

Ormiston Academies Trust

## Complaints policy

### Policy version control

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## Talking to us first

If something at school is worrying you, we want to hear about it. We understand that speaking up can feel difficult, and we are committed to listening, acting fairly, and resolving matters at the earliest possible stage.

A concern is a worry you would like the school to look into. A complaint is raised when a concern has not been resolved, or when something more serious has gone wrong. Most concerns can be sorted out quickly with a conversation and never need to become a formal complaint.

In almost every case, the quickest way to resolve a concern or complaint is to speak to the member of staff most directly involved — usually a class teacher or form tutor — or to contact the school office using contact details below:

Contact details for Ormiston Meridian Academy

Phone: 01782 377100

Email: [info@omera.co.uk](mailto:info@omera.co.uk)

The vast majority of concerns or complaints are resolved quickly, without needing to use the formal procedure. If we are unable to resolve your concern this way, the formal stages of our complaints procedure are set out in this document.

## 1. Complaints Policy and Procedure

### 1.1 Who can make a complaint?

- 1.1.1 This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Ormiston Academies Trust about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

### 1.2 The difference between a concern and a complaint

- 1.2.1 A concern is a worry you would like the school to look into and for which you are seeking reassurance.
- 1.2.2 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about something the school has done, or has failed to do.
- 1.2.3 It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Ormiston Academies Trust takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.
- 1.2.4 We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Ormiston Academies Trust will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

## 1.3 How to raise a concern or make a complaint

- 1.3.1 A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.
- 1.3.2 Any concerns should be initially directed to the appropriate member of staff. For pastoral issues — anything to do with your child's wellbeing, behaviour or how they are getting on socially — the first port of call should be the form tutor or class teacher. Academic issues (those relating to learning or a particular subject) should be sent initially to the form tutor or class teacher, or to subject leaders for more specific concerns. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.
- 1.3.3 Complainants should not approach individual governors, trustees or the CEO to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and will not provide a direct response.
- 1.3.4 Complaints against school staff (except the principal) should be made in the first instance, via email to [dlovell@omera.co.uk](mailto:dlovell@omera.co.uk). This may need to be handled through the Allegations of abuse against staff policy including low level concerns depending of the nature of the complaint. The Data Protection and Complaints Team will ensure the complaint is handled through the correct policy.
- 1.3.5 Complaints that involve or are about the principal should be addressed to the Data Protection and Complaints Team, which is part of the Trust Central Team. Please email [complaints@ormistonacademies.co.uk](mailto:complaints@ormistonacademies.co.uk)
- 1.3.6 If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
- 1.3.7 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 or holding meetings in accessible locations. Please contact the school office.

## 1.4 What we ask of complainants

- 1.4.1 Complainants get a quicker, fairer response if they:
  - Explain the complaint in full as early as possible.
  - Limit your complaint text to roughly 2 sides of A4 and minimize the use of AI tools
  - Co-operate with the school in seeking a resolution.
  - Respond promptly to requests for information or meetings.
  - Ask for assistance as needed.
  - Treat everyone involved with respect.
  - Refrain from publicising the complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

## 1.5 Other matters affecting how we handle complaints

- 1.5.1 We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Trust retains the right, if appropriate, to determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.
- 1.5.2 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.
- 1.5.3 If a complainant commences legal action against Ormiston Academies Trust in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded. Where legal action has commenced, any contact must be in writing to [dlovell@omera.co.uk](mailto:dlovell@omera.co.uk) Correspondence to any other person will not be responded to.

