Flow chart – guidance on making a complaint against a school

You should initially make a complaint directly to the school (including a Free School or an academy) by following their complaints procedure.

If due to circumstances you are unable to follow the school's own process it may be appropriate to direct your complaint to us. We still may advise you to contact the school or governors first.

If you have exhausted the school's own complaints process, you may forward your complaint to DfE addressing your complaint to the Secretary of State. Please include all relevant documentation including correspondence.

Complaints that raise child protection concerns will be reviewed **within 24 hours** of receipt, even if you have not gone through the school's own process first.

We will acknowledge that we have received your complaint within **five working days.**

With your permission we will forward your complaint to the person or relevant body if your complaint cannot be dealt with by us.
If we are unable to pass your complaint on to another organisation, we will advise you of this.

The Department will consider whether your complaint is covered by the relevant sections of the Education Acts, and confirm whether we will intervene.

We will aim to provide a decision regarding your complaint in **15 working days** of receiving all relevant information.

Some cases may take longer due to their complex nature and the need for input and agreement on a decision. We will inform you if this is the case.

The Department will make clear the time it will expect to take to reach a final decision on complaints once it is in receipt of all the information it needs.

The Department will notify you of the outcome of the investigation of your complaint.