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# Kingsley Learning Foundation Trust

## Complaints Policy

Chair Signature: *D. Withers*

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## 1. Aims of this policy

1.1. This policy outlines the process for complaints from guardians and members of the public. The aim of this policy is to ensure that any complaint, including a complaint against a member of staff, is handled by the Kingsley Learning Foundation Trust (KLFT) sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level, and resolved as soon as possible.

1.2. When responding to complaints, the Trust aims to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
- Ensure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school and Trust improvement evaluation processes.

1.3. The Trust will try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

1.4. The Trust will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.

1.5. To support this, the Trust will publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the Trust website. Throughout the process, the Trust will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

## 2. Definitions

2.1. The Department for Education (DfE) guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint:

- A concern is defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.
- A complaint is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

## 3. Scope of this policy

3.1. This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion
- Whistleblowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline.

3.2. Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.

3.3. Complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

3.4. If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the Police, Local Authority (LA) safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, we will provide a proposed new timescale to the complainant.

3.5. If a complainant commences legal action against KLFT in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

## 4. Who is responsible for carrying out this policy?

4.1. The Trust Board has overall responsibility for this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.

4.2. The Trust Board has delegated the day-to-day responsibility for the operation of these procedures to the school Headteachers.

## **5. Legislation and guidance**

5.1. This document meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from guardians of pupils in our Trust.

5.2. It also refers to good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures from the Department for Education (DfE).

5.3. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

5.4. In addition, this policy addresses duties set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework with regards to dealing with complaints about the Trust's fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

### **6.1. The Complainant**

6.1.1. The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- Follow these procedures
- Co-operate with the Trust and its schools throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved with respect
- Not publish details about the complaint on social media.

### **6.2. The Investigator**

6.2.1. An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint and establish the facts. They will:

- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
- Prepare a comprehensive report which includes the facts and potential solutions.

### **6.3. Clerk**

6.3.1. The clerk will:

- Be the contact point for the complainant and the complaints committee, including circulating the relevant papers and evidence before complaints committee meetings
- Arrange the complaints hearing
- Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the hearing.

### **6.4. Committee Chair**

6.4.1. The Committee Chair will:

- Chair the meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout
- Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the committee, and are allowed to present their case.

### **6.5. Complaints Co-ordinator**

6.5.1. This role may be utilised in the cases of large or complex complaints at the discretion of the school. It could be the Deputy Headteacher, other staff member providing administrative support, CEO/designated complaints Governor or Trustee.

6.5.2. The complaints co-ordinator should:

- Ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- Liaise with staff members, Headteacher, CEO, Chair of Governors, Chair of Trust or the Clerk and to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- Be aware of issues regarding:
  - o Sharing third party information
  - o 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
  - o Keep records.

## **7. Principles for investigation**

### **7.1. Principles**

7.1.1. When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right.

7.1.2. We also intend to address complaints as quickly as possible. To achieve this, realistic and reasonable time limits will be set for each action within each stage.

7.1.3. Where further investigations are necessary, new time limits will be set, and the complainant will be sent details of the new deadline with an explanation for the delay.

7.1.4. The Trust expects that complaints will be made as soon as possible after an incident arises, and no later than 3 months afterwards. We will consider exceptions to this time frame in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

### **7.2. Complaints about the fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Requirements**

7.2.1. We will investigate all written complaints relating to a school's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, and notify the complainant of the outcome within 10 school days of receiving the complaint. The school will keep a record of the complaint (see Record Keeping) and make this available to Ofsted on request.

### **7.3. Anonymous complaints**

7.3.1. Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated. However, the person receiving the complaint will decide whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

### **7.4. Withdrawal of a complaint**

7.4.1. A complainant may withdraw their complaint at any time during the process and should confirm this in writing.

### **7.5 Complaints received outside of term time**

7.5.1. We will consider complaints received out of the term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## **8. Summary of complaints procedures**

8.1. We have adopted a 4-stage process for dealing with complaints:

- Stage 1 - Informal Resolution
- Stage 2 - Formal Investigation
- Stage 3 - Standards Committee (Governors) panel hearing
- Stage 4 - Trust Review.

## **9. Stage 1: Informal Resolution**

9.1. The school will take complaints seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter informally and quickly.

9.2. The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of school staff or the Headteacher, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office.