## 1.6 Complaints we will not consider

| Complaint                                                                              | Where to take it / what we do                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Issues with how the complaint is being raised</b>                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Same issue already fully investigated under this policy                                | We don't reinvestigate                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Made by a third party without authority from the person concerned                      | Must come from the person concerned                                                                                                                                                           |
| Complaints from former pupils                                                          | Only considered if the concern was raised while the pupil was still on roll                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Complaints with a separate statutory or external route</b>                          |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Admissions                                                                             | School's admissions and appeals process<br><a href="http://www.stoke.gov.uk">www.stoke.gov.uk</a>                                                                                             |
| Exclusion of pupils                                                                    | <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions</a>                                                                                          |
| Statutory SEN assessments or EHCP applications                                         | Local authority                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Child protection or safeguarding                                                       | School's safeguarding policy or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)                                                                                                                 |
| Data protection — Subject Access Requests (1 month) and FOI requests (20 working days) | Trust's Information Rights process (separate statutory timeframes)                                                                                                                            |
| National curriculum content                                                            | Department for Education<br><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education</a>           |
| Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision                                          | Concerns about whether the academy is meeting EYFS requirements can also be raised directly with Ofsted: 0300 123 4666 / <a href="mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk">enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk</a> |
| Collective worship or religious education                                              | Separate statutory route under section 71 of the Education Act 1996 — complaint to the Local Authority                                                                                        |

|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Withdrawal from RE or relationships and sex education (RSE) lessons                                      | Parental statutory right — speak to the school directly, not under this policy                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Exam results or grade appeals                                                                            | Exam board / JCQ appeals process — not handled under this procedure                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| About a third-party provider using our facilities                                                        | Contact the provider directly                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Internal Trust processes</b>                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Staff grievances, capability or disciplinary                                                             | Trust's internal HR procedures (outcomes are confidential)                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Whistleblowing                                                                                           | Trust's Whistleblowing Policy                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| About a Local Governing Body                                                                             | Trust's Governance team<br><a href="https://ormistonacademiestrust.co.uk/who-we-are/docs-and-policies/governance-and-scheme-of-delegation/">https://ormistonacademiestrust.co.uk/who-we-are/docs-and-policies/governance-and-scheme-of-delegation/</a> |
| About the CEO, Chair of Trustees or the Trust Board                                                      | Trust's Governance team<br><a href="https://ormistonacademiestrust.co.uk/who-we-are/docs-and-policies/governance-and-scheme-of-delegation/">https://ormistonacademiestrust.co.uk/who-we-are/docs-and-policies/governance-and-scheme-of-delegation/</a> |
| Academy reorganisation proposals (closure, merger, age-range change)                                     | Directed to Ormiston Academies Trust as the decision-maker <a href="mailto:info@ormistonacademies.co.uk">info@ormistonacademies.co.uk</a>                                                                                                              |
| <b>Discretionary academy decisions (concerns can be raised, but decisions stand)</b>                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Actions already taken in line with policy                                                                | You can raise a concern, but it will not go through the 3-stage process                                                                                                                                                                                |
| School uniform requirements                                                                              | Set under the academy's uniform policy — you can raise a concern, but uniform requirements are not overturned through this procedure                                                                                                                   |
| Prom attendance or eligibility                                                                           | Decisions made under the academy's prom or behaviour policy — you can raise a concern, but eligibility decisions are not overturned through this procedure                                                                                             |
| School trips and educational visits (cost, eligibility, withdrawal of a place)                           | Decisions made under the academy's trips and charging policies — you can raise a concern, but eligibility decisions are not overturned through this procedure                                                                                          |
| Class allocation, sets/streams or teacher assignment, or change of courses after the start of the course | Decisions made by school leadership — you can raise a concern, but allocation decisions are not overturned through this procedure                                                                                                                      |
| Behaviour sanctions and detentions                                                                       | Academy's behaviour policy — serious sanctions follow that policy's own appeal route                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Charges for school activities                                                                            | Academy's Charging and Remissions policy                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Where parallel proceedings are underway</b>                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Police, safeguarding teams or legal proceedings already underway                                         | See section 1.5 — this procedure may be paused until those conclude                                                                                                                                                                                    |

- 1.6.1 If we decide that we are unable to consider your complaint, we will write to you within three academy weeks following the receipt of your complaint and explain why. In some circumstances, we may decide that your concern(s) should be considered using another policy or procedure.

