



Complaints Procedure

Document produced by Donna Lodge

Date: July 2012

Adopted by the Governing Body: August 2103

Reviewed and adopted by the Governing Body: 21 May 2013

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

The Da Vinci Studio School is keen to offer the best possible service to all students, parents, employers, visitors and members of the community. We encourage open discussion and feedback but if any member of the Studio School community has a concern or complaint, then we will adopt a restorative approach to resolve the issue.

Phase 1 – Dealing with Concerns

It is recognised that many concerns and issues will be raised informally, and, hopefully, promptly and can be reported to pastoral or learning coaches who may be able to resolve the issue immediately. If this is not possible, however, the member of staff will assist the person who expresses a concern (the complainant) by completing a form to register the concern.

The School's aim is to resolve informal issues and concerns quickly and effectively, with the aim of reaching a satisfactory solution for all involved. If this cannot be achieved at this first level, the complainant has the right to take the concern to the next level and discuss the issue with a lead learning coach. If resolution is still not achieved, the matter will be investigated by the Vice Principal. Informal discussions can usually result in a satisfactory outcome and we always aim to deal with concerns within a one week turn around, however, if the concern can't be resolved informally, it may need to be escalated to a formal level.

It should be understood that these Complaints Procedures are not competent to deal with issues that should be resolved within the framework of Grievance or Disciplinary Procedures.

Phase 2 - Making a formal complaint

To pursue the concern further, a formal complaint form needs to be completed.

Definition

The School has defined a formal complaint as '**any expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response, which has not yet been satisfactorily resolved**'. This definition will apply consistently across all curriculum and functional areas.

Note: Complaints concerning assessment and accreditation are dealt with through appeals procedures set up with Awarding/Validating Bodies. Complaints from contractors will be dealt with as appropriate under the relevant contract terms.

Lodging a Complaint

If an individual remains dissatisfied after exhausting Phase 1, a complaints form should be completed. This is available in the appendix to this policy, through our school website or on request from the Principal's PA. Once completed this form should be submitted to the Principal's PA.

Note: If the formal complaint is against the Principal, the form may be submitted to the Secretary to the Governing Body and the phase 3 procedure invoked immediately.
The Principal

- 1.1 The Principal should acknowledge your complaint in writing, within 5 days of receipt. In some cases the Principal will have already been involved in looking at the matter; in others it will be his/her first involvement.
- 1.2 The complainant may select a person of their choice to complain on their behalf (e.g. a friend, parent or guardian) and they may bring along a friend to any discussion. Complainants are advised to retain their own records, copies of their complaint forms and any documents which they feel substantiate their complaint.
- 1.3 The Principal may arrange a meeting to discuss your complaint further and gather any additional information. The complainant may bring a friend to this discussion.
- 1.4 If the complaint is against a member of staff the Principal should ask the Vice Principal if there is a prima facie case for the disciplinary investigation, and if there is, this should take place and the complaints process be suspended, if not, the Principal should talk to the staff member against whom the complaint has been made.
- 1.5 If necessary, the Principal should interview witnesses and take statements from those involved.
- 1.6 The Principal should keep reasonable written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.
- 1.7 Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Principal should produce a written response to you. The Principal may wish to meet with you to discuss/resolve the matter before confirming the outcome in writing.
- 1.8 The written response should include a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, it should include what action the school will take to resolve the complaint.
- 1.9 You should also be advised that if you are not satisfied with the response and wish to take the matter further, you can do so, by writing to the Secretary of the Governing Body within three weeks of receiving the outcome letter. (Phase 3).
- 1.10 Phase 2 should be completed in ten school days. However, it is recognised that this timetable is likely to prove impossible for complaints which are complex. In such cases, the Principal should write to you giving a revised target date.
- 1.11 Schools will not pay financial compensation as a response to complaints, though may spend money on a relevant educational purpose (e.g. paying a fee for a repeat examination).

Complaints against the Principal

If the complaint is wholly or mainly about the Principal the Governing Body should consider the complaint in accordance with Phase 3 of the procedure described below. However,

before Phase 3 is instigated the Chair of the Governing Body will invite the Principal to respond to the complaint in writing within ten school days. The Chair will send a copy of the Principal's response to the complainant and s/he will be asked to indicate within five school days of receipt of the response whether s/he is satisfied with the response. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response Phase 3 should commence as described below.

