does not adopt a legalistic approach. Representatives of the media are not permitted to attend.



If the panel cannot be held within 14 working days, Fusion Services will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

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

Fusion Services will only provide the papers included as part of the evidence considered in the stage 2 complaint. The Business Administrator will arrange the panel date, time, venue and panel membership.

The panel should not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded. CCTV or mobile devices cannot be submitted where other parties are in view without their consent. There is no facility to edit the CCTV recordings.

The panel will consider the complaint and all evidence presented and can uphold the decision in whole or in part, or dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part. Where the complaint is upheld the panel will decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not be handled under this complaint procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under (Human Resources) staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

This is the final stage of the complaint procedure and decisions will be communicated in writing within 14 working days of the meeting.