



Complaints Policy and Procedures

Date Accepted by The Department for Education: Summer 2020

Reviewed by The Axis Academy Local Support Board (LSB): Summer 2020

Date Reviewed: September 2022

Date for Policy review: September 2023

The Axis Academy Trust's Board and the Headteacher are committed to providing the best educational experience they can for all learners attending The Axis Academy and its provisions. They recognise the value to all concerned of dealing fairly, speedily and effectively with any complaint against their decisions, actions or omissions, which a student or parent/carer or other aggrieved person may have. To this end, they have adopted the underlying principles and procedures set out in this document.

FRAMEWORK OF PRINCIPLES

Our complaints procedure:

- Encourages resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- Is easily accessible and publicised
- Is simple to understand and use
- Is impartial
- Is non-adversarial
- Allows swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- Ensures a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respects people's desire for confidentiality
- Addresses all the issues and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- Provides information to the Trust's board so that services can be improved.

DEFINITION OF COMPLAINT

An academy complaint is any communication received by a person or persons with a legitimate interest in the school, but not employed at the school, which expresses dissatisfaction about the standard of teaching of members of the teaching staff, or about the conduct, actions or omissions of members of the teaching or non-teaching staff employed at the academy.

DEFINITION OF COMPLAINANT

A complainant is someone:

- Who allegedly has been wronged
- Whose child(ren) has been wronged (i.e. parent or carers or other person with parental responsibility)
- Someone representing a person in one of the above groups, for example a Councillor.

Where a complainant is a student under the age of 18 years, the complaint may be pursued only by, or on behalf of, the child's parent or carer. Where someone other than a pupil or a parent/carers is pursuing a complaint on his or her behalf, this can be done only with the express consent of the pupil or parent concerned.

TYPES OF COMPLAINT

Statutory/established procedures

It is the Academy's intention to resolve all complaints informally and as such we will endeavour to do so. There are however, established or statutory procedures for dealing with a number of complaints as listed below:

- Admissions and referrals to the academy
- Exclusions
- Special education provision (SEND)
- School re-organisation
- Matters concerning the curriculum under Section 19 and 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988
- Complaints by academy staff or prospective staff
- Child protection
- Public examinations
- Academy records on individual students

The following stages of complaints procedure will be applied in relation to supporting complaints relating to the above policies or any complaint that arises outside of the policies listed.

Complaints not covered by established or statutory procedures

Stage 1 - Informal Stage

All complaints, however received, should be reported to the Academy Office. The Academy Office may refer the complaint to an appropriate member of staff to resolve the matter. That member of staff will have a duty to inform the Headteacher if any issue is not resolved after discussion with the complainant. Parents/carers should be encouraged to settle the matter with

the class teacher or designated staff member. The majority of straightforward complaints and problems are likely to be resolved at this point.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint to the Headteacher

The second stage is where the parent/carer is not satisfied with the informal response or feels it is not appropriate to make the complaint formally to the Headteacher. They should be advised to take up the matter in writing with the Headteacher. The Headteacher can, if they wish to do so, refer this to The Axis Academy Local Support Board (LSB), who in turn may ask the Secretary of State through the EFA (Education Funding Agency) to undertake a formal investigation and provide a detailed report. If the Headteacher undertakes the investigation at stage 2, they will be exempt from sitting on any complaints committee convened to hear a complaint escalated to stage 3. The outcome at this stage may be:

- No further action, with reasons given
- Action within the Headteachers own powers
- Referral to The Axis Academy Trust's Board for consideration

All complaints at this stage will be responded to in writing within 14 working days of the original complaint.

Stage 3 - The Trusts Board

The third stage will be where the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of the stage 2 investigation and response. They should be advised to put their concerns in writing to the review board for consideration. The Board would meet within 10 working days of the complaint being received.

A panel of three members (including one independent member) with delegated powers will convene to hear the complainant a meeting attended by the complainant (accompanied should the individual request so), the Headteacher and witnesses. Written evidence will be submitted in advance to all parties and verbal evidence given at the hearing. The complainant or the Academy can involve independent parties who can support either party at this meeting. Independent parties could be legal or supportive partners such as Parent Support Services or specialist advisers.

The board’s decision is final and will notify all parties as soon as possible after the meeting. The outcome will be one of the following:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the academies’ systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

The review board will be:

Chair of LSB	Standards subcommittee and Safeguarding Associate	Independent Headteacher from Local High School
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TIMESCALES

The following limits should apply to all complaints handled under the school’s complaints procedure:

- Stage 1: It is reasonable that parents/carers seeking to resolve matters of concern to them should receive a response within 15 working days of making initial contact, unless there is a good reason not to do so. The response should offer the complainant a full explanation or set out the steps that are proposed to resolve the complaint.
- Stage 2: Should be responded to within 15 working days from receipt of complaint escalation.
- Stage 3: Should be responded to within 20 working days from receipt of complaint escalation.

The longer time limit for Stage 3 reflects the fact that these complaints may be complex and therefore likely to take longer to resolve. Where it is not possible to respond to complaints within these timescales, the complainant should be informed in writing of the reason for the delay and given an anticipated response date.

All complaints and correspondence will be kept in a confidential file with detailed timings. These documents will be available to the LSB and or

inspectors (under section 109) should they wish to review the process and outcomes.

FURTHER STAGES

Following the Board's review of the complaint at stage three, it is open to the complainant to pursue their complaint with the Secretary of State for Education via the EFA (Education Funding Agency). The Axis Academy Local Support and Scrutiny Board will give full consideration to any recommendations or directions the EFA may make. The complainant will be advised of this course of action should they remain dissatisfied with a decision made by The Axis Academy Board.

APPENDIX 1**The Axis Academy Complaint Form**

Please complete and return to the Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Student's name:

Your relationship to the student:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.

(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: