

Complaints Policy and Procedures

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Aims

The Learning Community Trust aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents/carers of pupils in our academies, and others.

When responding to complaints, our aims are:

- To encourage resolution of problems by informal means and at the earliest opportunity where possible
- To be impartial
- To handle complaints in a timely manner and to keep people informed of the progress of the complaint
- To investigate fully and fairly
- To address all the points raised and give an effective and prompt response
- To respect a complainant's desire for confidentiality if requested; however, an anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To consider how the complaint can feed into evaluation and improvement processes

Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents/carers of pupils at the academy and is intended to comply with all relevant legislation and guidance. In accordance with this intent, the policy will be amended as needed.

Roles and responsibilities

This policy applies to all employees of the Learning Community Trust. In this policy, the term Appropriate Responsible Leader refers to: the Principal or Headteacher of an academy, where the complaint is about an academy; and to a Director or Assistant Director or Executive where the complaint is about the central LCT team or has reached Stage 3 and beyond. It could also include the Chair of a Local Governing Body or the Trust where the complaint is about a Principal or CEO respectively. For simplicity, where the term Principal is used in the remainder of this policy, this also includes Headteachers.

The policy is approved by the LCT Board of Trustees. Responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Principal in the academy or Directorate and Executive in the central team.

The responsibility for defining whether exceptional circumstances apply in any respect lies with the Principal for a complaint about an academy, and with the Chief Operating Officer for a complaint about the Trust.

For parents/carers making a complaint, the online complaints form will ensure that the complaint is routed to the relevant person at each stage, removing the need for parents/carers to remember which staff member to address the complaint to.

Defining a complaint

These definitions are taken from Department for Education guidance explaining the difference between a concern and a complaint.

A concern is defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.’

A complaint is defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action.’

The Trust and its academies will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible. It recognises that effective resolution of concerns helps prevent further dissatisfaction leading to complaints and it is in everyone’s interest to resolve both concerns and complaints informally at the earliest possible stage.

Scope

There may be occasions where complainants are dissatisfied with informal resolution and wish to progress to a formal process, or some rarer occasions where a complainant has reason to progress straight to the formal process. This policy outlines the procedures for handling such complaints.

The policy does not cover complaints relating to:

| Exceptions | Who to contact |
|---|---|
| Admissions to LCT academies | Concerns about admissions should be handled through the appeals process or via the local authority |
| Safeguarding matters/matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation | Complaints about child protection matters are handled under the Safeguarding Policy and in accordance with statutory guidance. For urgent concerns, contact the academy or Trust DSLs; you could also contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) |
| Statutory assessments of SEN | Complaints regarding the statutory assessment of a child’s special educational needs should be directed to the relevant local authority, unless this directly relates to the academy’s contribution to the assessment e.g. the academy did not provide information in the time frame, in which case the complaint can be made via this policy |
| Suspension/exclusion of children from school | Further information about raising concerns if your child has been suspended or excluded can be found in the letter notifying you of the event |
| Whistleblowing | This is covered in the LCT Whistleblowing Policy |
| Staff grievances | Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the LCT grievance procedures |
| Staff conduct | Where appropriate, complaints about staff conduct will be addressed under disciplinary procedures. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against the staff member as the result of a complaint, but they will be notified that the matter is being addressed. |
| Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities | Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about their service. However, if this relates to a Safeguarding matter, the academy/Trust DSL should also be informed at the same time as the provider. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Withdrawal from curriculum | <p>Parents and carers can withdraw their child from any aspect of RE including the daily act of collective worship. They do not have to explain why. If parents or carers are not satisfied with the handling of their request to withdraw their child from RE including the daily act of collective worship, they can raise a complaint through the complaints policy.</p> <p>The right of withdrawal does not apply to other areas of the curriculum where religious matters may be raised or arise.</p> |
| Complaints regarding requests for term time absence | <p>These requests are entirely at the Principal's discretion and therefore do not come under the remit of the complaints policy.</p> |
| Complaints relating to issues before an academy joined LCT | <p>While LCT will listen to concerns around practices in an academy before it joined the Trust, it may be unable to fully investigate matters that fall within the remit of this policy as the policies and practices of the school prior to joining LCT may be significantly different. If this does occur, LCT will act in the best interests of the child to resolve the complaint.</p> <p>This does not apply to Whistleblowing or Safeguarding issues which are covered under separate policies.</p> |
| Data Protection complaints e.g. around data processing, use of CCTV | <p>These are covered under the LCT Data Protection Policy and should be addressed via this route</p> |