Phase 3 – Consideration by the Governing Body

2.1 If the complainant decides to take the matter further, he or she should write to the Secretary of the Governing Body enclosing a copy of the formal complaint form and the Principal's response, and specifying what further action or outcome is desired. The Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and should write to the complainant to acknowledge the complaint within two school days of receipt of the complaint. A copy of the acknowledgement and the complaints form should be sent to the Principal and the Clerk to the Governing Body

2.2 Investigating the complaint

2.2.1 If the complaint has been investigated at Phase 2 the result of the investigation must be made available to the Clerk/Chair by the Principal. However:

Where the complaint is against the Principal, the Secretary of the Governing Body must decide, in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Body (see 2.3 below) whether and how the complaint should be investigated. If the outcome desired is within the power of the Governing Body to procure, having regards to the authority of the Principal. If it is not, the Secretary shall so inform the complainant, with an explanation of what further avenues of appeal are open by statute,

If the Secretary is of the view that the outcome desired is within the power of the Governing Body to procure if it deems fit so to do, he will so inform the Chair of the Governing Body and the Principal and convene a hearing before an Appeals Panel. All Governors are eligible to serve on the panel except governors in the employ of the Studio School, and any governor who has a personal interest or previous involvement in the matter. One member of the Panel shall be unconnected with the School. The composition of the Panel and its Chair will be determined by the Chair of the Governing Body.

2.2.2 Where the complaint is other than against the Principal, the Secretary, in consultation with the Principal and Chair of the Governing Body must decide if the desired outcome is within the power of the Governing Body to procure, having regard to the authority of the Principal.

If the Secretary is of the view that the outcome desired is within the power of the Governing Body to procure if it deems fit so to do, he will so inform the Chair of the Governing Body and the Principal and convene a hearing before an Appeals Panel. All Governors are eligible to serve on the panel except governors in the employ of the Studio School, and any governor who has a personal interest or previous involvement in the matter. One member of the Panel shall be unconnected with the School. The composition of the Panel and its Chair will be determined by the Chair of the Governing Body. The Panel will comprise three members.

The Panel should consider the complaint initially on the basis of the written evidence and normally set up a hearing and hear both parties.

The Panel will not normally take upon themselves the role of substituting their judgement for those of the Principal on any matter which is clearly with the Principal's role to determine.

The role of the appeals panel therefore should be to satisfy itself that the person making the decision:

- Informed himself or herself correctly about the rules which governed his or her decision
- Called to his own attention all those matters he or she was bound to consider
- Excluded from his or her own attention any matter that was irrelevant
- Made a decision on the competent facts that was within the compass of decisions that a properly informed authority might take (ie was not wholly unreasonable or perverse)
- And that there was no allegation or evidence of malice or any other breach of the rules of natural justice

Only if, at the first hearing, there is a doubt about any of the above, then the original decision should be set aside and a full "de novo" hearing take place, after which the same judgement as the original judgement or a different judgement may be handed down.

If they decide to set up a hearing, the Committee should follow the procedure set out in paragraph 2.3 to 2.18 below.

- 2.3 The Secretary to the Governing Body shall Clerk the Panel
- 2.4 The Clerk will write to the complainant to explain how the review will be conducted. The letter should be copied to the Principal.
- 2.5 The Clerk will inform members of the Panel of the date of the meeting. The complainant and Principal should be invited to attend the meeting. The date and time of the meeting should be convenient to the complainant and the Principal, within reason. The notification should inform the complainant of his/her right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/representative. It should also explain how the meeting will be conducted and of the complainant's right to submit further written evidence to the Panel.
- 2.6 The Principal should also be invited to prepare a written report for the Panel in response to the complaint.
- 2.7 The Clerk will ensure that all relevant correspondence regarding the complaint is circulated to the panel members, the complainant and the Principal in advance of the meeting.

- 2.8 If the Principal and/or the complainant wish to call witnesses, the agreement of the Chair of the Panel should be obtained in advance of the meeting.
- 2.9 It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the meeting is properly conducted. However, the proceedings should be as informal as possible.
- 2.10 The aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. At the end of the meeting the Panel will decide what action to take or recommend.
- 2.11 If either party wishes to introduce previously undisclosed evidence or witnesses, it is in the interest of natural justice to adjourn the meeting so that the other side has time to respond to the new evidence. Late evidence of witnesses should not be accepted unless there is a good reason for the lateness.
- 2.12 The meeting should allow for:
- The complainant to explain his or her complaint and the Principal to explain the reasons for his or her decision;
 - The Principal to question the complainant about the complaint and the complainant to question the Principal;
 - Panel members to have an opportunity to question both the complainant and the Principal;
 - Any party to have the right to bring witnesses (subject to the approval of the Chair) and all parties having the right to question all the witnesses.
 - Final statement by the Principal and complainant.
- 2.13 The Chair of the Panel should explain to the complainant and the Principal that the Panel will consider its decision, and a written response will be sent to both parties as soon as possible. The complainant, Principal and any witnesses will then leave.
- 2.14 The Panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and reach a unanimous, or at least a majority, decision on the complaint. Where appropriate the Panel can decide on the action to be taken to resolve the complaint and/or suggest recommended changes to the school's system or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.
- 2.15 As in Section 1.10 above, Governors will not pay financial compensation as a response to a complaint, though may spend money on an appropriate educational purpose.
- 2.16 The Clerk/Chair will send a written statement outlining the decision with reasons to both the complainant and the Principal.
- 2.17 The complainant should be advised that if s/he is dissatisfied with the response s/he has the right to take the matter further by complaining to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

2.18Phase 3 should be completed in 15 school days. However, it is recognised that this timetable is likely to prove impossible for complaints which are complex. In such cases the Clerk of the Panel should write to the complainant giving a revised target date.

Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and the School observe the confidential nature of issues. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it might not be possible to maintain confidentiality and each complaint will be judged on its own merit. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant and/or their representative. In the case of students raising a complaint who are aged below 18, the School may be obliged to inform their parent/guardian.

Monitoring and reporting

An annual report will be produced to record complaints raised. The Governing Body will monitor the handling of complaints in accordance with the School's procedures.