9.3. The school will acknowledge complaints within 5 working days, and provide a response within 10 working days in term time.

9.4. The informal stage may involve:

- A meeting between the complainant and the Headteacher and/or the subject of the complaint, if appropriate
- Provision of additional information or clarification
- Amendments to provision or practice
- Provision of additional support or guidance
- Mediation

- Conflict resolution.

9.5. If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

## 10. Stage 2: Formal Investigation

10.1. The formal stage involves the complainant putting the complaint into writing. This should provide details such as:

- Relevant dates and times
- The names of witnesses of events
- What the complainant feels would resolve the complaint.

Copies of any relevant documents should be included. See Appendix 2 for Complaint Form.

### 10.2. Addressing a complaint

10.2.1. Complaints not involving the Headteacher or a member of the Standards Committee (Governing Body) should be directed to the Headteacher. For contact details please refer to the school website.

10.2.2. Complaints involving the Headteacher or a member of the Standards Committee (Governing Body) should be directed to the Chair of the Standards Committee (Governing Body). This can be done by:

- Emailing the contact on the school website, for the attention of the Chair of the Local Governing Body
- A letter addressed to the Chair of the Standards Committee (Governing Body) delivered to the school office.

10.2.3. Complaints involving the Chair of the Standards Committee (Governing Body) should be directed to the governance professional to the Board of Trustees. This can be done by:

- Email: [kate.wareham@kingsley.school](mailto:kate.wareham@kingsley.school) for the attention of the governance professional
- Letter: for the attention of the governance professional sent to Kingsley Learning Foundation Trust, c/o Kingsley Special Academy, Churchill Way, Kettering, Northamptonshire, NN15 5DP.

### 10.3. Investigation

10.3.1. The investigating officer will then conduct the investigation. The investigation may include:

- Reviews of relevant documents
- Interviews with pupils, guardians, staff and other involved parties.

10.3.2. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 20 working days during term time.

10.3.3. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response and wishes to proceed to the next stage of this procedure, they should inform the investigating officer in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the written conclusion. Complaints will be escalated to the panel hearing stage if the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint at the second, formal, stage.

## 11. Stage 3: Standards Committee (Governing Body) Panel Hearing

11.1. The panel will be appointed by or on behalf of the Trust and must consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of who is independent of the Trust.

11.2. The panel will have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress (see Record Keeping). The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the panel is properly minuted.

11.3. The complainant must be notified of the date, time and location of the review panel at least 5 working days in advance. However, the review panel reserves the right to convene at their convenience rather than that of the complainant and should a complainant not attend without notice the panel will be held in their absence.

11.4. At the review panel hearing, the complainant and representatives from the school, as appropriate, will be present.

11.5. The complainant is allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied if they wish.

11.6. At the hearing, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called, as appropriate, to present their evidence.

11.7. The panel, the complainant and the school representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and school representative(s) have presented their cases, they will be asked to leave and evidence will then be considered.

11.8. The panel must then put together its findings and recommendations from the case. The panel will also provide a copy of the findings and recommendations to the complainant and, where relevant, the individual who is the subject of the complaint, and make a copy available for inspection by the Trust and Headteacher.

11.9. The panel will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 10 working days.

11.10. Where the school-based complaints procedure has been completed, and the complainant does not feel their complaint has been addressed correctly, they may contact the Trust in writing to request a review of the complaint investigation. This must set out why they believe that the process has not complied with the complaint procedure, legislation or a duty imposed under the funding agreement.

11.10.1. This can be done by:

- Email: [kate.wareham@kingsley.school](mailto:kate.wareham@kingsley.school) for the attention of the governance professional
- Letter: for the attention of the governance professional sent to the Kingsley Learning Foundation Trust, c/o Kingsley Special Academy, Churchill Way, Kettering, Northamptonshire, NN15 5DP.

## 12. Stage 4: Review by the Trust Board

12.1 A complaint may be escalated to Stage 4 where the complainant believes that:

- The school did not comply with its published complaints procedure
- The school or Trust's complaints procedure does not comply with statutory or regulatory requirements; or
- The school has failed to comply with a duty imposed under its Funding Agreement.

12.2 The Trust Board will not reinvestigate, or overturn decisions made under the school's complaints procedure. Its role is to review whether the complaint was handled fairly, thoroughly, and in accordance with policy and statutory obligations.

