

Model Parental Complaints Stage 3 Decision Template

There is no prescribed format for a Stage 3 Panel decision. Whilst this template is intended to include the main points a Stage 3 decision letter should include, it will need to be tailored to the specific circumstances of the complaint.

Schools should consult their complaints procedure for any other requirements for a decision letter including content and timescales for sending to parents.

This is one of several documents on parental complaints, the others are:

- [Model Complaints Procedure](#)
- [Model Complaints Form for parents](#) (to be used to submit a Stage 2 Complaint)
- *Parental Complaints Stage 2: Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions* (tbc)
- *Parental Complaint Stage 2: Decision Letter Template Structure* (tbc)
- [Parental Complaints Stage 3 Panel: Frequently Asked Questions](#), and
- [Model Parental Complaints Stage 3 Panel Hearing Process](#)

In relation to this decision letter template structure, the document *Parental Complaints Stage 3: Frequently Asked Questions* is particularly relevant, and we encourage schools to read these documents together.

This guidance has been cross-referenced with the above documents, but schools should ensure that it is consistent with their Complaints Procedure and communications between the school and parents.

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Stage 3 Decision Letter Template Structure

Introduction	Set out that you are writing in line with Complaints Procedure to inform parents of the Stage 3 panel decision.
	Set out composition of Panel. This should be in line with the school's Complaint Procedure and usually consists of two governors with no prior knowledge of or involvement in the matter, as well as an independent member, who also had no prior knowledge and is separate from the day-to-day-management and running of the school.
	Give a summary of the subject matter of the complaint and thank the parents for the efforts made to date to explain their complaint.
Procedural matters	Set out the chronology of the steps taken by the school to investigate the complaint, as relevant:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dates of Stage 1/informal complaint; • dates of Stage 2/formal complaint; and • date on which Stage 3 complaint was submitted.
	Give details of any further investigation carried out/requested by the Panel after the Stage 3 complaint was submitted (i.e. any further meetings with relevant members of staff).
	Set out the date of the Stage 3 Panel hearing and a list of attendees and roles (noting whether they were present for all or part of the hearing), including the parents' companion if applicable.
	Note that a bundle of papers was circulated before the hearing, and provide the date(s) this happened. Set out details of any further papers considered including the date(s) any parental submissions / evidence were received.
	Provide a copy of the minutes of the Stage 3 Panel hearing and confirm who prepared them. Ideally notes should be shared with the parties prior to any decision being issued to provide an opportunity for any further comments / queries on the accuracy of the notes to be taken into account by the Panel.
	Remind parents that at the centre of deliberations has been the education, safety and well-being of the pupil.
Findings	Set out each of the grounds of complaint.
	Set out the Panel's finding in relation to each ground of complaint, i.e. whether each ground is upheld/partially upheld or dismissed/partially dismissed. It will usually be appropriate to give reasons.
	Set out any recommendations made by the Panel.
Conclusion	Thank the parents for bringing this matter to the Panel's attention and for attending the hearing.
	Note that the decision of the Panel is final and there is no further right of appeal. Consider including wording on Alternative Dispute Resolution (please refer to the notes accompanying the Model Complaints Procedure for suggested wording).
	Remind parents of the confidential nature of the complaint proceedings. Confirm that parents should dispose of any documents provided as part of the panel hearing and offer to dispose securely of the papers.
	Wish the parents and pupil all the best for the future and express hope that the issues raised are now resolved.

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