



Complaints Policy
2022-2023

Policy version 1

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Complaints Policy

It is in everyone's best interest that complaints are resolved as quickly as possible within a clearly defined procedure. If a parent/carer, staff or student feels a situation has arisen that they are unhappy about then they have a right to make a complaint. Any and every complaint made will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and professionally. All complainants will be made aware of this policy and the procedures to follow if they wish to complain.

All staff should be aware of the complaints procedure and should be able to give information and assistance on how to raise a concern or make a formal complaint.

Records

All complaints will be recorded by the Aspire and Achieve, including informal complaints. The centre manager is responsible for ensuring that staff record all formal complaints and their outcome. These records will also include copies of letters and emails and notes relating to meetings and phone calls. This material will be treated as highly confidential and stored securely on centre premises. It will only be viewed by those involved in investigating the complaint.

Time limits

Complaints need to be considered and resolved, as quickly and efficiently as possible using the time limits published in this policy. However, where further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set and the complainant sent details of the new deadline and an explanation for the delay.

Dealing with complaints

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint will ensure that they:

- Clarify the nature of the complaint and unresolved issues
- Clarify what the complainant feels what would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and / or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Keep appropriate notes of any interviews held

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint will seek ways to resolve the complaint satisfactorily. It may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An acknowledgment that the complaint is valid in whole or in part and/or acknowledgment that the situation could have been handled differently or better (this is not the same as an admission of negligence)
- An apology
- An explanation
- An assurance and explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again.

1. Informal: pre-complaint stage

It is important to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints. The underlying principle is that concerns will be handled, if possible, without the need for formal procedures. If a complainant remains dissatisfied after this initial contact and wishes to take matters further, formal procedures will then need to be invoked.

0. Formal stage one: official complaint

Where a person has not been able to resolve a concern informally, they are entitled to formally log a complaint with the centre manager.

- The complaint letter or email should include as much detail as possible.
- Formal complaints should be logged as soon as possible, but no more than 4 weeks after the incident or issue occurring.
- Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days and will specify how the complaint will be investigated, by whom and the timescale within which a full response will be made.
- The centre manager will ensure that a thorough investigation is carried out and a full written response is made within 15 school days.
- A written response should contain an outline of the complaint and a summary of the response to the complaint including the decision reached and the reasons for it. Where appropriate this should also include what response Aspire and Achieve will take to resolve the complaint. This may be by way of a general description e.g., 'Action taken within the disciplinary procedure'.
- This letter or report should also inform the complainant that should he/she wish the complaint to progress onto the second stage of this procedure that he/she should send a written request stating this to the centre manager within 10 working days of receiving the response.

If no further communication is received from the complainant within 10 working days, it is deemed that the complaint has been resolved and should end.

0. Formal stage two

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at stage one or the complaint involves the centre manager then they may go to stage two and have the centre proprietor hear the complaint.

The same procedure and timings as stage one will apply.

Appendix A

A complainant may be regarded as unreasonable if the complainant's behaviour includes:

- refusing to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.
- refusing to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
- refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure.
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales.
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed).
- makes excessive demands on the centre's time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint acts in a manner which is:

- malicious;
- aggressive;
- threatening, intimidating or violent;
- made using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- made knowing the complaint to be false;
- made using falsified information;
- otherwise made using conduct which is intended to intimidate, harass - or is otherwise similarly inappropriate

Appendix B

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to(Centre Manager/Proprietor) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Student's name (if applicable):
Your relationship to student (if applicable)
Address: Postcode: Daytime telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint:
What action, if any, have you already taken to resolve your complaint. Who did you speak to and what was the response?
What actions do you feel might resolve the situation at this stage?
Are you attaching paperwork? If so please give details.
Signature: Date:
OFFICIAL USE Date acknowledgement sent: By who: Complaint referred to: Date:

Appendix C

Investigation Interview/evidence template (for use in complaints procedure)

Date of interview
Present (give job name and title)
Insert content of interview/evidence, ensuring to record both the question asked and the answer provided, where relevant.

I, (insert name) , confirm that these notes are an accurate record of the interview, evidence collected held on (insert date)
Signed:
Dated:

Appendix D

Letter template – acknowledgement of complaint

Dear _____

I acknowledge receipt of your formal complaint received on _____. Aspire and Achieve take complaints very seriously and see them as an opportunity to improve our service, where possible. I am sorry you have not been able to resolve your complaint informally but I am now happy to provide you with a copy of our Complaints Policy. We aim to provide you with a written response within 10 working days, if we cannot meet that target we will write to you again within the next 10 days to explain the reason for any delay and provide a revised date.

I will be handling your complaint on behalf of Aspire and Achieve but I can assure you that my response will be checked and endorsed by the Centre Manager/Proprietor/Designated panel member before being issued to you. I do hope we can work together to resolve your complaint in the best interests of all concerned. Yours sincerely

Signed _____

Name _____

Job Title _____

Contact details _____