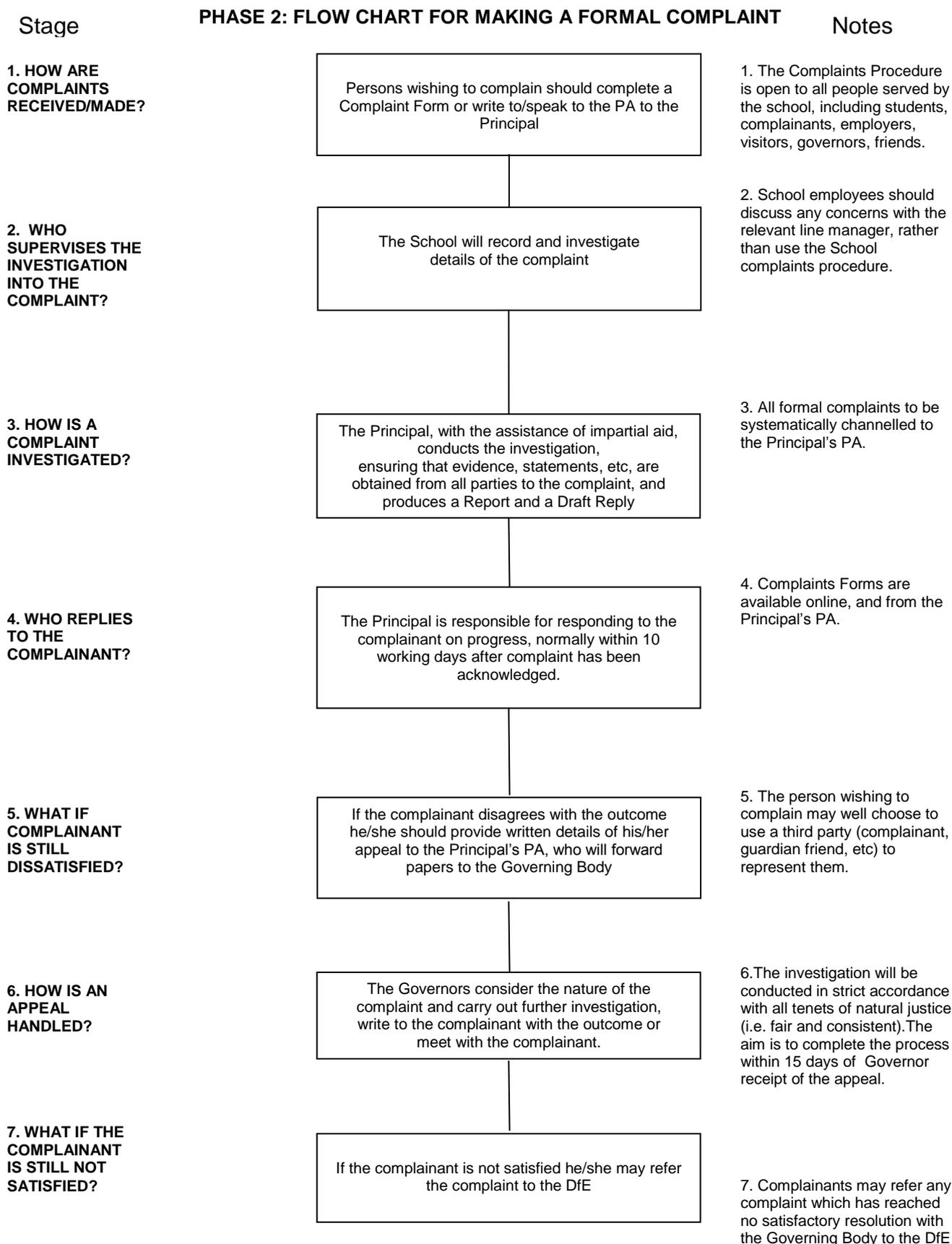
Review

The School will review the complaints procedure annually and will seek to consult with representatives of students, staff and employers. The School will measure the extent to which it is meeting its commitments through its review of complaints and outcomes of opinion surveys etc.

All complaints will be recorded, indicating whether resolved at primary stage or whether they proceeded to panel hearing.

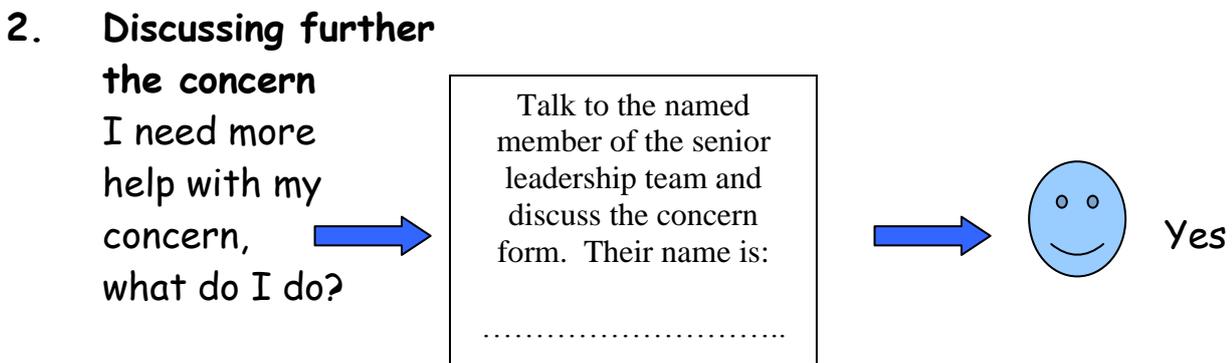
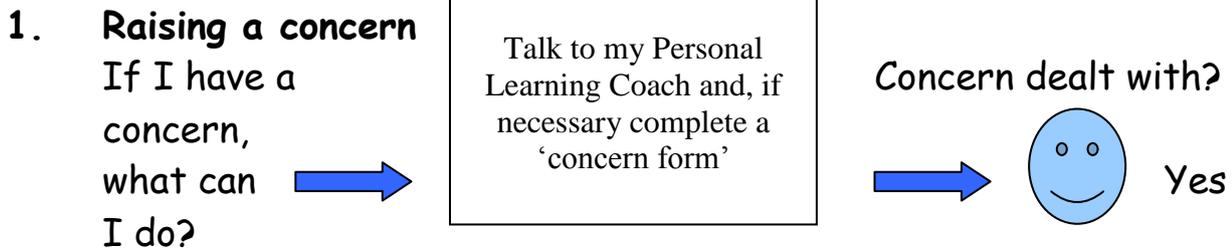
Final Complaint outside School

Following the action taken above, if the complainant still feels that the matter has not been resolved to their satisfaction and, after having exhausted Phases 2 and 3 of the School's complaints procedure, they will be advised to take their complaint to the Department for Education, or any other specific regulatory body.

