Name of Policy:	Complaints
Date Agreed:	September 2024
Review Date:	September 2026
School or Cluster Policy:	Glan Clwyd Cluster Policy
Statutory or non-statutory Policy:	Statutory

1. Introduction

Ysgol Glan Clwyd is committed to dealing effectively with complaints. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible, we will put right any mistakes we have made and we will apologies. We aim to learn from mistakes and use that experience to improve what we do.

Our definition of a complaint is 'an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the school or a member of its staff that requires a response from the school'.

This complaints procedure supports our commitment and is a way of ensuring that anyone with an interest in the school can raise a concern, with confidence that it will be heard and, if founded, addressed in an appropriate and timely fashion.

2. When to use this procedure

When you have a concern or make a complaint we will usually respond in the way we explain below. Sometimes you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by the school, in which case we will tell you who to complain to. At other times you may be concerned about matters that are handled by other procedures, in which case we will explain to you how your concern will be dealt with.

Complainants should raise the complaint within 10 school days of the incident, or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months from the point that the complainants first became aware of the event in question. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame only if exceptional circumstances apply.

If your concern or complaint is about another body as well as the school (for example the local authority) we will work with them to decide how to handle your concern and inform you of what is decided.

3. Have you asked us yet?

If you are approaching us for the first time then this policy may not apply and it may not be treated as a complaint. This will be dealt with as a concern which gives us the opportunity to rectify the problem within a reasonable time frame. However, if you are not happy with our response to your

concern, you can escalate it to a complaint. Most concerns can be settled quickly just by speaking to the relevant person in school, without the need to use a formal procedure.

4. What we expect from you

We believe that all complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected. But school staff and governors have the same right. We expect you to be polite and courteous. We will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour. We will also not tolerate unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence, malicious or vexatious complaining. We have a separate policy, Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy, to manage situations where we find that someone's actions are unacceptable and we will use these policies to fulfil our duty of care towards our staff.

Once a concern or complaint is raised our expectation is that the matter is dealt with in accordance with this policy and its timeframes. (Section 2) Please be aware that the posting of comments on social media platforms could compromise any investigation.

Under normal circumstances concerns that cannot be resolved informally should be raised using the Complaints form. This form is available online on the school website or from the school reception. If you need any support in completing the form please contact a member of staff. Complaints can also be made in person and via the telephone on 01745 582 611.

5. What you can expect from us

We will consider all your concerns and complaints in an open and fair way.

At all times the school will respect the rights and feelings of those involved and make every effort to protect confidential information.

Timescales for dealing with your concerns or complaints may need to be extended following discussion with you.

We may ask for advice from the local authority or diocesan authority where appropriate.

Some types of concern or complaint may raise issues that have to be dealt with in another way (other than this complaints policy), in which case we will explain why this is so, and will tell you what steps will be taken.

The governing body will keep the records of documents used to investigate your concern or complaint for seven years after it has been dealt with. Records will be kept in school and reviewed by the governing body after seven years to decide if they need to be kept for longer.

Complaints that are made anonymously will be recorded but any investigation will be at the discretion of the school depending on the nature of the complaint.

Where complaints are considered to have been made only to cause harm or offence to individuals or the school, the school will ensure that records are kept of the investigations that are made and what actions are taken, including the reasons for 'no action'.

As stated in section 2 historical complaints will only be investigated in exceptional circumstances.

6. Answering your concern or complaint

The chart in Appendix A shows what will happen when you make a complaint or raise a concern. There are up to three Stages: A, B and C. Most complaints can be resolved at Stages A or B. You can bring a relative or companion to support you at any time during the process but you will be expected to speak for yourself. However, we recognise that when the complainant is a pupil it is reasonable for the companion to speak on their behalf and/or to advise the pupil. If you choose to bring a companion, you will need to tell the school who you are going to bring, before the meeting.

As far as possible, your concern or complaint will be dealt with on a confidential basis. However, there could be occasions when the person dealing with your concern or complaint will need to consider whether anyone else within the school needs to know about your concern or complaint, so as to address it appropriately.

If you are a pupil under 16 and wish to raise a concern or bring a complaint we will ask for your permission before we involve your parent(s) or carer(s). Although we would prefer to have your consent before we involve your parent(s) or carer(s), we do not legally require it.

If you are a pupil under 16 and are involved in a complaint in any other way, we may ask your parent(s) or carer(s) to become involved and attend any discussion or interview with you.