## 1.7 Time scales

- 1.7.1 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. We will only consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

## 1.8 Complaints received outside of term time

- 1.8.1 We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday or close period.

## 1.9 External escalation routes

- 1.9.1 If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of stage three, or you believe the Trust has not followed this procedure properly, you can take your complaint to one of the external bodies listed below.

| Complaint                                                                                                                     | Who to contact                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Trust has not followed this procedure properly, or has not complied with its funding agreement or other legal obligations | Department for Education — <a href="http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school">www.gov.uk/complain-about-school</a>                   |
| Concerns about the overall quality of education or the way the academy is managed                                             | Ofsted — 0300 123 4666 / <a href="mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk">enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk</a>                                       |
| Unresolved data protection or freedom of information complaints, after our internal process has concluded                     | Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) — <a href="http://www.ico.org.uk">www.ico.org.uk</a>                                        |
| Concerns relating to discrimination under the Equality Act 2010                                                               | Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) — <a href="http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com">www.equalityadvisoryservice.com</a> |

## 2. Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Ormiston Academies Trust wants to resolve the complaint. 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 recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology
- feedback will be provided to the subject of a complaint where appropriate.

### 2.1 Withdrawal of a Complaint

- 2.1.1 If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

## 2.2 Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- 2.2.1 Stage 1 is informal. The aim is to listen, clear up any misunderstandings and resolve the issue quickly. Most concerns are resolved at this stage.
- 2.2.2 You can raise a Stage 1 concern in person, by phone, by email or in writing. Someone else can raise it for you with your consent.
- 2.2.3 For pastoral or academic issues, contact the form tutor, subject teacher, Head of Year or subject lead. Informal complaints can be investigated by a member of senior leadership but should not be investigated by the principal. For complaints about a member of staff (other than the principal), speak to that person's line manager. Complaints about the principal go straight to Stage 2 — see section 1.3.5
- 2.2.4 We will acknowledge your complaint within 48 hours. You should get an initial response within 5 school days, and most Stage 1 matters are resolved within 15 school days.
- 2.2.5 We will confirm the outcome in writing (usually by email), even if the matter is resolved informally. All Stage 1 concerns are logged.
- 2.2.6 If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can move to Stage 2 — Formal Resolution. You must do this within four school weeks of the Stage 1 response (see section 2.3).

## 2.3 Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (Dealt with by Principal (unless they are about the principal))

- 2.3.1 Formal complaints must be made to the Data Protection and Complaints Team, via the complaints form at appendix 1 and sending to [complaints@ormistonacademies.co.uk](mailto:complaints@ormistonacademies.co.uk). If you are unable to complete the form, the complaint may be done in person at the school, in writing or by telephone.
- 2.3.2 The Data Protection and Complaints Team will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (via email) within 5 school days.
- 2.3.3 Once appointed, the investigating officer will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The investigating officer can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.
- 2.3.4 Note: The principal may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.
- 2.3.5 During the investigation, the principal (or investigator) will:
  - if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
  - keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.
- 2.3.6 At the conclusion of their investigation, the investigating officer will provide a formal written response within 20 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. In exceptional circumstances we may, at the discretion of the Data Protection and Complaints Team, extend the

deadline for an additional 10 school days where a complaint is deemed to be particularly complex.

- 2.3.7 If the investigating officer is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.
- 2.3.8 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 actions Ormiston Academies Trust will take to resolve the complaint.
- 2.3.9 The investigating officer will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.
- 2.3.10 If the complaint is about the principal, the Education Director for the school, or a Principal from a different school within the Trust or an independent investigating officer will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2.
- 2.3.11 You may bring someone with you to any meeting at Stage 2 — a relative, friend or other supporter. Legal representation is not permitted.
- 2.3.12 At Stage 2 we can uphold the complaint in full, uphold it in part, or not uphold it. Whether or not we uphold a complaint, we will explain what action we will take and may recommend changes to school systems or procedures.
- 2.3.13 All complaints are handled confidentially. Information is shared only with those who need to know to investigate or resolve the matter.

