

## **PARENTAL COMPLAINT STAGE 2: DECISION LETTER TEMPLATE STRUCTURE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

IAPS and ISBA have worked in conjunction with HCR Law on this decision letter template structure for Stage 2 parental complaints.

There is no prescribed format for a Stage 2 decision. Whilst this template covers the main points a Stage 2 decision letter should include it will need to be tailored to the specific circumstances of the complaint. We anticipate that this letter will typically be written by the Head, however there are circumstances when the Stage 2 decision-maker may need to be someone else, including when the complaint is against the Head. Schools should consult their complaints procedure for more on this and 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 (which may be used to submit a Stage 2 Complaint)
- Parental Complaints Stage 2: Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions
- Parental Complaints Stage 3 Panel: Frequently Asked Questions
- Model Parental Complaints Stage 3 Panel Hearing Process, and
- Parental Complaint Stage 3 Decision Letter Template.

In relation to this decision letter template structure, the document *Parental Complaints Stage 2: Guidance and 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.

**HCR Law, August 2025**

## **STAGE 2 DECISION LETTER TEMPLATE STRUCTURE**

<b>Heading</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<p>Set out that you are writing in line with the school's complaints procedure to inform parents of the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation.</p>
	<p>Set out background to complaint, including relevant dates and any steps taken at Stage 1.</p>
	<p>Thank parents for efforts made to date to explain their complaint.</p>
	<p>Confirm any meetings held with parents at Stage 2 are in line with the complaints procedure.</p>
<b>Procedural matters</b>	<p>Confirm steps the school has taken as part of the Stage 2 investigation, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Consideration of the complaint letter or completed complaints form</li> <li>b) Review of all the relevant documents and reports provided by the parents</li> <li>c) Review of relevant internal school policies and procedures (including content on the school's website as appropriate)</li> <li>d) Review of any documents and reports provided by the school covering the issues raised and processes followed including any informal/Stage 1 review</li> <li>e) Meetings with relevant members of staff (or pupils)</li> <li>f) Review of any representations by the parents at the Stage 2 meeting, and</li> <li>g) Review of any further information / statements as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>If any information is provided by the parents at a late stage or past a stated deadline, it would be helpful to include the date this information was received.</p>
	<p>If appropriate, acknowledge any delay in the Stage 2 process to date and give reasons for this. Refer to any updates given to the parents in this regard.</p>
	<p>Confirm that as part of the complaints process the decision-maker has established the facts on the basis that they consider a given fact to be more likely to be true than not.</p>
	<p>Remind parents that at the centre of deliberations has been the education, safety and well-being of the pupil.</p>
<b>Grounds of complaint and findings</b>	<p>Summarise each ground of the complaint in turn, explaining the decision-maker's understanding of it. This is particularly important if the parent's complaint does not clearly define separate grounds of complaint.</p> <p>If the complaint is wide-ranging and grounds of complaint have been grouped together, explain that the decision-maker has used their discretion to do so.</p>

	<p>Set out any findings and decision in relation to each ground. This may include reference to consideration of any relevant evidence.</p>
	<p>Confirm whether each ground of the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.</p>
	<p>Where grounds of complaint are upheld or partially upheld, set out any proposed resolution.</p> <p>Where complaints are not upheld, there may still be some learning points which can be broadly acknowledged possibly in the form of actions and a time frame if appropriate.</p>
<b>Conclusion and right to appeal</b>	<p>Confirm that it is hoped that this decision draws the matter to a close.</p> <p>If appropriate, recognise that this has been a difficult time and offer support to pupil and/or family.</p>
	<p>Advise that, if dissatisfied with the findings, they have the right to proceed to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure and set out how this must be done (in line with the same procedure), i.e. who they must write to, their contact details and a date by when this must be received.</p>
	<p>Confirm that, if requested, a Stage 3 Panel hearing will be held, and that the Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.</p>
	<p>Provide parents with a (further) copy of the complaints procedure or refer them to the school's website where it can be found.</p>
	<p>Remind parents of the confidential nature of the complaint procedure. Confirm that parents should dispose of any documents provided as part of the Stage 2 process and offer to dispose of the papers securely.</p>
	<p>Thank the parents for bringing the matters to your attention and add any final remarks to end the letter in a cordial manner.</p>