



**The Telford Langley School**  
**ENSURING EXCELLENCE**

**Exams Complaints and Appeals Procedure**

Approved: Autumn 2025

# Exams Complaints and Appeals Procedure

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Exams Complaints and Appeals Procedure
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Mr Craig Pattinson, Deputy Headteacher
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# 1. Purpose of the procedure

This procedure confirms The Telford Langley School's compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3, 5.8) that the centre will draw to the attention of candidates and their parents/carers our written complaints and appeals procedure, which covers general complaints regarding the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification and our internal appeals procedure.

## 2. Grounds for complaint

A candidate (or their parent/carer) may make a complaint on the grounds below (this is not an exhaustive list).

### Teaching and learning

- ▶ Quality of teaching and learning, for example
  - ▶ Non-subject specialist teacher without adequate training/subject matter expertise utilised on a long-term basis
  - ▶ Teacher lacking knowledge of new specification/incorrect core content studied/taught
  - ▶ Core content not adequately covered
  - ▶ Inadequate feedback for a candidate following assessment(s)
- ▶ Pre-release/advance material/set task issued by the awarding body not provided on time to an exam candidate
- ▶ The taking of an assessment, which contributes to the final grade of the qualification, not conducted according to the JCQ/awarding body instructions
- ▶ The marking of an internal assessment (centre assessed work), which contributes to the final grade of the qualification, not undertaken according to the requirements of the awarding body
- ▶ Candidate not informed of their centre assessed marks prior to marks being submitted to the awarding body
- ▶ Candidate not informed of their centre assessed marks in sufficient time to request/appeal a review of marking prior to marks being submitted to the awarding body
- ▶ Candidate not given sufficient time to review materials to make a decision whether to request a review of centre assessed marks
- ▶ Candidate unhappy with internal assessment decision (complainant to refer via the school website to the centre's *internal appeals procedure*)
- ▶ Centre fails to adhere to its *internal appeals procedure*

### Access arrangements

- ▶ Candidate not assessed by the centre's appointed assessor
- ▶ Candidate not involved in decisions made regarding their access arrangements
- ▶ Candidate did not consent to record of their personal data online (by the non-acquisition of a completed candidate personal data consent form)
- ▶ Candidate not informed/adequately informed of the arrangements in place and the subjects or components of subjects where the arrangements would not apply
- ▶ Exam information not appropriately adapted for a disabled candidate to access it
- ▶ Adapted equipment /assistive technology put in place failed during exam/assessment
- ▶ Approved access arrangement(s) not put in place at the time of an exam/assessment

- ▶ Appropriate arrangements not put in place at the time of an exam/assessment as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment
- ▶ Candidate unhappy with internal assessment decision relating to access arrangements or special consideration (complainant to refer via the school website to the centre's *internal appeals procedure*)
- ▶ Centre fails to adhere to its *internal appeals procedure*

### **Entries**

- ▶ Failure to clearly explain a decision of early entry for a qualification to candidate (or parent/carer)
- ▶ Candidate not entered/entered late (incurring a late entry fee) for a required exam/assessment
- ▶ Candidate entered for a wrong exam/assessment
- ▶ Candidate entered for a wrong tier of entry

### **Conducting examinations**

- ▶ Failure to adequately brief candidate on exam timetable/exam regulations prior to exam/assessment taking place
- ▶ Room in which exam held did not provide candidate with appropriate conditions for taking the exam
- ▶ Inadequate invigilation in exam room
- ▶ Failure to conduct exam according to the regulations
- ▶ Online system failed during (online) exam/assessment
- ▶ Disruption during exam/assessment
- ▶ Alleged, suspected or actual malpractice incident not investigated/reported
- ▶ Eligible application for special consideration for a candidate not submitted/not submitted to timescale
- ▶ Failure to inform/update candidate on the accepted/rejected outcome of a special consideration application if provided by awarding body

### **Results and Post-results**

- ▶ Before exams, candidate not made aware of the arrangements for post-results services and the accessibility of senior members of centre staff after the publication of results
- ▶ Candidate not having access to a member of senior staff after the publication of results to discuss/make decision on the submission of an enquiry
- ▶ Candidate request for return of work after moderation and work not available/disposed of earlier than allowed in the regulations
- ▶ Candidate (or parent/carer) unhappy with a result (complainant to refer via exams officer to awarding body *post-results services*)
- ▶ Candidate (or parent/carer) unhappy with a centre decision not to support a clerical check, a review of marking, a review of moderation or an appeal (complainant to refer via the centre's *internal appeals procedure*)
- ▶ Centre fails to adhere to its *internal appeals procedure*
- ▶ Centre applied for the wrong post-results service/for the wrong script for a candidate
- ▶ Centre missed awarding body deadline to apply for a post-results service

- ▶ Centre applied for a post-results service for candidate without gaining required candidate consent/permission

### **3. Registering a complaint**

If a candidate (or their parent/carer) has a general concern or complaint about the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification they are following, Telford Langley School encourages the candidate to try to resolve this informally in the first instance. If a complaint fails to be resolved informally, the candidate (or their parent/carer) is then at liberty to make a formal complaint.

Complaints must be made in line with the Community Academies Trust Complaints Policy which can be found on the school website.

### **4. Links to other School Policies and References**

This procedure links to the following policies and procedures:

- JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres **2025-2026**
- Community Academies Trust Complaints Policy\*

### **5. Community Academies Trust Complaints Policy**

\*Details of the key principles and procedures taken directly from the Community Academies Trust Complaints Policy:

#### **2 Key principles**

2.1 The trust expects all complainants to make reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution.

2.2 The trust encourages parents and others to approach the school with any concerns and refrain from airing concerns about the school and its staff on social media sites. Posting negative comments on social media can cause damage and upset and is often counter-productive to pupils' education.

2.3 To investigate your complaint properly and fairly, we have implemented a staged approach. We anticipate that almost all complaints that arise will be resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2 outlined below.

2.4 We expect our members of staff to be addressed in a respectful manner and for communication to remain polite at all times. The procedure under Part 3 will only be used on very rare occasions to deal with repetitious and/or vexatious complaints or complaints pursued in an otherwise unreasonable manner.

2.5 Concerns or complaints should be brought to our attention as soon as possible. Any matter raised more than 3 months after the incident being complained of (or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 3 months of the last of these incidents) will not be considered unless the Headteacher accepts that there are good reasons to explain the delay or the complaint is about a particularly serious matter.

2.6 Where a complaint is received outside of term time, we will consider it to have been received on the first school day following the holiday period.

2.7 On rare occasions a school or the trust may receive complaints from a number of individuals relating to the same issue. In order to deal with these complaints efficiently the school/trust may follow the procedure set out in Part 4.

2.8 If it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines set out within this procedure, you will be advised accordingly and given an explanation as to why this has been the case and provided with revised timescales. If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority safeguarding teams or tribunals/courts, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. Where a complaint is raised but we do not have clarity from the complainant on the issues and/or desired outcomes, we will inform the complainant what information we need to progress the complaint and pause this procedure until reasonable clarity is achieved.

2.9 Complainants should not approach individual governors or trustees to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may prevent them from considering complaints at later stages.

2.10 If a complainant commences legal action against the trust in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether it would be appropriate to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

2.11 If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

### **3 Records of complaints**

A record will be kept of all written formal complaints, including at what stage they were resolved and action taken by us as a result of those complaints regardless of whether they were upheld. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where:

- access is requested by the Secretary of State;
- disclosure is required in the course of a school inspection;
- an individual has a legal right to access their own personal data contained within such documentation; or
- under other legal authority.

We will make the findings and recommendations of the Complaints Committee available for inspection on the school premises by the trust and the Headteacher.

## **4 Part 1: Complaints procedure for parents**

### **Stage 1: Informal concerns**

1.1 An informal concern can be raised in person, by telephone, by email or letter. Concerns may also be raised by a third party acting on behalf of a parent, as long as they have appropriate authority to do so. Most enquiries and concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily by the class teacher, Head of Key Stage, Head of Year or other members of staff without the need to resort to the formal procedure. We value informal meetings and discussions and

encourage parents to approach staff with any concerns they may have and aim to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding.

1.2 It is always helpful if you can fully explain the nature of the concern and identify the outcome you are looking for. Where appropriate, you may be invited to an informal meeting with the member of staff most appropriate for dealing with that concern. The member of staff dealing with the concern will make sure that you are clear on what action (if any) has been agreed. This may be put in writing if appropriate.

1.3 If the matter is brought to the attention of the Headteacher they may decide to deal with your concerns directly at this stage. If the concerns are about the Headteacher these should be referred directly to the Clerk to the School Standards Committee under Stage 2.

1.4 The school will respect the views of a parent who indicates that they would have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff. In this case, the Headteacher will refer the parent to another designated member of staff. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved in the circumstances leading to the concern feels too compromised to deal with it, the Headteacher may consider referring the parent to another member of staff. The member of staff may be more senior, but this is not essential.

1.5 Staff members should log all informal concerns and inform the Headteacher of any serious concerns.

1.6 There is no suggested timescale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion, although it would be expected that most issues will be resolved within 15 school days. Where no satisfactory solution has been found, you will be advised that if you wish your concerns to be considered further you should write to the Headteacher under Stage 2 of this procedure within 15 school days.

1.7 At any stage of the complaints process, complainants may instead seek to resolve their complaint informally by discussing their concerns with the trust Complaint Relations Officer.

## **Stage 2: Formal written complaints**

2.1 If your concerns are not resolved under Stage 1, you are entitled to put your complaint in writing and send this to the Headteacher of the relevant school.

2.2 It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like us to take to resolve your complaint. The Complaint Form provided at Annex 2 is provided for this purpose. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you. In all cases your written complaint must include:

- the nature of the complaint;
- details of how the matter has been dealt with so far;
- the names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of all relevant documents; and
- a clear statement of the actions that you would like us to take to resolve your complaint.

2.3 Your complaint will normally be acknowledged in writing within five school days of receipt. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the [school/trust's] complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This will normally be within 15 school days of receipt.

2.4 If appropriate, the Headteacher (or someone appointed by them) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your complaints and to explore possible resolutions. If you accept that

invitation, you may be accompanied by one other person, such as a friend, relative or interpreter, to assist you. Where possible, this meeting will take place within 10 school days of receipt of the written complaint.

2.5 If necessary, witnesses will be interviewed and statements taken from those involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil will usually be interviewed. Pupils will normally be interviewed with their parent present, but if this would seriously delay the investigation of a serious or urgent complaint or if the pupil has specifically said that they would prefer that their parents were not involved, another member of staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable will be present. If the matter includes a complaint relating to a member of staff, the member of staff will have the opportunity to respond to the complaint.

2.6 Once the relevant facts have been established as far as possible, you will be provided with a written response to the complaint, including an explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. This will include what action will be taken to resolve the complaint (if any). You will be advised that if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, you may request that your complaint be heard by the Complaints Committee under Stage 3 of this procedure.

2.7 The trust may engage an independent, external person to carry out the investigation into the Stage 2 complaint or to review the investigation and response at Stage 2. This may be appropriate where the complaint is particularly complex or involves legal issues.

**Q. What if the complaint is about the Headteacher or the Headteacher has already considered your complaint under Stage 1?**

In these cases, your complaint should be sent to the Clerk to the School Standards Committee (governors) at the school's address who will arrange for a governor to carry out the Stage 2 procedure.

**Q. What if the complaint is about a governor on the School Standards Committee (local governing body)?**

Complaints about the Chair of Governors or any individual governor should be addressed to the Clerk to the School Standards Committee via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. The Clerk will arrange for another governor or trustee (as applicable) to investigate the concerns in accordance with Stage 2. If the complaint is about the Clerk to the School Standards Committee or the School Standards Committee as a whole, you should send your complaint to the Executive Assistant to the Directors/Governance Manager c/o Community Academies Trust, Dimpleby House, Stonydelph Primary School, Crowden Road, Wilnecote, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B77 4LS, who will then determine the most appropriate action with regards to Stage 2 and Stage 3.

**Q. What if the complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer?**

If the complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer of the trust, or if they have been closely involved at Stage 1, your complaint should be sent to the Executive Assistant to the Directors/Governance Manager who will arrange for a trustee to carry out all the Stage 2 procedures.

**Q. What if the complaint is about a trustee, the Executive Assistant to the Directors/Governance Manager or a member of the trust?**

If the complaint is about a trustee or member of the trust, you should contact the Executive Assistant to the Directors/Governance Manager who will arrange for another trustee to investigate the concerns in accordance with Stage 2. If the complaint is about the Executive

Assistant to the Directors/Governance Manager, your complaint should be sent to the Chair of the Trustees.

If your complaint is about the trust board as a whole, you should send your complaint to the Executive Assistant to the Directors/Governance Manager c/o Community Academies Trust Dimbleby House, Stoneydelph Primary School, Crowden Road, Wilnecote, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B77 4LS, who will arrange for the matter to be independently investigated. Please be aware that where your complaint relates to an employee a copy of the complaint may be shared with them in order to investigate the issues raised.

### **Stage 3: Referral to the Complaints Committee**

3.1 If you are dissatisfied with the decision under Stage 2, you may request that a Complaints Committee be convened to consider your complaint. The Complaints Committee will principally consider how the complaint was handled at the previous stages but has discretion to review other aspects of the complaint as it sees fit. The Complaints Committee will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

3.2 To request a hearing before the Complaints Committee, you should write to the Executive Assistant to the Directors/Governance Manager at Community Academies Trust, Dimbleby House, Stoneydelph Primary School, Crowden Road, Wilnecote, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B77 4LS, within 15 school days of receiving notice of the outcome of Stage 2. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. You should ensure that you provide copies of all relevant documents and state all the grounds for your complaint and the outcome that you are looking for.

3.3 Your written request will be acknowledged within five school days of receipt.

3.4 The Executive Assistant to the Directors/Governance Manager will assume the role of the Clerk and will arrange for a Complaints Committee to be convened, made up of at least three committee members, including:

- Governors of a School Standards Committee and/or trustees of the trust (as appropriate) with no prior involvement in the matter; and,
- one person who is independent of the management and running of the school (NB: this can be a local governor from a different school within the same trust if they have no conflict or prior knowledge)
- the Clerk shall appoint one of these committee members to be the Chair of the Committee.

3.5 Every effort will be made to enable the hearing to take place within 20 school days of the receipt of your request. As soon as reasonably practicable and in any event at least five school days before the hearing, you will be sent written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the committee members who will be present. Fair consideration will be given to any bona fide objection to a particular member of the committee. You will also be informed of the name of the person who will be presenting the case on behalf of the school/trust (referred to in this policy as the 'school representative'). This may be the person who is the subject of the complaint, the person who undertook the investigation at Stage 2 and/or another person with sufficient knowledge of the matter.

3.6 If, despite best efforts, it is not possible to find a mutually convenient date and time for a hearing within a reasonable timeframe, the Clerk may determine that the hearing proceeds on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

3.7 You have the right to be accompanied to the hearing by a friend, relative or interpreter. You should notify the Clerk in advance if you intend to bring anyone to the hearing. We do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the Complaints Committee meeting. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend. The Complaints Committee itself may take legal advice and/or be supported by a legal advisor at the hearing on matters of law and procedure.

3.8 A copy of the complaint and any other documents provided by you in support of your complaint, or by the school representative in defence of the complaint, will be provided to the Complaints Committee as soon as practicable upon receipt. Copies of these documents shall also be provided to you and the school representative (as applicable) at least 3 school days before the hearing. The Complaints Committee reserves the right not to consider any documentation presented by either party less than 3 school days prior to the hearing. The Complaints Committee is under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and/or may take written statements into account. The committee will not normally accept recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

3.9 The hearing will be conducted to ensure that each party has the opportunity to address the Complaints Committee. The procedure to be followed during the hearing will be explained to the parties by letter in advance of the hearing. The Clerk will ensure that sufficient notes are taken to record an accurate reflection of the points considered and any decisions taken or actions agreed. Electronic recordings of the hearing will not normally be permitted and, in any event, would require the consent of all those present.

3.10 Unless otherwise stated, the procedure for the Stage 3 hearing is as follows:

- the parent and school representative will enter the hearing together;
- the Chair of the Committee will introduce the committee members and outline the process;
- the parent will explain the complaint;
- the school representative and committee members will question the parent;
- the school representative will explain the school/trust's actions; the parent and the committee members will question the school representative;
- the parent will sum up their complaint;
- the school representative will sum up the school/trust's actions;
- the Chair of the Committee will explain that both parties will hear from the committee within five school days;
- both parties will leave together while the committee decides;
- the Clerk, and any legal advisor assisting the committee (if applicable), will stay to assist the committee with its decision making.

3.11 The Clerk and or Complaints Committee reserves the right to modify the above procedure at their sole discretion, for example requiring the parent and the school representative to present their complaint/actions separately to the Complaints Committee in the absence of the other party.

3.12 A Complaints Committee may be adjourned if the Complaints Committee require further evidence or in exceptional circumstances (for example, if clarification sought by the Complaints Committee is essential to the proceedings). The adjourned date must be as soon as possible.

3.13 After the hearing, the Complaints Committee will consider their decision and inform you and, where relevant, the person complained about of their decision in writing within five school days. The letter will set out the decision of the committee together with the reasons underpinning that decision. The committee can (by a majority if necessary):

- 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 school or trust systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

#### **Stage 4: Referral of complaint to the Department for Education (DfE)**

4.1 If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Complaints Committee, you are entitled to refer your complaint to the Department for Education (DfE). The DfE will only investigate whether the complaint was handled properly and in accordance with education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and cannot change an academy's decision about a complaint.

4.2 At the time of writing this procedure, details about the DfE procedure and the DfE online enquiry form are available at: [How DfE handles complaints about academies - GOV.UK](#) Or you can write to the DfE at the following address:

Department for Education School complaints compliance unit

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester M1 2WD

A summary of the complaints procedure taken from Annex 3 of the Community Academies Trust Complaint Policy

**Annex 3: Summary of Complaints Procedure for Parents and Carers (Part 1)**

<b>Stage 1: Informal concerns</b>	Parent brings complaint to attention of member of staff
	Issue to be resolved (guide: within <b>15 school days</b> )
	Where no satisfactory solution has been found, parent to be advised that they should proceed to Stage 2
<b>Stage 2: Formal Written Complaint</b>	Parent to put complaint in writing using Complaint Form within <b>15 school days</b>
	Complaint to be acknowledged within <b>five school days</b>
	Meeting with parents within <b>10 school days</b> (where appropriate)
	Response to the complaint sent within <b>15 school days</b>
<b>Stage 3: Referral to Complaints Committee</b>	Parent to request hearing within <b>15 school days</b> of receiving notice of the outcome of Stage 2
	Request to be acknowledged within <b>five school days</b>
	Hearing to take place within <b>20 school days</b> of receipt of request
	Notification of date, time and place of the hearing and details of the committee members present sent at least <b>five school days</b> before the hearing
	School representative and parents to submit evidence in support of their case to the Executive Assistant to the Directors/Governance Manager at least <b>3 school days</b> before the hearing
	Complaints Committee decision sent not more than <b>five school days</b> after the hearing

## Complaints form

FOR CENTRE USE ONLY	
Date received	
Reference No.	

Please tick box to indicate the nature of your complaint

- Complaint against the centre's delivery of a qualification
- Complaint against the centre's administration of a qualification

Name of complainant	
Candidate name (if different to complainant)	
Please state the grounds for your complaint below:	
<p>If your grounds are lengthy, please write as bullet points; please keep to the point and include relevant detail such as dates, names etc. and provide any evidence you may have to support what you say.</p> <p>If necessary, continue on an additional page if this form is being completed electronically or overleaf if hard copy being completed.</p>	
Detail any steps you have already taken to resolve the issue(s) and what you would consider to be a good resolution to the issue(s)	
Complainant signature:	Date of signature:

This form must be completed in full - an incomplete form will be returned to the complainant.