## 2.4 Stage 3 – Complaints Panel

- 2.4.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the handling of the complaint at Stage 2, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3 – a meeting with a panel which will be formed of a senior member of OAT staff, a governor for the school along with one panel member independent of the management and running of the school. No panel member will have been involved in earlier stages of the same complaint. The Chair will normally be a senior member of OAT staff. This is the final stage of the complaints' procedure.
- 2.4.2 A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Data Protection and Complaints Team, within 10 school days of the receipt of the Stage 2 response. This request must outline the reasons for the escalation and the desired outcome, including why you are still dissatisfied, failure to do this may result in the Trust being unable to progress to Stage 3.
- 2.4.3 The Data Protection and Complaints Team will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (via email) within 5 school days.
- 2.4.4 Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.
- 2.4.5 The Data Protection and Complaints Team will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the

Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Data Protection and Complaints Team will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

- 2.4.6 If the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates, without good reason, the trust 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.
- 2.4.7 The complainant may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Legal representation is not permitted.
- 2.4.8 Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- 2.4.9 At least 10 school days before the meeting, the Data Protection and Complaints Team will:
- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
  - request copies of any further written material to be submitted at least 5 school days before the meeting.
- 2.4.10 Any written material will be circulated to all parties 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The panel will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.
- 2.4.11 The panel will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.
- 2.4.12 The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.
- 2.4.13 The panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The panel can:
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
  - dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- 2.4.14 Whether or not the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the panel can still:
- 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.
- 2.4.15 The Chair of the Panel will provide the complainant and Ormiston Academies Trust with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days.

- 2.4.16 The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Ormiston Academies Trust.
- 2.4.17 If a panel member is unable to attend, the Chair will appoint a replacement or postpone the meeting.
- 2.4.18 We will make reasonable adjustments to enable you to take part — for example providing information in alternative formats, additional breaks, or accepting written submissions in lieu of attendance. Let the Data Protection and Complaints Team know in advance if you need adjustments.
- 2.4.19 You can choose to make written submissions instead of attending the meeting. Let the Data Protection and Complaints Team know in advance.
- 2.4.20 The Chair runs the hearing to a standard running order: the complainant explains their reasons; panel members ask questions; the complainant sums up; the investigating officer explains the school's actions and calls any witnesses; further questions follow; the investigating officer sums up; and the panel withdraws to consider its decision in private. The Clerk keeps a record.
- 2.4.21 In reaching a decision the panel weighs up: the evidence from the school and the complainant; the relevant school policies and procedures, and whether they were followed; any areas of agreement, or any misunderstandings that can be put right; and what action the school may need to take, including any recommended changes to systems or procedures.
- 2.4.22 The Chair will run the meeting in an informal, non-adversarial way. We will put complainants at ease — especially anyone who is not used to a panel setting, or who is a child or young person — and explain what the panel can and cannot do.
- 2.4.23 If a child or young person is the complainant, or attends to support a complaint, we will ask in advance what support they need to take part. This could include being interviewed/questioned separately to the proceedings. The panel will give their views equal weight to those of adults. The welfare of the child or young person is paramount.

## 2.5 After Stage 3

- 2.5.1 The decision of the Complaints Panel is final and will not be re-investigated by the Trust. If you believe we have not followed this procedure or have not complied with our legal obligations, you can ask the Department for Education to consider your concerns — see section 1.8.

## 3. Unreasonable behaviour by complainants

- 3.1 We are committed to handling every complaint fairly, and we won't normally limit how often or how much you can contact us. However we will not ask our staff to put up with behaviour that is abusive, offensive or threatening. If that happens, we may not be able to take a complaint any further until the behaviour changes.

- 3.2 We consider behaviour unreasonable when the way you contact us — how often or how — obstructs us from looking into your complaint. Examples of unreasonable behaviour include if you:
- refuse to articulate the complaint clearly, or to co-operate with the investigation process, despite offers of assistance
  - refuse to accept that certain issues are outside the scope of the procedure, or insist the complaint be handled in ways incompatible with this procedure
  - repeatedly make the same complaint, or refuse to accept the findings of an investigation that has been fully and properly completed (including any referral to the Department for Education)
  - change the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
  - introduce trivial or irrelevant material, or raise large numbers of unimportant questions and insist on immediate answers to their own timescales
  - make unjustified complaints about staff dealing with the matter, or seek their replacement
  - seek an unrealistic outcome, or make excessive demands on school time through frequent, lengthy contact in person, in writing, by email or by telephone
  - threaten legal action or demand cash compensation in an attempt to influence the handling or outcome of the complaint
  - comment unreasonably or publish unacceptable information about the complaint on social media or other public platforms
  - use threats, intimidation, abusive, offensive or discriminatory language, or violence
  - knowingly provide false information, or stalk or harass members of staff
  - record meetings or telephone calls covertly
  - refuse to engage with the named contact, or approach multiple staff or governors to circumvent the procedure
  - persist in pursuing the same complaint after our procedure has been exhausted
  - behave in any other way, or make any other demand or request, that is manifestly unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
- 3.3 While we are looking into your complaint, please keep your contact with us proportionate. Repeated calls, emails or letters about the same point slow us down and can delay the outcome.
- 3.4 As a first step, if unreasonable behaviour arises we will usually have an informal conversation — explaining what the issue is and asking for the behaviour to change before we take any formal action.
- 3.5 If the behaviour continues, the principal or the Data Protection and Complaints team will write to the complainant to confirm that the behaviour is unreasonable and ask for it to change. Where contact has become excessive or disruptive, we may also agree a communication plan — for example setting out who to contact and how often. We will review the plan after six months.
- 3.6 For serious incidents — including aggression, violence, stalking or harassment — we will report the matter to the police straight away and confirm our actions in writing. We may also bar the person from our premises and from contacting our staff directly.
- 3.7 Where any of the behaviour in this section applies, we may decide not to take the complaint or concern any further. We will write to confirm this and to set out the reasons. If you believe we have not followed this procedure, you can ask the Department for Education to look at how we handled the matter (see section 1.8).

## 4. Non-parental complaints

### 4.1 Stage one

- 4.1.1 Where a concern or complaint has been brought to the attention of / identified by a staff member in person then they will address the issue on the spot, where appropriate. If the complaint has been raised over the phone or in writing the complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate person to handle the complaint (for example, the Academy complaints coordinator). It may be necessary for the academy to request that a complaint form be completed to aid the understanding of the complaint.
- 4.1.2 If it is a minor complaint, then this will be dealt with by the Academy complaints coordinator and / or another relevant member of staff. A full response will be provided within ten academy days. This may be a written response or can involve a meeting with a staff member.
- 4.1.3 All documents relied upon for this stage of the complaint (including the complaint form and outcome) will be retained on the complaint file. If the complaint is closed at this stage, the complaint log should be updated.
- 4.1.4 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the academy's response, then they are able to progress the complaint to stage two.

### 4.2 Stage two

- 4.2.1 All complaints at this stage must be received in writing unless reasonable adjustments are required within 4 academy weeks of a response at stage one. Stage two complaints can be made in the following ways:
- Completing a complaint form – available from Appendix 1 of this policy
  - By email to [insert academy email address] – to help us identify that it is a complaint then please put 'complaint' in the subject heading in writing to [insert academy address including who it should be addressed to]
  - By phone or in person – only where a reasonable adjustment to handle the complaint over the phone or in person has been made. If reasonable adjustments require the complaint to be made verbally then a written record of what the complaint is regarding should be recorded during the phone call / meeting and sent to the complainant.
- 4.2.2 The complaint will be investigated by the principal. Where the complaint is about the principal the complaint will be investigated by the Education Director. This will be decided within five academy days and an acknowledgement of the complaint will be sent to the complainant confirming who will be investigating the complaint and the timescales required to investigate and resolve the complaint (if different from those set out below).
- 4.2.3 The investigator may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. The response should be received in writing within four academy weeks of the date of the acknowledgement letter where possible. Any delay in the investigation will be communicated to the complainant at the earliest opportunity. The decision of the principal or Education Director at this stage is final.