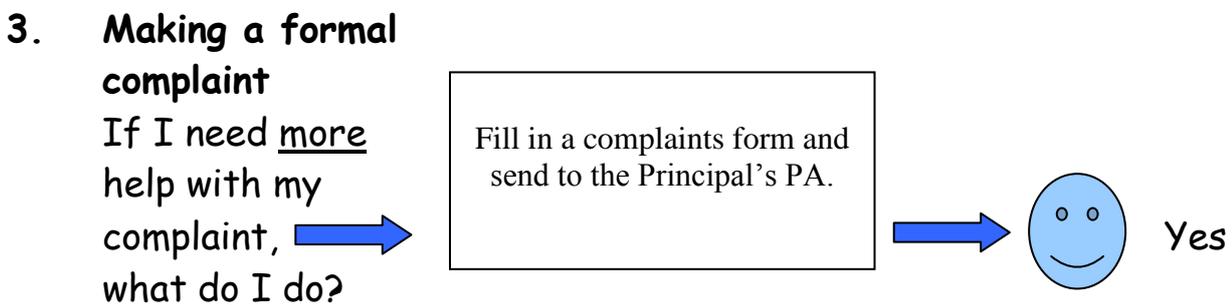


LEVEL 1 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOW CHART

INFORMAL PROCEDURE



FORMAL PROCEDURE



Remember If you want to make a complaint, try to sort it out straight away before things get any worse.



PHASE 1: CONCERNS FORM

The Da Vinci Studio School aims to offer the best possible service to all students, visitors and members of the community. If you are dissatisfied with our performance please let us know by either raising the issue with the Principal's PA, who will log the concern, or complete the on-line form to register the concern, or by visiting www.davinci-school.co.uk

We aim to deal with concerns as quickly as possible, and if your concern is not satisfactorily resolved you should complete the complaints form quoting the reference number for this concern.

YOUR DETAILS:

Please give your name and contact details:

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ Mobile No: _____ Email: _____

Are you a:

student potential student complainant
 visitor employer other (please state)

ISSUE OF CONCERN: (please circle one or more of the categories below)

Is your concern about:

School course Policy or procedure Facility or service

Member of staff Equality & diversity Freedom of information

Other (please state)

Please give details of your concern below, continuing on another sheet of paper if necessary:

PHASE 2: COMPLAINTS FORM

The Da Vinci Studio School aims to offer the best possible service to all students, visitors and members of the community. If you are dissatisfied with our performance please let us know by either raising the issue with the Principal's PA, who will log the complaint, or complete the on-line form to register the complaint, by visiting www.davinci-school.co.uk

YOUR DETAILS:

Please give your name and contact details:

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ Mobile No: _____ Email: _____

Are you a:

student potential student complainant
 visitor employer other (please state)

NATURE OF COMPLAINT: Please give details of your complaint below, continuing on another sheet of paper if necessary:

Details of actions taken to resolve the initial concern (used additional sheets of paper if necessary)

The Da Vinci Studio School is committed to equality of opportunity for all. Please confirm details about yourself by ticking all appropriate boxes below: this information is for monitoring purposes only and will not be disclosed to the person dealing with the complaint.

GENDER				
Male		Female		
AGE				
25 or under		26-35		36-45
46-55		56-65		over 65
NATIONALITY & ETHNIC ORIGIN				
Nationality:				
How would you describe your ethnic origin?				
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Race – White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Asian/Asian British – Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Race – White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Race – White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Asian/Asian British – Other Asian Background	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Race – any other mixed background	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Black/Black British - African	<input type="checkbox"/>	White - British	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Black/Black British - Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	White - Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Black/Black British – Other Black Background	<input type="checkbox"/>	White – any other white background	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
DISABILITY				
Note: for the purpose of the Disability Discrimination Act 1999 a disability is considered as an impairment which affects normal day to day activity and may be physical or mental, or may relate to a progressive illness/condition.				
Do you have an impairment which affects normal day to day activity?				Yes/No

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Received:

Ref:

Notes: