



Hove Park School Complaints Policy and Procedures

Date Ratified	Frequency of Review	Next Review Date
18.07.16	Every two years	Autumn Term 2018
Staff Link	Committee	
Jim Roberts	Full governing body	

A) Policy Context and Scope

1. Hove Park School's complaints procedure, as detailed here, meets the requirements laid down under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002.
2. In order to reduce the incidence of formal complaints this procedure includes procedures and guidelines for effective handling of concerns expressed by parents/carers
3. The procedure is designed to support the school's belief that concerns are often best addressed by the members of staff most directly involved in the issue.
4. The procedure is based on the assumption that at all stages described in the procedure, the best outcome to a concern that has been raised is agreement secured through a restorative approach.
5. Unless and student is aged 18 or over, formal complaints originated by a student should be made by a parent or carer on behalf of the student.
6. Staff grievance or disciplinary procedures are not within the scope of this policy.
7. The school may also deem it appropriate to address some concerns or complaints additionally through the school's safeguarding policy.
8. Third party providers offering community facilities or services through the school premises, or using school facilities, will have their own complaints procedures. Other school relevant policies, contracts and agreements will include the requirement for such organisations to have a complaints procedure.

B) Concerns and Complaints Process Stage

1. Concerns expressed, issues raised or problems identified by a parent/carers to a member of staff will be dealt with according to the steps shown below in 'Procedure for Handling Concerns' and following the advice given below as 'Handling Concerns – Guidelines for Staff'.
 - a. Where the member of staff dealing with any concerns, issues or problems under this procedure considers them to be significant and in need of wider review they will forward details to either their line manager or the Complaints Co-ordinator.
 - b. A concern not satisfactorily resolved by this process may be lodged as a formal complaint to the headteacher, who will determine whether the concern had yet been adequately pursued through the earlier stages.
2. A formal complaint to the headteacher must be made using the 'Hove Park School Formal Complaint Form' below. Such complaints will be dealt with according to the steps shown below in 'Procedure for Handling Formal Complaints to Headteacher' and 'Handling a Formal Complaint to the Headteacher – Guidelines'.
 - a. A concern not satisfactorily resolved by this process may be lodged as a formal complaint to the governing body.
 - b. A complaint about the headteacher must be lodged as a formal complaint to the governing body.
3. A formal complaint to the governing body must be made using the 'Hove Park School Formal Complaint Form' below. Such complaints will be dealt with according to the steps shown below in 'Procedure for Handling Formal Complaints to governing body' and 'Handling a Formal Complaint to the governing body – Guidelines'.
4. A concern not satisfactorily resolved by this process may be lodged as a formal complaint to Brighton & Hove City Council and, if still not resolved, to the Secretary of State for Education.

C) Accelerating the Escalation of a Complaint

On occasion, it might be appropriate for a concern to be escalated to a higher stage more quickly than the timescales otherwise indicated within the process

Criteria for accelerating escalation include:

1. If stage one has already been followed and the concern regards the actions of a member of staff whose position in the school hierarchy requires the process to be escalated to ensure that a more senior colleague investigates the issue.
2. The concern raises safeguarding issues that suggest the possibility of significant harm to a child and there is substantial cause to believe that the most effective way for the issue to be resolved is through accelerated escalation.
3. The concern raises academic issues that need speedy resolution either due to external timescales such as exam dates or because of significant detriment to the academic progress of a child and there is substantial cause to believe that the most effective way for the issue to be resolved is through accelerated escalation.
4. The concern raises disciplinary issues that meet the threshold for an investigation as defined in the staff disciplinary policy.

The decision as to whether it is necessary to accelerate escalation lies with the complaints coordinator and the headteacher (refer above to the procedure if the complaint is about the headteacher).

D) Complaints Co-ordinator

1. The Complaints Co-ordinator is responsible for keeping records of complaints and for providing an impartial service to those wishing to make a formal complaint.
2. The CC is not responsible for resolving concerns or complaints.
3. The headteacher will allocate this role to a member of staff with sufficient seniority and appropriate skills.

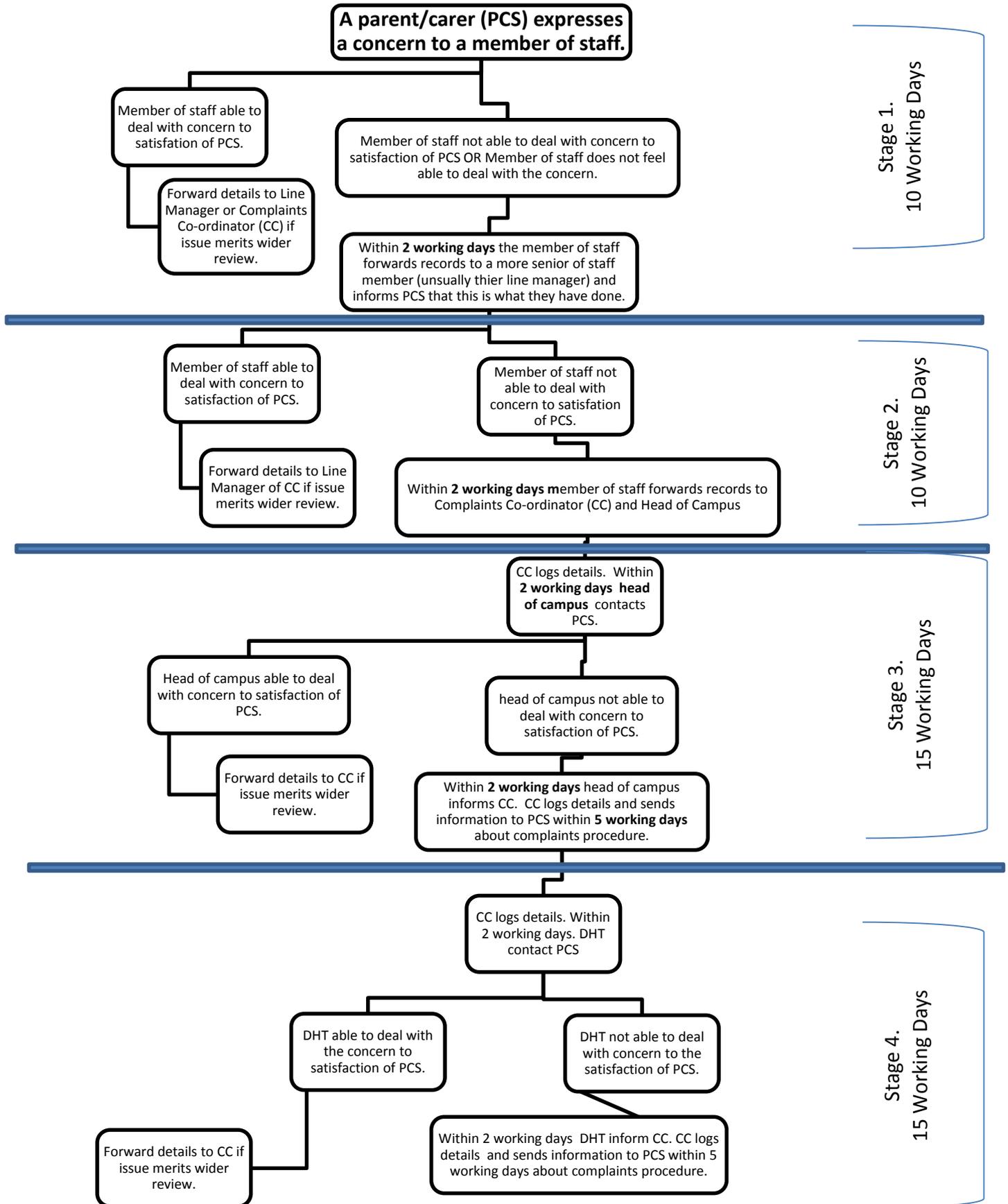
E) Concerns and Complaints Recording & Review

1. The governing body will review annually the records made by the Complaints Co-ordinator covering both formal complaints and concerns meriting review.
2. It is important for all staff at all stages of the procedure to understand and act on the importance of good record keeping procedures.

F) Publishing of Policy & Procedures for Concerns and Complaints

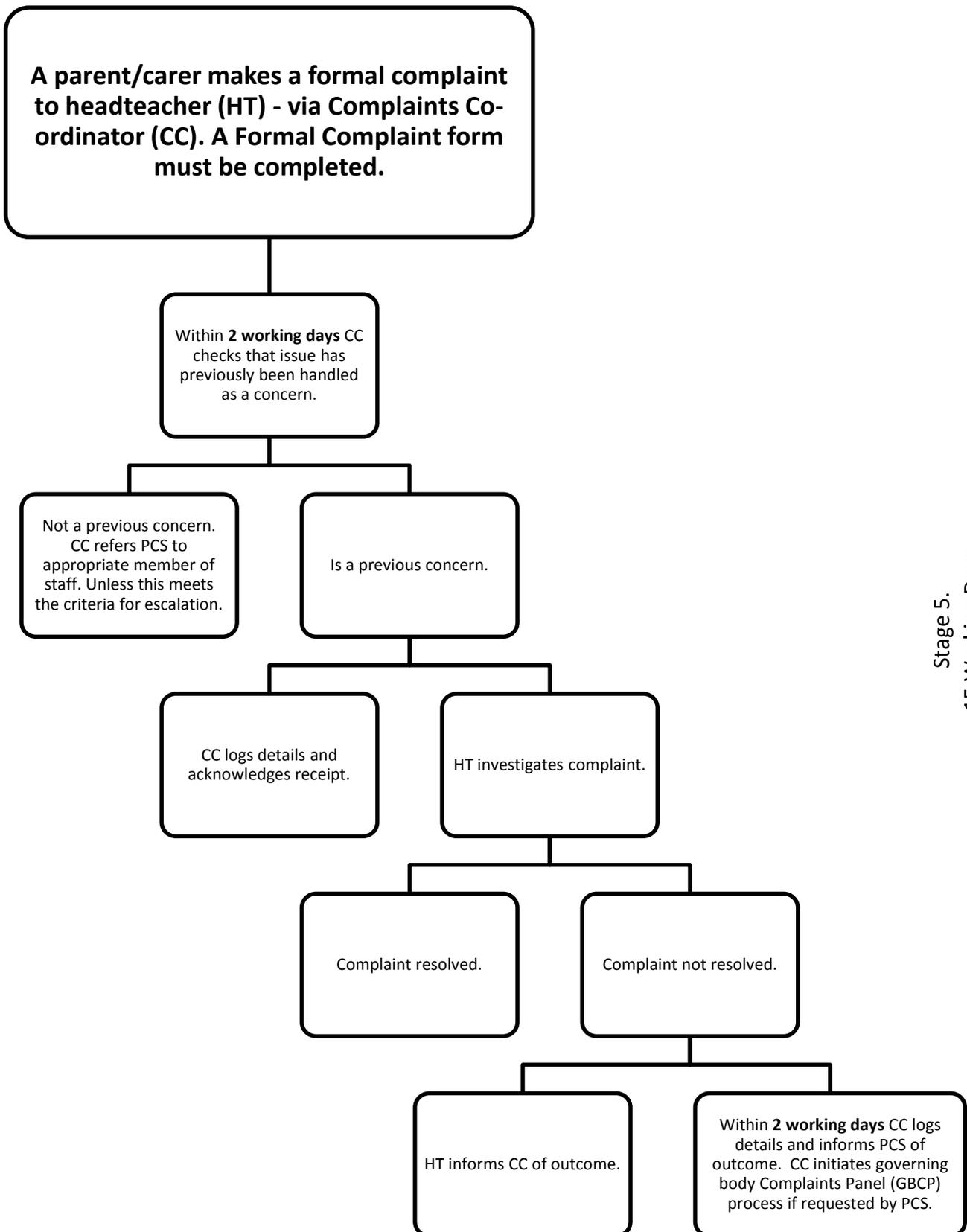
1. This procedure and associated procedures and guidelines will be published on the school's website and will be available on request from the school.
2. The school website and extranet will also provide information for parents/carers and students about who to contact with specific, commonly-occurring concerns, issues or problems that are not complaints. As a minimum these will include:
 - a. Bullying
 - b. Friendship/peer-group difficulties
 - c. General learning/progress issues
 - d. Subject-specific learning/progress/relationships issues
3. The school website will publicise an email contact specifically for complaints.

G) Hove Park School – Procedure for Handling Concerns



H) Hove Park School – Procedure for Handling Formal Complaints to headteacher

In the majority of cases this process will follow on from the process for handling concerns.



Stage 5.
15 Working Days

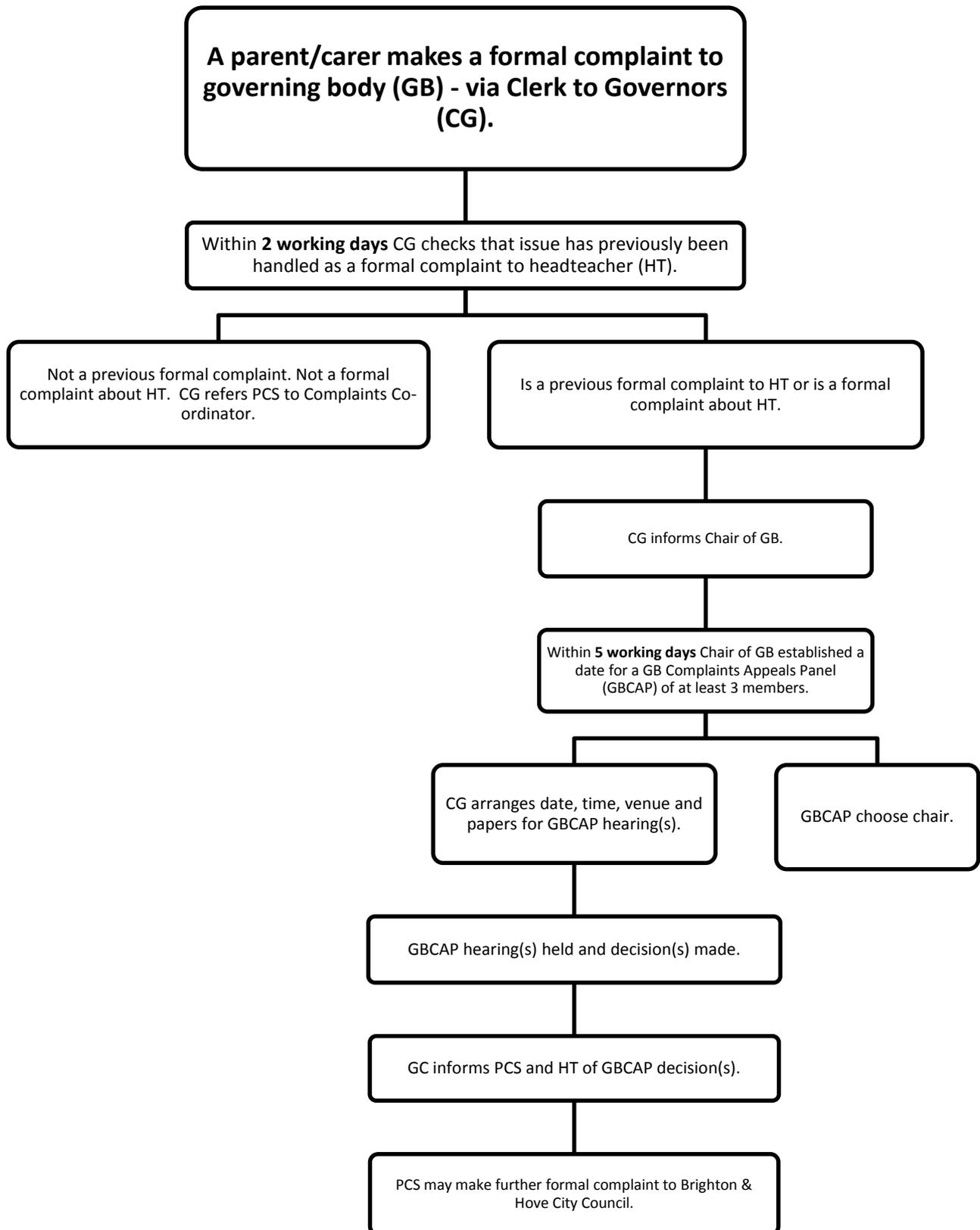
I) Chair of Governors

The Chair of Governors or a delegated governor investigates the concern again.
Actions to include: meeting with parent/carer again (with or without school staff),
looking at the previous evidence and talking with other involved parties.
Outcomes include: upholding previous management decisions, facilitating a
restorative meeting or referring the complaint to stage 7 (the final stage).

Stage 6.
15 Working Days

J) Hove Park School – Procedure for Handling Formal Complaints to governing body

Unless the formal complaint is about the headteacher this procedure will follow on from the procedure for handling formal complaint to the headteacher.



Stage 7.
15 Working Days

K) Handling Concerns – Guidelines for Staff

1. Take all concerns seriously, whether expressed in writing, over the phone or in a meeting.
2. Keep a written record of any concern and your actions (as per school policy for keeping records).
3. If you are not able to deal with the concern for any reason pass it to someone who can as soon as possible.
4. Agreeing to differ, apologising, explaining how a set of circumstances arose and demonstrating that the situation will not be repeated are all valid ways of resolving a concern.
5. Do not take an adversarial or defensive approach.
6. If dealing with the concern is going to take a long time keep the person concerned informed about progress made and actions taken.
7. A concern is only satisfactorily resolved if the person expressing the concern deems it to be so.
8. If you feel that the issue you have dealt with merits wider review, forward details to the Complaints Co-ordinator.

L) Handling a Formal Complaint to the Headteacher – Guidelines

1. Establish what has happened and who has been involved.
2. Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved. This can be done in a meeting with the complainant or through telephone contact. Asking the complainant what would make things right is a way of clarifying what the complainant feels.
3. Interview all concerned with the issue allowing those being interviewed to be accompanied if they wish. Make notes of interviews and conduct them with an open mind. Provide interviewees with a copy of the notes in order to verify them and confirm their accuracy.
4. Complaints should be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible using a full range of responses. In this context, an admission by the school that a situation could have been handled better is not the same as an admission of negligence.
5. Realistic timescales should be set for each stage of the procedure. Where further information is needed the timescales must be reset and the complainant given an explanation for the delay.
6. Ensure that records of the investigation and outcome are forwarded to the CC.

M) Handling a Formal Complaint to the Governing Body – Guidelines

1. At stage 7, GB nominate a number of members with delegated powers to hear complaints. These delegated powers are:
 - a. Hearing complaints appeals
 - b. Making recommendations on policy as a result of complaints
2. The minimum size of a GBCAP is 3 members.
3. The members of the GBCAP for a particular complaint must not have had any prior involvement with the complaint or the circumstances surrounding it.
4. The GBCAP for a particular appeal will choose which member of the panel is chair. The panel chair is responsible for the overall conduct of the hearing process.
5. The CG is responsible for the administration of the hearing process.
6. The purpose of the hearing is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.
7. The hearing must be independent and impartial.

8. The headteacher attends the hearing.
9. An adult complainant may be accompanied at the hearing by prior arrangement with the chair of the GBCAP.
10. A student complainant must be accompanied at the hearing by a parent/carer.
11. The recommended hearing process is:
 - a. Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
 - b. After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
 - c. The headteacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
 - d. The headteacher is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
 - e. The complainant may question both the headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken.
 - f. The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
 - g. The head teacher is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
 - h. Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
 - i. The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel, in writing, within a set time scale.
12. The GBCAP can:
 - a. Dismiss a complaint in whole or in part.
 - b. Uphold a complaint in whole or in part.
 - c. Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
 - d. Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
13. Where any part of a complaint is dismissed the CG must give the complainant information about any further rights of appeal, including how to do this.

HOVE PARK SCHOOL FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

Use this form to make a FORMAL COMPLAINT to the headteacher or to the governing body. You can ask for help to complete this form from the school's Complaints Co-ordinator. The completed form should be returned to: Complaints Co-ordinator, Hove Park School & 6th Form Centre, Nevill Road, Hove, BN3 7BN. You will be told that your form has been received. Please contact the school if you do not hear from us within 2 weeks of posting or delivering this form.

HOVE PARK SCHOOL FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM		
Use this form to make a FORMAL COMPLAINT to the headteacher or to the governing body. You can ask for help to complete this form from the school's Complaints Co-ordinator. The completed form should be returned to: Complaints Co-ordinator, Hove Park School & 6 th Form Centre, Nevill Road, Hove, BN3 7BN. You will be told that your form has been received. Please contact the school if you do not hear from us within 2 weeks of posting or delivering this form.		
Your name:	Your relationship to the student:	
Student's name:		
Your address:	Your email address:	
Do you want us to write to you by email?		
Daytime Contact Phone Number(s):	Evening Contact Phone Number(s):	
When is it best for us to phone you?		
Please give details of your complaint:		
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you contact? How? When? What was the response?)		
What action do you feel might resolve the complaint at this stage?		
Are you attaching any paper work? If so please give details.		
Signature:	Date:	
Official use		
Date form received:	Complaint referred to* and date:	Date form acknowledged:
		(include * in letter)