- 4.2.4 All documents relied upon for this stage of the complaint will be retained on the complaint file.

## 5. Complaints about Ormiston Academies Trust

- 5.1 There may be times when a complaint is received that is regarding the actions of the Academy Trust head office staff member. In these instances, the procedures for dealing with such complaints differ from those regarding academies.
- 5.2 The process for complaining about OAT follows two stages. Complaints to OAT are likely to be in relation to the work that OAT does or the actions of its employees. Again, it is a precondition of the complaints procedure that reasonable attempts should be made to resolve issues on an informal basis (at stage one) and the Chief Executive Officer of OAT shall have the discretion, to be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

### 5.3 Stage one – informal

- 5.3.1 Informal concerns can be made over the phone, by email or post. Concerns should be raised directly with the staff member that they involve. If your concerns are not able to be resolved directly with the staff member involved, then you should follow the process detailed in stage two.

### 5.4 Stage two – formal

- 5.4.1 A complaint should be made in writing to OAT's Data Protection and Complaints Team.
- 5.4.2 The complaint will be dealt with by the line manager of the person who the complaint involves and / or OAT's Data Protection and Complaints Team. Where the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, a full response will be provided within ten academy days.

### 5.5 Stage three – review

- 5.5.1 The final stage is for the complaint to be reviewed by a member of the National Leadership Group. It is the responsibility of the complainant to request a review within four academy weeks of receiving a response at stage one.
- 5.5.2 To request a review, you should write to OAT's Data Protection and Complaints Team detailing why you remain unhappy with the stage two response. This request will be acknowledged within five working days. The Data Protection and Complaints Team will pass this on for review. They will remain your main point of contact at this stage.
- 5.5.3 The task of collating the information may be delegated to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. A full and final response to your complaint will be communicated in writing within two academy weeks of the complaint being allocated to a member of the National Leadership Group.

### 5.6 Complaint about the CEO

- 5.6.1 In the event of a complaint in respect of the CEO, the following modifications to the procedures apply:

- Stage two - a formal complaint should be submitted to the Chair of the Board of Trustees using the email address [complaints@ormistonacademies.co.uk](mailto:complaints@ormistonacademies.co.uk) . The Chair will either investigate the matter or nominate another trustee to investigate the complaint.
- Stage three – The stage three investigation will be completed by a trustee who has not previously been involved in this complaint. A full and final response to your complaint will be communicated in writing within two academy weeks of the complaint being allocated to an Investigating Officer.

## 6. Complaints Form

- 6.1 If you are unable to access the form or would prefer a Microsoft Word version, please contact the school office or the Data Protection and Complaints Team.

## 7. Retention

- 7.1 All records relating to complaints will be confidential. They will be retained securely for a period 6 years after the close of the complaint.

## Appendix 1 - Complaint form

If you wish to make a written complaint, please either email [dlovell@omera.co.uk](mailto:dlovell@omera.co.uk) or complete the areas below and email to [complaints@ormistonacademies.co.uk](mailto:complaints@ormistonacademies.co.uk)

Please ensure you include the following information:

**Your name:**

**Student's name, academy and form:**

**Your relationship to the student:**

**Address and postcode:**

**Telephone number(s):**

**Please give details of your complaint:**

**What actions have you taken to resolve the complaint? Who did you talk to? What was the response?**

**What actions do you feel will resolve the complaint at this stage?**

Once completed the Data Protection and Complaints Team will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.