

APPENDIX A
Conduct of Governors' Complaints Panel
Meetings

- 1 Although this procedure may appear formal, the hearing will be conducted in as informal as way as possible, and the Chair of the Panel will make every effort to make all parties feel comfortable.
- 2 A suitable venue will be provided for the meeting which includes separate waiting areas for the two parties and refreshments for all involved.
- 3 Every reasonable effort will be made to agree the date and time of the meeting with all parties and witnesses and all relevant documentation will be circulated to all parties by the clerk (appointed by the governors) to the Panel at least five working days in advance of the meeting.
- 4 Submission of additional documentation will not normally be allowed outside this timescale or at the appeal meeting, but the decision whether or not to allow this will lie with the governors' panel.
- 5 The meeting will be minuted by the clerk and the draft minutes agreed with the Panel (or if they so resolve by the Chair of the Panel) and then forwarded by the clerk to the complainant for any comment as to accuracy. Any such comments must be returned within 5 working days of being sent. (If by first class post only within 6 working days). The clerk will share any such response with the Chair/Panel (as previously agreed), offering any professional advice or comment, and may accept any amendments in whole or part, or similarly reject them. Any comments not accepted may be appended to the minutes, now approved, for information. The approved minutes should be held by the school and sent to the complainant. The minutes are not to be shared with the governing body, or any individual governor not on the Panel. However the panel Chair should be expected to report back the outcome (without naming any individual) and any actions or learning recommended, to the next full meeting of the governing body.
- 6 The meeting may be attended by:
 - the complainant, with a companion if desired (who cannot also be a witness) or a representative for you;
 - the head teacher and/or Chair of Governors/ nominated governor, as appropriate, with an adviser if required;
 - Any witnesses called by either party;
 - the members of the Governors' Complaints Panel;
 - the clerk;
 - an adviser to the Governors' Panel.
- 7 Members of staff who have been involved in the issue, or other witnesses, may be called upon by either side to attend part of the meeting to provide information to the governors. The appeal Panel may also seek the attendance of named persons, including staff, if

they deem it relevant. However no person, including staff members, may be required to attend. It is for the Panel to decide if it is reasonable to draw any inference in relation to the facts as a result of non-attendance.

- 8 Both sides must provide names of any witnesses to be called at least 5 days in advance of the meeting, and the nature of the evidence which they will be providing. Failure to do so may mean that witness may not be permitted to attend the hearing at the discretion of the governors. The panel has the discretion not to admit a witness if they do not consider their evidence to be relevant to the complaint. Witnesses will not be permitted to sit in the appeal hearing before giving their evidence. It is for the Panel to decide what weight to give any written evidence submitted by a person who does not attend the hearing, and whom it is thus not possible to question.
- 9 There will be no audio or visual recording of the proceedings by any party but a copy of the minutes of the meeting, once approved, will be shared with all parties, as detailed in (5) above.
- 10 The clerk will ensure the governors' Panel select a Chair.
- 11 The Chair of the panel will introduce all the parties present and explain the procedure to be followed, and that every effort will be made to keep the process as informal as possible.
- 12 The complainant (or companion/ representative) will outline your complaint and explain why you are dissatisfied with the school's response to date. You may call any witnesses in support of your complaint who will attend the meeting only for the time that they are providing information, and may be questioned by all parties.
- 13 The headteacher/ Chair /nominated governor will have the opportunity to ask the complainant and any witnesses' questions.
14. The panel may ask questions of any party at any point. With the agreement of the Panel Chair, any adviser to the Panel may also ask questions of either party.
15. The head teacher and/or the Chair of Governors will explain their/their staff member's involvement in the complaint and the reasons for their decisions at the informal and first/second formal stage. The head teacher and/or Chair of Governors may call any witnesses in support of his/her statement who will attend the meeting only for the time that they are providing information, and may be questioned by all parties.
16. The complainant and the governors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the head teacher and/or Chair of Governors.
17. Both parties will be given the opportunity to sum up their statements, ending with you. No new material may be introduced at this stage.

18. The governors may decide to adjourn the hearing pending further investigation, or to consider or clarify any procedural point at any stage, if this seems necessary.
19. Both parties will leave the meeting and the governors will consider the information that has been put to them. The clerk, and any adviser to the panel, will remain for this part of the meeting in order to clarify anything if necessary, and to offer advice, but the governors' deliberations will not be minuted.
20. The governors' panel must reach a unanimous or majority decision as to whether or not to uphold your complaint wholly or in part, and what action (if any) the school needs to take to resolve your complaint. This may include referring the matter to another formal process, whether in relation to a complaint against a governor or a member of the school staff. Normally the governors will reach a decision at this point but they may feel the need to take further advice and adjourn. Where this is the case they will endeavour to reach a decision as soon as possible. Normally this should be within five working days, with any subsequent delay detailed in writing to the complainant by the clerk at the earliest opportunity.
21. The Clerk will communicate the governors' response to both parties in writing as soon as possible but, in any case, within 5 working days of reaching their decision. The governors' response will detail whether the complaint is upheld wholly or in part and briefly summarise the basis on which governors arrived at this conclusion. The response will also include any lessons learnt and specify any action to be taken by the school as a result of the complaint and within what timescale