Stage A (Informal)

If your complaint is about a headteacher or a member of the governing body, please refer to section 8. Special circumstances.

If you have a concern, you can often resolve it quickly by talking to a member of staff. You should raise your concern as soon as you can; normally we would expect you to raise your issue within 10 school days of any incident. The longer you leave it the harder it might be for those involved to deal with it effectively.

If you are a pupil, you can raise your concerns with your school council representative, form tutor or a teacher chosen to deal with pupil concerns (as appropriate for the school). This will not stop you, at a later date, from raising a complaint if you feel that the issue(s) you have raised have not been dealt with properly.

We will try to let you know what we have done or are doing about your concern normally within 10 school days, but if this is not possible, we will talk to you and agree a revised timescale with you.

The person overseeing your concern or complaint will keep you informed of the progress being made. This person will also keep a log of the concern for future reference

Stage B (Formal)

In most cases, we would expect that your concern is resolved informally. If you feel that your initial concern has not been dealt with appropriately you should put your complaint in writing to the headteacher. There is a form attached (Appendix B) that we recommend you use.

We would expect you to do this within five school days of receiving a response to your concern as it is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as soon as possible. If you are a pupil we will explain the form to you, help you complete it and give you a copy.

If your complaint is about the headteacher, you should put your complaint in writing to the chair of governors, addressed to the school, to ask for your complaint to be investigated. Again, you should use the form in Appendix B.

In all cases, the school can help you put your complaint in writing if necessary.

If you are involved in any way with a complaint, Ceri Davies, Cluster Business Leader will explain what will happen and the sort of help that is available to you.

Ceri Davies will invite you to discuss your complaint at a meeting. Timescales for dealing with your complaint will be agreed with you. We will aim to have a meeting with you and to explain what will happen, normally within 10 school days of receiving your letter. The school's designated person will complete the investigation and will let you know the outcome in writing within 10 school days of completion.

Stage C (Formal)

It is rare that a complaint will progress any further. However, if you still feel that your complaint has not been dealt with fairly, you should write, through the school's address, Ysgol Glan Clwyd, Denbigh Road, St Asaph, Denbighshire, LL17 ORP, to the chair of governors setting out your reasons for asking the governing body's complaints committee to consider your complaint. You do not have to write down details of your whole complaint again.

The clerk to the governing body will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

If you prefer, instead of sending a letter or e-mail, you can arrange an appointment (through the school) to talk to the chair of governors or Ceri Davies who will write down what is discussed and what, in your own words, would resolve the problem. We would normally expect you to do this within 5 school days of receiving the school's response. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. You will be asked to read the notes or will have the notes read back to you and then be asked to sign them as a true record of what was said. We will let you know how the complaint will be dealt with and will send a letter to confirm this. The complaints committee will normally have a meeting with you within 15 school days of receiving your letter. If this is not possible, the clerk will keep you updated as to progress.

The letter will also tell you when all the evidence and documentation to be considered by the complaints committee must be received. Everyone involved will see the evidence and documentation before the meeting, while ensuring that people's rights to privacy of information are protected. The letter will also record what we have agreed with you about when and where the meeting will take place and what will happen. The timescale may need to be changed, to allow for the availability of people, the gathering of evidence or seeking advice. In this case, the person dealing with the complaint will agree a revised meeting date with you.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no conflict of interest such as personal links with the complainant; personal links with any person against whom a complaint is made or prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Before the meeting, the committee will appoint a chair.

A Governing Body may appoint someone to a Complaints Committee who is not a member of a Governing Body as long as the majority of committee members are governors. The Governing Body should decide whether the person appointed has voting rights.

It is recommended that governing bodies consider forming joint committees with other schools to handle complaints. Two or more governing bodies may do this using The Collaboration Between Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2008. If governing bodies do this the terms of reference of the joint committee should make clear the complaints procedure to be used for each school.

You are entitled to bring someone along to the meeting for support, for example, a friend or relative

Normally, in order to deal with the complaint as quickly as possible, the complaints committee will not reschedule the meeting more than once. If you ask to reschedule the meeting more than once, the committee may think it reasonable to make a decision on the complaint in your absence to avoid unnecessary delays.

Representatives from the media or legal profession are not permitted to attend.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not accept as evidence recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The meeting will be held in private. Audio/visual recordings of meetings or conversations are not permitted unless a disability or special need requires it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before recordings of meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken. Any records of meetings will be kept for a minimum of seven years.

