

Resolutions Team Terms of Reference

Introduction

Anthem Schools Trust is committed to working collaboratively to create ambitious and successful schools where every child thrives, with teaching and learning at the heart of everything we do. Our work is grounded in improving the quality of learning and life experiences for students, particularly those facing barriers to achievement, and fostering a relational approach that promotes equity and inclusion. Our Resolution Team helps ensure we run any required hearings professionally, lawfully and in line with our values of Integrity, Collaboration and Excellence.

Resolutions Team

To support the effective governance and operation of the Trust, the Resolutions Team provides a pool of trained and available individuals who can serve on Governor Disciplinary Committees (GDCs), HR Hearings, and Complaint Panel Hearings.

Trustees have delegated responsibility for sitting on GDC panels to the Anthem Community Councils (ACCs) as outlined in the Scheme of Delegation. The ACCs sub-delegate the responsibility for sitting on GDC panels to the Resolutions Team. This Terms of Reference also sets out the ability for the Resolution Team to sit on Complaint Panel Hearings and HR Hearings.

Purpose

GDCs: The Resolutions Team is responsible for reviewing decisions made by Headteachers regarding students' suspensions and exclusions, in line with timelines set by the Department for Education (DfE)'s statutory guidance.

Complaint and HR Hearings: In addition, members may also support with stage 3 complaint reviews and sit on stage 4 complaint panels. Where appropriate, members may sit on panels reviewing HR matters such as grievances and disciplinaries.

Frequency of meetings and procedures

GDC panels will be convened by the Governance Professionals in accordance with the DfE Suspensions and Exclusions Guidelines with regard to timelines. The Governance Professionals will clerk and provide guidance to the panel.

Complaints and HR panels will be convened by the relevant complaints/HR co-ordinator.

Resolution Team members are asked to sit on a minimum of 3 panels a year.

Membership

The Resolutions Team is comprised of nominated members who are trained and supported to sit on these panels. This includes:

- Volunteering Anthem Community Council members (ACC members) and Trustees;
- Anthem Directors of education,, Headteachers, Deputy and Associate Headteachers, Heads of Schools and members of the national team.
- External individuals who have specifically volunteered for the Resolutions Team.

Training and support

All Resolution Team members will receive training in complaints and exclusions in advance of being asked to sit on formal panel hearings. Thereafter, they will receive refresher training at least every 2 years. In the interim, they will receive updates on any changes to legislation, guidance or best practice, as and when needed.

Role in GDCs

In accordance with the national guidance on exclusions and the trust's Behaviour and Ethos Policy and Exclusions Policy, the main responsibilities of the Resolutions Team members as they convene each individual review panel are as follows:

- Review the decision and evidence base provided by the Headteacher as to the rationale for exclusion, considering whether the exclusion is lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate. Headteachers must demonstrate that the decision to exclude is not discriminatory and/or fails to address any underlying reasons for the behaviour exhibited, including additional support that could be given for any special needs which the student may have.
- Review and hear contributions from parents/carers and other relevant stakeholders, including written submissions from parents/carers as submitted.
- Consider whether the student should be reinstated, taking into account the interests and circumstances of the excluded student, including the circumstances in which the student was excluded, and with regard to the interests of other students and people working at the school.

Role in Complaints

In accordance with the School's Concerns and Complaints Policy and Anthem Complaints Policy, Resolutions Team members may support with Stage 3 complaints and sit on Stage 4 complaint panels. Their main responsibilities are as follows:

- Determine whether or not the complaint has merit; and
- Recommend changes to the school's or trust's systems or procedures, where appropriate, to ensure that issues of a similar nature do not recur.

Reporting

Minutes will be taken at each formal panel meeting, shared as required and retained in line with the Retaining Records policy.

Renewal

These terms of reference were approved by Trustees on XXX and will be reviewed every two years.