

Complaints Policy

The Academy of Lincoln Trust



	Name	Position	Date	Review Date
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Approved by:	Trustees of ALT	Chairman		

Signed..... Date:

This Policy has been approved by the Trustees:

Signed..... Date:

ISSUE	AUTHOR	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
1.0	Beverley Cranston	September 2015	Review
2.0	Beverley Cranston	September 2018	Review date
2.1	Beverley Cranston	November 2018	Include SEN procedure
2.2	Beverley Cranston	January 2019	Additions made to process

Complaints Policy

Academy of Lincoln Trust's definition of a complaint is as follows:

"A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made either orally or in writing and formally received by the Trust about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Academy or staff affecting an individual or group".

Where there are established statutory procedures for the dealing with a complaint, these will be followed.

Overview:

Complaints will be treated seriously and courteously and given the time they require to be heard.

Complainants will be advised at the earliest possible stage of:

- The scope, if any, for pursuing the complaint and the procedure for dealing with it.
- The way in which the complaint will be handled.

The aim is that the complaint should be properly and fairly dealt with. The later stages of the Complaints Procedure are used rarely but remain part of the process. Services are improved by positive response to compliments, concerns and complaints.

N.B. Anonymous complaints would not normally be considered under this procedure. The Trust will not tolerate abuse of staff during the complaint process. Where agreement cannot be reached, the aim of the procedure is to ensure that all parties will be treated fairly.

Special educational needs (SEN):

If you want to complain about out academies SEN support, you should do so whilst your child is still registered at the academy. This includes complaints that the academy has not provided the support required by your child's SEN statement of education, Health and Care Plan (EHC).

Follow these steps in order to move onto the next steps if your complaint is not resolved.

1. Talk to the school's Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO).
2. Follow the school's complaints procedure.
3. Complain directly to Lincolnshire County Council. There is a different process if you disagree with a decision your local authority has made about an SEN statement or EHC plan. This complaint will be handled directly by the LCC.

Complaint Process:

STAGE 1

Most complaints can be quickly resolved by talking to the teacher or member of staff concerned. To do this, contact the Academy to arrange a time to meet with the person concerned and discuss the problem.

STAGE 2

If the matter cannot be resolved directly with the person concerned, the complaint should be referred to the Head of Department, line manager or relevant member of the senior leadership team. Again, this can be done by contacting the Academy and arranging an appointment. It would be helpful if concerns could be put in writing.

STAGE 3

In a small number of cases, the matter may not be resolved and will be referred to the Headteacher. In a very small number of cases the matter may still be unresolved. When this happens, the complaint should be directed to the Chair of the Governing Body of the Academy concerned. In most cases, this means putting the complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors and sending it via the Academy or Clerk to the Governors. The Chair of Governors will contact the person making the complaint. N.B. If the matter is not discussed with the Headteacher it is not normally possible to proceed further with the official complaints procedure. In this circumstance, the complaint should also be put in writing, stating the reasons why the complaint has not been discussed with the Headteacher and send it to the Chair of Governors.

STAGE 4

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the involvement of the Chair of Governors, a request can be made to ask for the complaint to be considered by the Governing Body's Complaints Committee. To request a hearing before the Complaints Committee, please write to the Clerk to the Governors within five working days of the decision to be appealed. Requests will only be considered if the relevant procedures at stage 1 – 3 have been completed. Please ensure that all copies of all relevant documents accompany the letter to the Clerk and state all grounds for the complaint and the outcome desired. The Clerk will acknowledge the request within 5 working days. The review will be undertaken by a panel and of at least 3 members appointed on behalf of the governing body. As required by The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2010, the panel must include at least one member who is independent of the management and running of the Academy. The panel members will have no detailed prior knowledge of the case and the Clerk will convene the panel as soon as is reasonably practicable but the panel will not sit during the Academy holidays.

Every effort will be made to enable the meeting to take place within 15 days of receipt of the request. As soon as is practical and at least 5 working days before the hearing, the Clerk to the Governors will send written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing together with brief details of the panel members who will be present.

The complainant will be asked to attend the hearing and may be accompanied by one other person, e.g. a close relative or friend who should not be legally qualified. The complainant's child, if deemed necessary, may attend the hearing at the discretion of the Chair. Copies of additional documents for the panel to consider should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors at least 3 days prior to the hearing.

The panel shall reach a decision unless there is an agreed position. The decision, findings and recommendations may be notified orally at the hearing or subsequently and shall be confirmed in writing within ten working days to the complainant and where relevant, the person complained about. Findings and recommendations will also be available for inspection on the Academy premises by the proprietor and the Headteacher.

Where a complaint evokes a formal procedure, or proceeds to a panel hearing, a written record will be kept of all complaints made and any action taken by the Academy as a result of the complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

All correspondence, statements and records relating to the individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

The local authority does not investigate complaints directly. If a complaint is made either in writing or verbally to the Director of Children's Services or to any officer of the local authority, the Governing Body of the Academy is made aware of the complaint and is requested to deal with it through the adopted procedure.