12.3 Where a complaint is raised with the Trust, the governance professional or investigating officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 working days (term time). The complainant will be informed of the process and expected timescales for review.

12.4 The Trust will review the school's handling of the complaint, including whether:

- The complaint was investigated at Stage 3 in line with policy
- The decision reached was reasonable and evidence-based
- Communication with the complainant was appropriate and transparent
- Any safeguarding, data protection, or confidentiality requirements were properly followed.

12.5 If it is found that the school did not follow its complaints procedure correctly, or that statutory or regulatory duties were not met, the Trust may require the school to reconsider the complaint. This must take place within 10 working days (term time) of notification from the Trust.

12.6 The school may be asked to provide the following to support the Trust's review, within 5 working days of the request:

- Copies of relevant policies and procedures
- A clear record of how each stage of the complaints procedure was followed
- All correspondence, evidence, and meeting notes relevant to the complaint
- The Stage 3 findings and recommendations.

12.7 Following the review, the Trust Board (or its delegated panel) will consider the findings and issue a written response within 10 working days (term time) of the review being completed. The written response will confirm whether the complaint was handled in line with policy and legislation, and outline any further actions required by the school.

12.8 The decision of the Trust Board at this stage represents the final stage of the Kingsley Learning Foundation Trust's complaints procedure.

12.9 If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the Trust Board review, they may contact the Department for Education to consider whether the complaint has been handled properly and in accordance with statutory requirements.

⇒ <https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact> the Department for Education

Alternatively, complaints may be sent by post to:

Academy Complaints Team, Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT

### **13. Use of representatives**

13.1 Complainants are welcome to be accompanied or represented at any stage of the complaints process. A representative can provide support, help present the complaint, and ensure the complainant feels comfortable and fairly treated during meetings or correspondence.

13.2 Representatives may attend meetings/panels in a supportive or advisory capacity. However, they must not answer questions or speak on behalf of the complainant unless specifically invited to do so by the investigator.

13.3 To maintain confidentiality, fairness, and the integrity of the complaints process, representatives must not be:

- A current or former member of staff of Red Kite Special Academy, Kingsley Special Academy, or the Kingsley Learning Foundation Trust
- Any person who is, or has been, directly involved in the complaint or its investigation
- Another guardian who has an active complaint under consideration at Stage 2, Stage 3, or Stage 4 of this procedure
- Any individual whose involvement could present a conflict of interest or risk breaching confidentiality.

13.4 The use of a representative to act in place of the complainant, for example, to manage correspondence or present the complaint on their behalf, is permitted only at the discretion of the investigator.

- Full written permission from the complainant must be provided before any such arrangement can be accepted.
- The investigator reserves the right to decline this arrangement where it is considered that there may be a safeguarding concern, a potential breach of confidentiality, or a conflict of interest.
- In such cases, the investigator will inform the complainant in writing of the decision and the reasons for it.

13.5 The investigator or panel Chair reserves the right to request that an alternative representative be appointed if the selected person does not meet the criteria above, or if their participation is deemed inappropriate or disruptive to the process.

13.6 All representatives are expected to maintain confidentiality at all times and to behave respectfully throughout the complaints process. Any breach of confidentiality or inappropriate behaviour may result in the meeting being paused or the representative being asked to withdraw.

13.7 Where the complainant requires additional support due to accessibility, language, or communication needs, reasonable adjustments will be made to enable fair participation in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the school's accessibility and inclusion policies.

### **14. Public and social media conduct**

14.1 The Trust recognises that social media can be a valuable tool for communication. However, it is not an appropriate forum for raising or pursuing complaints about the Trust, a school, its staff, or pupils.

14.2 To ensure that all concerns are managed fairly, respectfully, and confidentially, all complaints must be submitted through the formal complaints procedure outlined in this policy.

14.3 The school will not engage in discussions about individual complaints or allegations through social media platforms. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, or online community forums.

14.4 Complainants are expected to act respectfully and to avoid sharing or posting any comments, images, or information that could:

- Identify, criticise, or cause distress to pupils, guardians, staff, or governors
- Breach confidentiality or data protection regulations

- Disrupt the operation of the school
- Be considered defamatory or discriminatory.

14.5 Where inappropriate or harmful use of social media is identified, the Trust or a school may take appropriate action, which may include:

- Requesting that the post or content be removed
- Restricting direct communication until the content is taken down
- Referring the matter to the Trust, legal advisors, or relevant external authorities where appropriate (e.g. for defamation, harassment, or safeguarding concerns).

14.6 In serious cases, where the welfare of pupils or staff is affected, the school may report concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Police, or other relevant agencies, in line with the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

14.7 The Trust and its schools are committed to handling all complaints with openness, respect, and confidentiality. We expect the same standards from complainants and the wider school community, including on social media and in public forums.

## 15. Complaints about the Trust or central staff

15.1. We use a three-step process for addressing complaints made about the Trust as a whole, or against central staff:

- Stage 1 - Informal Resolution
- Stage 2 - Formal Investigation
- Stage 3 - Trust Board Panel Hearing.

### 15.2. Stage 1: Informal Resolution

15.2.1. We make every effort to address any complaints early through informal measures.

15.2.2. The complainant should raise any issues as soon as possible with the relevant member of the Trust's central team, or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

15.2.3. If the concern regards the CEO, the complainant should contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

15.2.4. If the complainant is unsure who to contact, or needs to contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees, they should contact the Trust office:

- Email: [kate.wareham@kingsley.school](mailto:kate.wareham@kingsley.school) for the attention of the governance professional
- Telephone: 01536 316880
- Letter: Kingsley Learning Foundation Trust, c/o Kingsley Special Academy, Churchill Way, Kettering, Northamptonshire, NN15 5DP.

15.2.5. The process for responding to and investigating an informal complaint about the Trust or central staff is the same as that set out in *Stage 1: Informal Resolution*.

### 15.3. Stage 2: Formal Investigation

15.3.1. If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily at the informal stage, the complainant must submit a formal complaint in writing. They can do this by contacting the Trust office, as above.

15.3.2. The complainant will receive written acknowledgement of their complaint within 5 working days.

15.3.3. The investigating officer will then conduct an investigation, in line with the process set out in *Stage 2: Formal Investigation* providing a written response to the complainant within 20 working days.

### 15.4. Stage 3: Board of Trustees Panel Hearing

15.4.1. Complaints will be escalated to the panel hearing stage if the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint at the second, formal, stage.

15.4.2. A panel will be appointed by the Trust, and will consist of 3 members of the Board not involved in investigating the complaint in the formal stage.

15.4.3. The complainant must be notified of the date, time, and location of the review panel at least 5 working days in advance. However, the review panel reserves the right to convene at their convenience rather than that of the complainant and should the complaint not attend without notice the panel reserves the right to meet in their absence.

15.4.4. The complainant and representatives from the Trust, as appropriate, will be present at the panel hearing.

15.4.5. The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied if they wish.

15.4.6. The Board will ensure that the hearing is properly minuted.

15.4.7. At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called, as appropriate, to present their evidence.

15.4.8. The panel, the complainant and the Trust representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and Trust representative(s) have presented their cases, they will be asked to leave and evidence will then be considered.

15.4.9. The panel must then put together its findings and recommendations from the case. The panel will also provide a copy of the findings and recommendations to the complainant and, where relevant, the individual who is the subject of the complaint, and make a copy available for inspection by the Trust.

15.4.10. The panel will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 10 working days.

## **16. Referring complaints on completion of the Trust's procedures**

16.1. If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the Trust's complaints procedures they can refer their complaint to the DfE. The DfE will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly. The DfE will not overturn a school's or the Trust's decision about a complaint. However, it will look into:

- Whether there was undue delay, or the Trust did not comply with its published complaints procedure
- Whether the Trust was in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State
- Whether the Trust has failed to comply with any other legal obligation.

16.2. If the Trust or one of its schools did not deal with the complaint properly, it will be asked to re-investigate the complaint. If the complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the Trust will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

16.3. For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

16.4. For information on referral to the DfE please see:

Department for Education online at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)

Telephone on: 0370 000 2288

By writing to: Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

## **17. Persistent complaints**

17.1. Where a complainant tries to re-open the issue with the school or Trust after the complaints procedure has been fully exhausted and the school or Trust has done everything it reasonably can in response to the complaint, the Chair of the Standards Committee (Governing Body) or the Chair of the Board of Trustees will inform the complainant that the matter is closed.

17.2. If the complainant subsequently contacts the school or Trust again about the same issue, the school or Trust can choose not to respond. The normal circumstance in which the school or Trust will not respond is if:

- The school or Trust has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs, and
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school or Trust's position and their options (if any), and
- The complainant is contacting the school or Trust repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time.

However, this list is not intended to be exhaustive.

17.3. The school or Trust will be most likely to choose not to respond if:

- There is reason to believe the individual is contacting the school with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience, and/or
- The individual's letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive, and/or
- The individual makes insulting personal comments about, or threats towards, school or Trust staff.

17.4. Unreasonable behaviour which is abusive, offensive, or threatening may constitute an unreasonably persistent complaint.

17.5. Once the school or Trust has decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, the complainant will be informed in writing, either by letter or email.

17.6. The school or Trust will ensure when making this decision that complainants making any new complaint are heard, and that the school and Trust act reasonably.

#### **17.7. Unreasonably persistent complaints**

17.7.1. We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns, and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow the Trust's complaints procedure as normal wherever possible.

17.7.2. If the complainant continues to contact the school or Trust in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place. We may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as Citizens Advice
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary.

#### **17.8. Duplicate complaints**

17.8.1. If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account.

17.8.2. If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and the local process is complete
- Direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint.

17.8.3. If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

#### **17.9. Complaint campaigns**

17.9.1. Where the school or Trust receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school or Trust, the school or Trust may respond to these complaints by:

- Publishing a single response on the school or Trust website
- Sending a template response to all of the complainants.

17.9.2. If complainants are not satisfied with the school or Trust's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

## **18. Record keeping**

18.1. The school will record the progress of all complaints brought against it, including information about:

- Actions taken at all stages
- The stage at which the complaint was resolved
- The final outcome.

18.2. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes related to meetings and phone calls.

18.3. This material will be treated as confidential, stored securely in a school office and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

18.4. In the case of complaints about the Trust or central staff, these records will be managed by the governance professional and will be stored securely in the Trust's offices under restricted access.

18.5. This is except where the Secretary of State (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

18.6. Records of complaints will be kept in accordance with the Trust Data Retention Schedule:

- Major complaints: current year plus 6 years
- If negligence involved: current year plus 15 years
- If child protection or safeguarding issues are involved then: current year plus 40 years.

18.7. The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole Standards Committee (Governing Body) of the school, or the entire Board of Trustees, in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point.

18.8. Where the Standards Committee (Governing Body) is aware of the substance of the complaint before the review panel stage, the school will, where reasonably practicable, arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.

18.9. Complainants also have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The decision to approve this request is made by the Governing Body, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

## **19. Learning lessons**

19.1. The Trust CEO will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Headteacher, where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school or Trust can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

## **20. Monitoring arrangements**

20.1. The school Headteacher will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in the section entitled *Learning lessons*.

20.2. School complaints records are logged and managed by the school Headteacher.

20.3. The CEO will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure Trust-wide.

## **21. Kingsley Learning Foundation Trust wellbeing statement**

21.1. The Trust will always put the effective education of our pupils at the heart of any decision that we make. In doing so, we recognise that the requirement to adhere to policies and procedures may be time consuming and can impact on workload. For this reason the Trust and its schools will always endeavour to support staff when policies and procedures are being actioned.

## **22. Review of this policy**

22.1. This policy will be reviewed by the CEO and Policy Working Group annually. At each review, the policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

## Appendix 1: Complaints not investigated under the KLFT Complaints Policy

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools	Concerns about admissions should be handled through a separate process - either through the appeals process or via the local authority.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
Exclusion of pupils from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a> . <i>*complaints about the application of the Behaviour Policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i> The Behaviour Policy can be found on the school website.
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a> . Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education - <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>

## Appendix 2 - Complaint Form

Please feel free to use this form to support your complaint if you wish. Please complete and return to the school office in an envelope marked for the attention of the appropriate person (Headteacher, CEO, Chair of Governors, Chair of Trustees or Clerk to the Governing Body) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>
<b>Address:</b> <b>Postcode:</b> <b>Day time telephone number:</b> <b>Evening telephone number:</b> <b>Email address:</b>
<b>Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.</b>

**What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?**

**Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Official use**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**By who:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Action taken:**

**Date:**