Anonymous Complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Principal or Appropriate Responsible Leader will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation

Timescales

- The timescales used in this policy refer to academy term time days. They exclude academy holiday periods due to the need to be able to access academy staff to process and investigate properly.
- If other bodies such as the police or local authority safeguarding teams or tribunals are investigating aspects of the complaint, this may impact the Trust's ability to adhere to the timescales within this policy or result in the procedure being suspended until the external investigation is completed. If this happens the complainant will be informed of the new time scale.
- If the complainant commences legal proceedings against the academy in relation to the complaint, consideration will be given as to whether to suspend the complaints policy until those legal proceedings have concluded.
- The academy expects that complaints will be made as soon as possible after an incident arises and no later than 1 month afterwards in usual circumstances. We will consider exceptions to this time frame up to 3 months in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.
- Complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible. However, if the complaint is complex or requires further investigations (including LCT seeking its own

legal advice), new timeframes may be set. The complainant will be sent details of the new timescales.

- We may adjust timescales as appropriate to account for any reasonable adjustments in relation to a disability of any party.
- We will hold all data around a complaint on file until 6 years from the date of final resolution of the complaint.

Resolving complaints

When investigating a complaint, we will look at:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

At each stage in the policy, the aim is always to resolve the complaint. If any part of the complaint is upheld, this will be acknowledged. In this case, one or more of the following may be offered:

- An explanation of why the issue occurred
- An explanation of what has been done to prevent the issue happening again
- An undertaking for process review in light of the complaint
- An apology

If, at any stage, the complainant decides to withdraw their complaint, this should be confirmed in writing by the complainant.

Procedure for handling unreasonably persistent, harassing, vexatious, unreasonable or abusive complaints

While the Learning Community Trust will always try to resolve concerns and complaints as quickly as possible, sometimes a complainant pursues a complaint or treats Learning Community Trust staff in a way that is unacceptable. Whilst we recognise that some complaints may relate to serious or distressing incidents, we will not accept threatening, inappropriate or harassing behaviour towards our staff.

An unreasonable complainant is anyone who engages in unreasonable behaviour when making a complaint such as actions which are:

- Out of proportion to the complaint
- Persistent, even after the complaints procedure has been exhausted
- Personally harassing
- Unjustifiably repetitious
- Obsessive, harassing or prolific

And unreasonable behaviour may include:

- Pursuing unjustified and unmeritorious complaints
- Pursuing justifiable complaints in an unreasonable, threatening or abusive manner
- Making complaints in public or sharing information relating to the complaint, staff, pupils, the Trust or the academy inappropriately on social media
- Refusing to attend appointments to discuss the complaint, though we will consider appropriate reasonable adjustments to accommodate any disability
- Unrealistic expectations around outcomes, leading to unjustifiable pursuit of the complaint

We expect anyone who wishes to raise a complaint to:

- Treat all staff with courtesy and respect
- Respect the needs of pupils and staff
- To not use or threaten violence towards people or property
- Recognise that staff work under other time constraints and allow a reasonable time to respond to a complaint; we will send acknowledgments within two working school days but responses from individual staff may not be possible within that time frame
- Understand that some problems may not be able to be resolved in a short time frame
- Follow the complaints procedure and not expect deviations from these e.g. unwarranted escalations
- Use appropriate language and avoid aggression or verbal abuse, including name-calling
- Raise concerns/complaints in an appropriate place and at an appropriate time e.g. not in front of other parents/carers and pupils, and not in a public space
- Be prepared to work in partnership towards a resolution

In the case of unreasonably persistent complaints or harassment, we may take any or all of the following steps:

- Refer the matter to the Executive team (this will occur as a matter of course as Executive approval will be required for any further action.)
- Inform the complainant informally that their behaviour is now considered to be unreasonable or unacceptable and request they change their approach
- Inform the complainant in writing that we consider their behaviour to be unreasonable or unacceptable and request they change their approach
- Require all future meetings with staff to be conducted with a third-party present to take notes
- Inform the complainant that we will only respond to written communication except in emergencies
- Inform the complainant that the complaint will not be investigated further until it is pursued in a reasonable way
- Place restrictions on access to the academy and its staff
- Cease all correspondence and communication with the complainant other than that necessary for the health and safety of any child/adult and to provide parents and carers with the information they are entitled to under The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005, within the statutory timeframe
- Out of our duty of care to staff and students, we will take emergency measures should these become necessary in extreme situations

If it is unfortunately necessary to proceed in this way we will still:

- Act reasonably in considering any new complaint
- Follow usual procedures relating to Freedom of information and Data Protection requests.

Learning Community Trust will not tolerate any form of physical or verbal aggression or personal harassment against staff. If this occurs, we may:

- prohibit the individual from entering the relevant site, with immediate effect – this may involve issuing a warning letter or formal section 547 notice under the Education Act 1996; this prohibition will be not less than 14 weeks in the first instance and may be extended thereafter
- inform the individual that communication with them will cease other than in an emergency

Where a complainant modifies unacceptable behaviour but then resumes it at a later date, we may apply or reapply any of the above. If behaviour continues to be acceptable, we may resume investigation of the complaint if it still lies within the time limits specified in this policy.

Where we receive duplicate complaints from another family member, and there are no new aspects which have not previously been investigated, we will inform the new complainant that the complaint has already been considered.

Complaint campaigns

From time to time, an academy or Trust can become the focus of a campaign and receive large volumes of complaints. These may be all related to the same subject and may also be from complainants unconnected with the schools.

In this event, we reserve the right to send out a template response to all complainants and/or publish a single response on our websites. This decision will be made by the LCT Executive team.

Stages in the Complaints Process

Complaints are submitted using the Complaints Form on academy and Trust websites. The online form will guide parents/carers through the process. If a parent/carer needs support completing the form, the academy will provide assistance.

Pre-Stage One: Raising a concern

Most issues can be resolved at this stage, quickly and informally. Taking informal concerns seriously and empathetically is the best way of meeting the needs of our pupils, of eliminating matters arising due to misunderstandings in reporting or communication, and of meeting the Trust vision and values.

If you have a concern, please contact the member of staff involved where at all possible in the first instance. As an example, this might be about homework, a behaviour sanction, or information relayed by your child that causes you to think something is not right or has not happened as you would expect. Each school has the details on its website for how to raise concerns informally in a pre-stage 1 process via the drop-down forms found on the Complaints Policy page. We will aim to respond to and ideally resolve these within 2 working school days. A full resolution may not be possible within 2 days but where it is not, we will keep you updated.

Stage 1 Informal resolution of a complaint

Sometimes a concern may not be resolved to your satisfaction, and you may feel it is appropriate to make a complaint. Again, many matters which reach this stage can be resolved satisfactorily by an Appropriate Responsible Person who will be the main point of contact for the complainant.

The Appropriate Responsible Person will be determined by the Principal or Executive leader (depending on the setting about which the complaint is being made). They will acknowledge a request to register a concern within 2 working school days. They will usually be able to resolve the matter quickly but may also need to consult with other staff to do so. They will take a written record of the complaint and date. They will inform other relevant colleagues on the day of receipt, and they will then use reasonable endeavour to resolve the complaint within ten working school days of the complaint being received. Where this is not possible, they will inform the complainant of the likely timeline for resolution.

If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the complainant will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2. This should be within 10 working school days of receipt of the decision around the complaint.

Stage 2 Formal resolution of a complaint

At this stage, if the complaint has not been resolved at Stage 1, the complainant should use the Stage 2 Complaints Form to put their complaint in writing to the Appropriate Responsible Leader. Receipt should be acknowledged within 2 working school days.

If the complaint is about the Principal, the complaint should be sent to Trust Central on the drop-down menu rather than the academy. This will then be sent to the Chair of the Local Governing Body via our automated process.

If the complaint is about the CEO, the complaint should be sent to Trust Central from the drop-down menu, and this will then be sent for the attention of the Chair of the Trust via our automated process. Complainants should include details which might assist the investigation, such as the names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, copies of relevant documents, and a clear statement of the actions that you would like the academy or central team to take to resolve the issue.

The Stage 2 Complaints Form is available on the academy and Trust websites. If you are unable to complete the form yourself, please contact the academy for support and assistance. You should receive an acknowledgement in writing within two working school days.

The Appropriate Responsible Leader will usually delegate responsibility for undertaking an investigation of the complaint unless they determine it appropriate to undertake the investigation personally. If the complaint is about the Principal, the Executive will support the Chair of the LGB in finding someone suitable to investigate.

The Principal, Chair of LGB or Executive will decide what course of action to take after they have considered the complaint. They may speak with the complainant if appropriate, and it may be possible to reach a resolution after this. This will ideally take place within 10 working school days of receipt of the complaint and if not possible to meet this timescale, the complainant will be updated on the progress of the complaint.

It may then be necessary to carry out further investigations. A written record of all meetings, interviews and telephone conversations to the complainant will be kept and documented in a single case file. This sits under the responsibility of the Appropriate Responsible Leader. All records are subject to the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts and will be factual and objective.

Once the Appropriate Responsible Leader is content that they have all the information needed, they will make a decision and inform the complainant in writing of the decision and their reasons. This will be provided no later than 10 working school days after speaking to or meeting the complainant, unless previously advised due to a reasonable delay in establishing facts. They may also meet with the complainant to explain their decision.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to their formal complaint, they will have the opportunity to have it considered at a Stage 3 Appeal. This will be communicated to them in the outcome letter and a request to proceed to Stage 3 should be received within 10 working school days of receipt of the outcome letter and should be in writing.

Stage 3 Appeal

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the decision in respect of a formal complaint, they can request that the complaint be considered further in a Stage 3 Appeal. The request must be made in writing on a Stage 3 Appeal request form and sent to the Principal for academy matters and to the Executive for central team matters.

The request must be made within 10 working school days of the Stage 2 decision. The complainant should provide details of the complaint made and why they believe it has not been resolved in the Stage 2 procedure. They should outline how they wish their complaint to be resolved.

The Stage 3 Appeal is to consider the complaint lodged in the initial Stage 2 submission. It does not consider other matters unless they are directly related to the original complaint and provide new information not seen at Stage 2 which might have changed the Stage 2 decision had it been available.

The Appeal date will ideally be set no more than 20 working school days from the receipt of the request; however, an acknowledgment of receipt will be sent within two working school days. Timing is, however, dependent on the availability of Stage 3 Appeals Panel members. If it is not possible to arrange a

mutually convenient date for a hearing within a reasonable time scale, the Executive may determine that the hearing should proceed on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least five working school days before the meeting. The hearing will not accept as evidence recording of conversations obtained without the informed consent of all parties.

For complaints related to an academy, the Appeals Panel should consist of two Local Governing Body members plus one Director/Assistant Director who have not previously been involved in the complaint. In circumstances where only one LGB member is available in a suitable time frame, another Director/Assistant Director may be used but usually the weighting of the Panel should be in favour of the LGB members. One LGB member must be independent of the management and running of the academy and therefore will be drawn from the LGB of another school, usually within the Trust.

For central LCT staff, the Stage 3 Appeal Panel will consist of three members of the Executive and Directors who have not previously been involved in the complaint. If the complaint is about the CEO, the Panel will consist of three Trustees not previously involved in the complaint.

Complainants will be informed in writing that they can attend the Panel hearing and be accompanied if they wish. The hearing will be held in private and electronic recordings are not permitted unless this is a specified reasonable adjustment for either party. Please note that while written statements may be taken from pupils as witnesses, a pupil cannot be asked to appear as a witness in the hearing.

The hearing will consider the complaint and examine all the evidence presented. The Panel will then:

- Uphold the complaint in whole or part
- Dismiss the complaint in whole or part

Complainants will be informed in writing of the decision and the reasons for it and any recommendations within 10 working school days from the date of the Appeal. The findings will be sent to:

- The complainant
- The Local Governing Body
- The academy Principal
- The Executive Team
- Where appropriate, the subject of the complaint.

The Executive Team will ensure any recommendations are distributed to relevant parties.

Stage 4 Final Appeal

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the process around a Stage 3 Appeal, they may refer this to the Trust Board Appeals Panel for a Stage 4 Final Appeal. This should be within ten working school days of the receipt of Stage 3 Appeal hearing and should be in writing. A written acknowledgement will be sent out within two working school days. The Final Panel will be made up of 3 members of the Board of Trustees, which may include the Chief Executive Officer.

The remit of the Panel is to look at whether policies and processes have been applied fairly in earlier stages. Complainants should provide details of why they do not believe this has been the case so far. The Panel will meet as soon as possible to consider the matter and will attempt to meet no later than twenty working school days after receipt of the request, but this will depend on availability of trustees.

At the conclusion of the Stage 4 Final Panel, a decision on the response to the complaint will be made and will be communicated in writing no later than ten working school days after the hearing. The decisions may be:

- That processes or policies were not properly applied and to request the Stage 3 Appeals Panel to look again in accordance with this
- Processes and policies were correctly applied

The Stage 4 findings will be sent in writing to:

- The complainant
- Stage 3 Appeals Panel members
- The Local Governing Body
- The academy Principal
- The Executive team
- Where appropriate, the subject of the complaint

Appendix 1

This section explains how best each person may manage their role in the complaint more effectively

The Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they are able to:

- co-operate in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- express the concern/complaint in full as early as possible;
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint;
- ask for assistance as needed;
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect.

The Appropriate Responsible Person

The appropriate responsible person should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure;
- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure will be aware of the legislation around complaints including the Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- liaise with staff members, Principal, Chair of LGB and Clerk to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure;
- keep records;
- be aware of issues regarding sharing third party information, as well as additional support - this may be needed by complainants when making a complaint, including interpretation support.

The Investigator

The Investigator's role can include providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:

- sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved;
- consideration of records and other relevant information;
- interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint;
- analysing information
- effectively liaising with the complainant and the Academy as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- identifying solutions and recommending courses of action to resolve problems;
- being mindful of the timescales to respond;
- responding to the complainant in plain and clear language.

The person investigating the complaint should make sure that they:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting.

The Panel Clerk

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant for the panel meeting and is expected to:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing;
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- record the proceedings in note form;
- circulate the minutes of the panel hearing;
- notify all parties of the panel's decision;
- liaise with the complaints co-ordinator.

The Panel Chair

The Panel Chair has a key role in ensuring that:

- the meeting is minuted;
- the remit of the panel is explained to the complainant and all parties have the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption;
- the issues are addressed;
- key findings of fact are made;
- parents/carers and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease – this is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person;
- the hearing is conducted in a relaxed but professional manner with everyone treated with respect and courtesy;
- the layout of the room will set the tone – care is needed to ensure the setting is comfortable and not adversarial;
- the panel is open-minded and acts independently;
- no member of the panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- all parties are given the opportunity to state their case and seek clarity;
- witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- pupils/students may not appear as witnesses, but they may provide statements.
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance – if a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the hearing;
- liaison takes place with the Clerk.

Panel Member

Panellists will need to be aware that:

- It is important that the review panel hearing is independent and impartial, and that it is seen to be. A representative may not sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- The aim of the hearing, which will be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school/Trust and the complainant. However, it must be recognised that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously;
- Many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel Chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible;
- Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the hearing; Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings will ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated. If the child/young person is the complainant, the panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, if any, the child/young person needs to attend. The parent should be advised however that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting which the panel considers not to be in the child/young person's best interests;
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount

Appendix 2

Example agenda for a Panel Hearing

The Chair of the panel will welcome all parties.

1. All parties will be asked to introduce themselves
2. The complainant will be asked to outline their complaint, inviting any witnesses to also present.
3. If witnesses are called, they will be first asked questions by the complainant, then by the Principal/Director and finally by the panel.
4. The complainant will conclude their presentation of their complaint.
5. The Principal/Director will be invited to ask questions of the complainant.
6. The Panel will ask questions of the complainant.
7. The Principal/Director will be invited to present their response to the complaint.
8. The complainant will be invited to ask questions of the Principal/Director.
9. The Panel will ask questions of the Principal/Director.
10. The Principal/Director will be asked to sum up their response.
11. The complainant will be asked to sum up their complaint.
12. All parties will be thanked for their attendance and contribution and the Chair will confirm that a written response will be sent to both parties within ten school days. The Panel reserves the right to modify the above procedure, for example requiring the parent and the academy representative to present their complaint/actions separately to the Panel in the absence of the other party.

Appendix 3

The following is a non-exhaustive list of what may constitute a vexatious or unreasonably persistent complaint:

- Placing excessive demands on staff time and resources during the complaint process, such as frequent phone calls, sending multiple emails to different staff members, or writing lengthy, complex letters every few days and expecting immediate responses.
- Expecting immediate replies or resolutions to communications, despite staff having teaching responsibilities and a standard response time.
- Being verbally abusive or disrespectful towards staff.
- Refusing to accept the outcome of a complaint, continually disputing the decision, and repeatedly raising the same issue.
- Refusal to specify the grounds of a complaint despite offers of assistance from Trust staff.
- Non-cooperation with the complaints investigation process or insistence that the complaint be addressed in ways incompatible with the Trust's complaints procedure.
- Making seemingly groundless complaints about employees handling the complaints or attempting to use the complaints procedure to pursue a personal vendetta against an employee or team.
- Making excessively demanding requests on the time and resources of Trust staff while a complaint is being investigated.
- Altering the basis of the complaint as the investigation progresses and/or denying statements made earlier in the process.
- Introducing significant new information late in the process that was in the complainant's possession when the complaint was first submitted.
- Presenting trivial or irrelevant new information or raising numerous detailed but insignificant questions, insisting that all be fully answered.
- Submitting multiple complaints in batches over time, resulting in related complaints being at different stages of the complaints procedure.
- Refusal to accept that certain issues fall outside the remit of the complaints procedure or demanding outcomes that the procedure cannot provide, such as overturning court decisions, dismissing staff, or criminal prosecution.
- Electronically recording meetings, phone calls, and conversations without prior knowledge and consent from the other parties involved.
- Seeking to coerce, intimidate, or threaten staff or others involved, whether through language, tone of voice, or body language.
- Submitting repeated complaints about the same issues that have already been addressed under the school's complaints procedure.
- Persisting in contacting the school and demanding responses or actions long after the investigation has been closed and all rights to review and appeal have been exhausted.
- Making abusive, threatening, or derogatory remarks about the Trust, school, or staff, whether in person, over the phone, in writing, or on social media.

Monitoring and review

The Trust's CEO will monitor the implementation of this policy, including making sure that it is updated to reflect the needs and circumstances of the trust and the academies.