It is usual practice to invite you to the meeting. The committee should consider whether it is better to have everyone with an interest in the complaint at the meeting or whether it is better to meet them separately. Where relationships are strained or have broken down it may be better to have separate meetings.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented.

The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The committee will provide you and Ysgol Glan Clwyd with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days.

The governing body's complaints committee is the final arbiter of complaints.

7. The Local Authority

The local authority will satisfy itself that all the schools it maintains have adequate complaints procedures that are publicised.

The local authority may provide whatever advice it chooses to governing bodies. It may also provide guidance documents in addition to this publication.

A governing body may seek advice from a local authority about its complaints procedure or how to handle a complaint or assistance to investigate a complaint. The statutory responsibility for dealing with complaints remains with the governing body however.

The local authority may become involved if:

a) The governing body does not have a complaints procedure;
b) The governing body does not have an adequate procedure;
c) The school has not followed its complaints procedure;
d) The school has a procedure that is inoperable, for example, because someone who is a subject of the complaint is undertaking the investigation or making decisions about it.

8. Special circumstances

Where a complaint is made about any of the following the complaints procedure will be applied differently.

A GOVERNOR OR GROUP OF GOVERNORS

i. The concern or complaint will be referred to the chair of governors for investigation. The chair may alternatively delegate the matter to another governor for investigation, or appoint an independent investigator. Stage B onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS OR HEADTEACHER AND CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

ii. The vice chair of governors will be informed and will investigate it or may delegate it to another governor. Stage B onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

BOTH THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS AND VICE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

iii. The complaint will be referred to the clerk to the governing body who will inform the chair of the complaints committee. Stage C of the complaints procedure will then apply.

THE WHOLE GOVERNING BODY

iv. The complaint will be referred to the clerk to the governing body who will inform the headteacher, chair of governors, local authority and, where appropriate, the diocesan authority. The authorities will usually agree arrangements with the governing body for independent investigation of the complaint.

THE HEADTEACHER

v. The concern or complaint will be referred to the chair of governors who will undertake the investigation or may delegate it to another governor. Stage B onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

In all cases the school and governing body will ensure that complaints are dealt with in an unbiased, open and fair way.

9. Our commitment to you

We will take your concerns and complaints seriously and, where we have made mistakes, will try and learn from them.

If you need help to make your concerns and complaints known we will try and assist you. If you are a young person and need extra assistance the Welsh Government has established MEIC which is a national advocacy and advice helpline for children and young people. Advice and support can also be accessed from the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

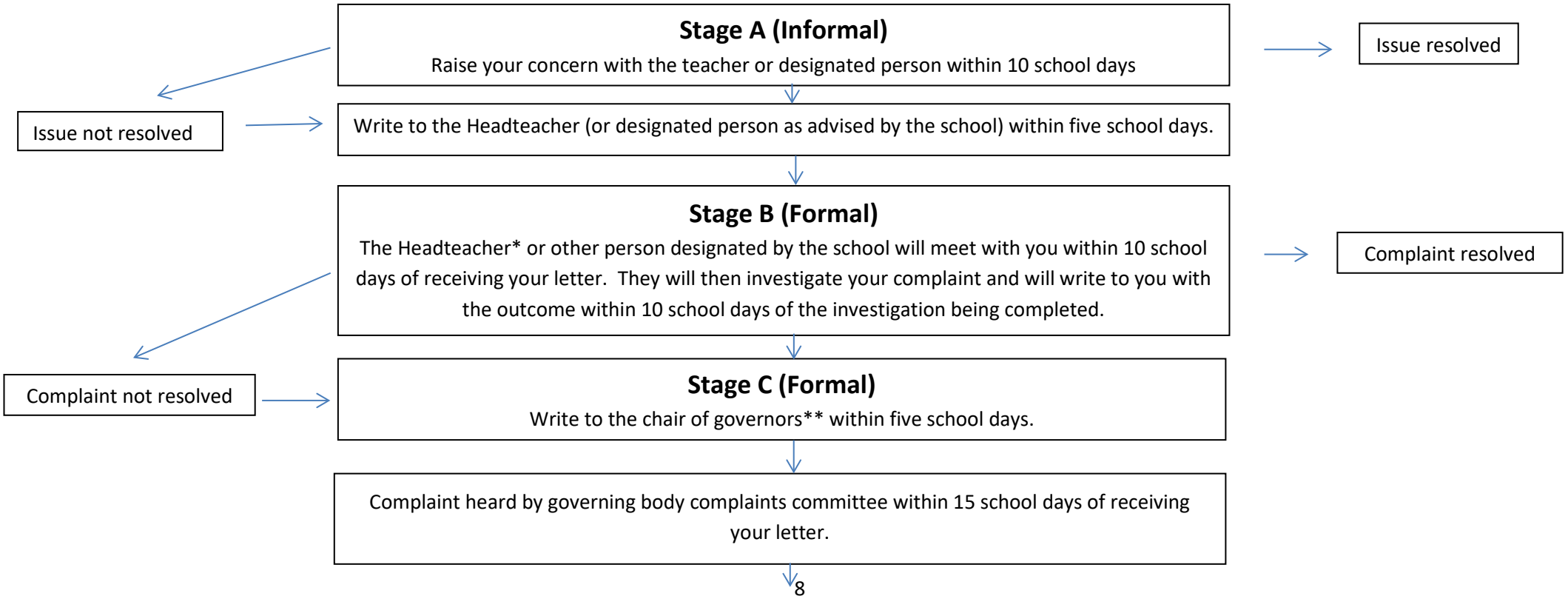
MEIC may be contacted by freephone: 0808 802 3456, or text: 84001. This service is operated 24 hours a day.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales can be contacted by freephone: 0808 801 1000 (Monday to Friday 9a.m. to 5p.m.), text: 80 800 (start your message with COM) or e-mail: advice@childcomwales.org.uk

The governing body has shared with staff and pupils on this policy and will share further if any amendments are made in the future.

Appendix A: Summary of dealing with concerns or complaints

This procedure will be followed in the event of a concern or a complaint about the school provided that the concern or complaint does not fall under other statutory procedures



	You will be informed of the outcome within 10 school days	→ Complaint resolved

**If the complaint is about the headteacher you should write to the chair of governors.*

*** If the complaint is about the chair of governors you should write to the vice chair.*

All timescales shown are targets and are flexible; however it is in everyone's best interest to resolve a complaint as soon as possible.

The school will work with you to ensure that the time allowed to deal with your concern or complaint is reasonable and helps to achieve an answer to the problem.

Appendix B: Model complaint form

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else, please fill in Section B also. Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to be satisfied that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned. If you are a pupil the school will help you complete this form, will explain it to you and will give you a copy of it when it is completed.

SECTION A: About you	
Forename(s):	
Surname:	
Title	Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Other:
Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone number:	
Mobile number:	
Email address:	
How would you prefer us to contact you?	
Section B: If you are making the complaint on behalf of somebody else	
Their full name:	
Address:	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	
Section C: About your complaint You may continue your answers on separate sheets of paper if necessary	
Name of school you are complaining about:	

What do you think they did wrong or did not do?
When did you first become aware of the problem?
If it is more than three months since you first became aware of the problem, please give the reason why you have not complained before.

Describe how you have been affected
What do you think should be done to put matters right?
Have you already put your concern or complaint to a member of staff? If so, please give brief details about how and when you did so.

Section D Privacy Statement

Ysgol Glan Clwyd is a data controller and is responsible for processing personal data.

The categories of personal data we process include:

- personal identifiers and contacts (e.g. name, address, phone number and email address)
- specific details of your complaint

We will use this information to:

- enable us to carry out investigations into your complaint
- provide a response and agree appropriate actions

The information processed may be obtained from:

- a complaint made by you or another individual
- school systems and databases
- information provided by other individuals
- any relevant CCTV/recordings/images

In some circumstances it may be necessary to obtain information about you from other organisations including

- Local Authority

In considering your complaint, we may share your information with:

- Governing Body complaints committee
- Senior and key members of staff

Where appropriate / where your complaint is escalated, we may share your information with:

- Investigating panel/officer
- Denbighshire county Council / Local Education Authority

Lawful basis to process data

Under the GDPR, the lawful basis we rely on for processing information for the above purposes, is performance of a task carried out in the public interest and in the exercise of official authority or where we have a legal obligation to process. In addition, concerning any 'special category data', where the processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest; or where we have obtained explicit consent.

Your rights

Under certain circumstances, you have rights under data protection laws in relation to your personal data including the right to receive a copy of the personal data we hold about you.

For further information on how we process personal data including how to raise concerns about the way we have handled your personal data, please see our privacy notice on the school's website.

Signature of complainant:	
Date	

If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else:

Signature	
Date	

Please send this form and any documents to support your complaint to:

Ceri Davies – ceri.davies@ysgolglanclwyd.cymru

OFFICIAL USE ONLY	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
By whom:	
Complaint referred to:	
Date:	