

# Complaints Procedure

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## Version Control Document

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## 1. Introduction

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 all Local Governing Bodies are required to have in place a procedure for dealing with complaints.

All establishments within the TEN Group want their students to be healthy, happy and safe and to achieve. They recognise that parents, carers or guardians play an important part in making this happen. Co-operation between parents, carers, staff and Governors leads to a shared sense of purpose and a good atmosphere in the Academy.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

This two part policy defines the procedures for dealing with all complaints relating to the provision of facilities or services at each of our Academies which will:

- Ensure complaints are listened to, explored and responded to quickly and effectively.
- Ensure complaints are dealt with by an appropriately designated person.
- Ensure outcomes of complaints are communicated in a timely manner to all relevant parties.
- Ensure that all parties work in partnership in achieving an effective, improving group of Academies.

## 3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 The TEN Group takes seriously any concern or complaint raised with it by a parent or carer of its pupils or any other body or individual. We believe that tackling issues at the earliest possible stage will improve our Academies and the TEN Group, enhance learning, prevent issues escalating and reduce the number of formal complaints.

This policy is prepared with reference to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. This policy will be accessible to all via the TEN Group website.

Any complaint must be put in writing to the relevant Academy or the TEN Group itself as appropriate. Academy and TEN Group staff should use their professional judgement when deciding if an issue, concern or query raised in writing should be seen as a complaint.

If uncertain, they should seek advice from their line manager. If there is any doubt, please refer the matter to the Principal of the Academy in question, or the Group Chief Executive of the TEN Group if the matter is related to the TEN Group itself.

- 3.2 All parents, carers, students and staff have a right to have complaints properly considered.

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with impartially and sensitively.

All issues should be addressed resulting in an effective/appropriate response as early as possible.

All complaints should be dealt with in confidence.

### 3.3 Principles for Academies

Complaints should be addressed to the individual Academy concerned, using its own complaints procedure. Each academy has a separate 'Part 2: Policy in Practice' which details the procedures to be followed.

### 3.4 Stages of the Procedure

Each Academy complaints procedure will include at least the following stages:

**Stage 1: Informal Stage**

**Stage 2: Formal Stage**

**Stage 3: Appeal Stage**

Procedures for Stages 1 and 2 are explained in the 'Part 2: Policy in Practice' for each Academy. Depending on the nature of the appeal it is recognised that stage 3 may well require being dealt with by staff outside of the Academy. Any appeal will be heard by a panel of at least three Governors/Board Directors which will normally include the Principal/Group Chief Executive.

No member of the panel will have had any prior involvement in the complaint or its investigation, and at least one will be independent of the management and running of the Academy/TEN Group.

The written appeal should set out precisely why you are dissatisfied and what you wish to be done. You will be invited to attend the panel hearing to address the panel directly and will have the right to be accompanied.

This is in addition to any written submission you make. Following the panel hearing you will be sent a formal response informing you of the decision. This process will be completed within a maximum period of 30 working/school days.

### 3.4 Complaints Involving the Principal

If your complaint involves the Academy Principal you should firstly have direct discussions with the Principal. Where it is not possible to resolve the complaint through discussions, you should set out your complaint in writing and send it to the Group Chief Executive of the TEN Group and send a copy to the Principal.

The Group Chief Executive will be responsible for ensuring Step 2 of the procedure is carried out. A written reply will be sent to you following the investigation. This will normally take place within 20 working/school days.

Step 3 would be undertaken if needed by a panel of Directors from the TEN Group.

### 3.5 Outcomes and Records

The outcome of any part of the formal process will be notified in writing to the complainant within the timescale indicated. This will also be given, where relevant, to the person complained about.

All documentation relating to any complaint will be held confidentially by the Principal or the TEN Group, whichever is applicable, in line with the TEN Group's Data Protection policy on document retention.

The Principal will report annually to Governors on complaints dealt with at this level, outlining the nature and outcome of complaints so that any changes or improvements needed in the Academy can be implemented. Reports aggregated across the Academies and the TEN Group itself may also be taken to the TEN Group's Board of Directors.

A register will also be held by the HR Manager of the TEN Group for complaints made against TEN Group staff and reported to the Board of Directors annually. All records of any complaints processes will be made available to the Secretary of State, or if a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

### 3.6 Action Under Other TEN Group Policies

Where necessary and appropriate, the outcome of any complaint against a member of staff investigated under this process may include a referral to other employment policies and procedures, e.g. disciplinary, capability. Any records of this will be held in accordance with that procedure and not with the records relating to the complaint.

Where there is found to be action necessary due to organisational failings or issues, this will be referred to the relevant TEN Group Committee or Board of Directors for resolution as necessary.

### 3.7 Recourse to External Parties

If the Complaints Policy has been exhausted, there is no further recourse within the TEN Group. However, if a complainant is dissatisfied with the response of the TEN Group, they are at liberty to write to the Secretary of State for Education or other appropriate external body.

## 4. Scope

This is a Norfolk Academies Part 1 Policy. As such, it provides the policy statement to be followed by all institutions that are part of the Norfolk Academies Multi-Academy Trust. Part 2 policies state the procedure followed by the individual institutions relating to this policy.

## 5. Legal Requirements

This policy is required by the Department for Education (DfE) and falls into the category of:

***C. Other Statutory Documents***

**6. References to Related TEN Group Policies**

Not applicable.

**7. Equal Opportunities Statement**

This policy has been assessed against the nine protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

There is no apparent impact on most characteristics although care must be taken to ensure that there is full access to this policy, particularly to those individuals who have a visual impairment or whose first language is not English to ensure there is no discrimination direct or indirect applied to the effective implementation of the procedures outlined in the policy.