



Complaints Policy and Procedures

Policy created on 1/9/2016 by D Hales

Policy updated 10/01/2019 by D Chell

Reviewed and approved by Head of Centre L Newbon

Contents

Statement of intent

Aims

Complaints procedure

Roles and responsibilities

Appendices

Appendix 1: example complaints form

Appendix 2: stage 2 example complaints form

Appendix 3: example letter for complaints against the Head of Centre

Appendix 4: checklist for a staff and parent hearing

Statement of intent

Alpha Learning prides itself on the quality of teaching provided for its pupils. However, if parents have concerns they can expect any issues to be treated seriously by the Centre in accordance with this policy document.

The Complaints Policy and Procedure has been created to deal with any complaint against a member of staff or the Centre as a whole, relating to any aspects of the Centre or the provision of facilities or services.

A complaint can be brought by a parent/carer/guardian of a registered child at the Centre or any person who has been provided with a service/facility at the school. This person is referred to as the complainant.

Schools may have a nominated member of staff with responsibility for the operation and management of the Centre complaints procedure. This member of staff may not necessarily be the Head of Centre.

At **Alpha Learning** the Lindon Newbon (Head of Centre) will be the first point of contact.

A concern becomes a complaint only when the complainant asserts that the Centre has acted wrongly in some significant decision, action, or failure to take action.

Even when a complaint has been made, it can be resolved or withdrawn at any stage.

Aims

In line with the Education Act 2002, **Alpha Learning** will:

Encourage the resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible.

Allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keep people informed of any progress.

Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary.

Respect people's desire for confidentiality.

Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress where necessary.

Provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

Dealing with concerns informally

The Centre recognises that a vast majority of complaints and concerns can be resolved informally.

The complainant must feel able to raise concerns and complaints with members of staff, either in person, by telephone, or in writing. A preliminary discussion may be undertaken to help clarify if he or she is making a complaint or expressing an opinion, and whether they wish to take it further.

The complainant should be able to bring a friend to any discussion.

The member of staff dealing with the concern should make sure that the complainant understands what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed.

The process should be completed quickly and concluded in writing with appropriate detail.

Where no satisfactory solution has been found, the complainant should be informed that he or she will need to consider whether to make a formal complaint in writing to the Head of Centre.

To assist in this process, a complaint form should be provided. (See Appendix [1](#) or [2](#).)

Monitoring and recording complaints

At all stages of the complaints procedure, the following information should be recorded:

Name of the complainant

Date and time at which the complaint was made

Details of the nature of the complaint

Desired outcome of the complainant

How the complaint is being investigated (including written records of any interviews held)

Results and conclusions of investigations

Any action taken

Further responses from the complainant

Any subsequent action if required

Special circumstances

If the complaint suggests that a child has been at risk of significant harm through violence, emotional abuse, sexual harassment or neglect, it may be referred without further notice to the children's social care and/or to the social services authority for the area in which the child lives.

If a social services authority decides to investigate a situation, this may postpone or supersede investigation by the Head of Centre or governing body.

Where a matter can be resolved through a legal appeal, it will not be considered as a formal complaint. The key areas are: admissions decisions; certain decisions relating to formal assessment of special educational needs; and decisions to permanently exclude a child.

Complaints procedure

Stage 1 - Complaint heard by staff member

Parent/carer/guardian discusses their concern with the child's class teacher or, if they prefer, another member of the school's teaching staff.

Where the complaint concerns the Head of Centre, Karl Burgess (head of Education) can refer the complainant to the LA.

If a resolution cannot be sought at this level, or the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of these initial discussions, then the parent/carer/guardian may wish to escalate the complaint to the next level of the procedure.

Stage 2 - Complaint heard by Head of Centre

The parent/carer/guardian should request an appointment to see the Head of Centre. This should be as soon as reasonably practical to avoid any possible worsening of the issue.

The Head of Centre may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken.

If the complaint is against a member of staff, the Head of Centre should talk to the staff member against whom the complaint has been made. If necessary, the Head of Centre should interview witnesses and take statements from those involved.

The Head of Centre should keep reasonable written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.

The Head of Centre will investigate fully and communicate findings and/or resolutions to the complainant verbally or in writing depending on the nature of the issue.

Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Head of Centre should produce a written response to the complainant. The written response should include a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, it should include what action the Centre will take to resolve the complaint.

Stage 2 should be completed within 15 Working days. However, it is recognised that where the case is complex, it may prove difficult to meet this time constraint. In such cases, the Head of Centre should write to the complainant giving a revised target date.

A final statement by the Head of Centre and complainant.

A written response to the complainant will be made within 15 working days. The letter will explain if there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed.

The aim of the hearing, which must be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the Centre and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not conclude in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his/her complaint has been taken seriously.

An effective hearing will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone of the hearing and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.

Extra care must be taken when the complainant is a child. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings will ensure that the child does not feel intimidated. The panel needs to be aware of the views of the child and give them equal consideration to those of adults. Where the child's parent is the complainant, it would be helpful to give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, if any, the child needs to attend.

The role of the secretary of state for education

If the complainant is unhappy with the way in which the Centre has dealt with the complaint, they may be able to approach the Secretary of State for Education to intervene.

For the Secretary of State to intervene following a complaint, they need to be sure that either:

The Centre has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise or performance of its functions imposed by or under the Education Act 1996.

The Centre has failed to discharge any duty imposed by or for the purposes of the Education Act 1996.

Appendix 1: example complaints form

Please complete and return to (complaints co-ordinator), who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:	
Pupil's name:	
Your relationship to the pupil:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	
Details of your complaint:	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?	
What action do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.	
Signature:	
Date:	
Office use only	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
Acknowledgement sent by:	
Complaint referred to:	
Date:	

Appendix 2: stage 2 example complaints form

If you have tried unsuccessfully to resolve your complaint and wish to take the matter further, please complete this form and send it to the head of centre (If your complaint is against the Head of Centre you will need to send the form to the head of education (Karl Burgess))

Name:	Address:
Pupil's name:	
Pupil's date of birth:	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	
Email:	Postcode:
What is your complaint concerning, and what action would you like the Head of Centre to take?	
When did you discuss your concern/complaint with the appropriate member of staff?	
What was the result of the discussion?	
Signed:	Date:

Appendix 3: example letter for complaints against the Head of Centre

Dear (insert addressee's name),

I have received your complaint against the Head of Centre (insert school/academy name) of .

I write to let you know that I have forwarded a copy of your complaint to the Head of Centre with a request that [he/she] responds to the issues raised in the complaint within 10 Working days.

A copy of the Head of Centre's response will be sent to you as soon as possible.

If you are not satisfied with the Head of Centre's response, please respond back to the letter by return email as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 4: checklist for a staff and parent hearing

Panel hearing checklist	<input type="checkbox"/>
The hearing is as informal as possible.	
Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.	
After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.	
The Head of Centre may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.	
The Head of Centre is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.	
The complainant may question both the Head of Centre and the witnesses after each has spoken.	
The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.	
The Head of Centre is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.	
A written response detailing the minutes of and resolution of the hearing will be sent by the Head of Centre to the complainant within 10 days of the meeting.	