

Venture Learning

Complaints Policy & Procedure

Venture Learning

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Introduction

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of young people receiving educational provision from Venture Learning. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Venture Learning about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Venture Learning takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases you will be referred to a different member of staff.

Venture Learning understands that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, we will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the procedures outlined within this complaints policy.

Key Staff and Contacts

Provision Based Contacts

Name	Role
Rhys Griffiths	**Head of Provision**
Holly Crann	**Deputy Head of Provision**
Contact details:	**Venture Learning** **19A Forester Street** **Netherfield** **Nottingham** **NG4 2LJ**
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Section 1: Roles and Responsibilities

1.1 Complainant

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

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible;
- co-operate with Venture Learning in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings
- treat allthose involved in the complaint with respect; and,
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

1.2 Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
    - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant and relevant others to establish what has happened and who has been involved
    - consideration of records and other relevant information
    - fair and unbiased analysis of nformation gathered; and,
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints coordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of interviews or arrange a for a note taker to record minutes;
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal;
- be mindful of the timescales to respond; and,
- prepare a comprehensive report for the Head of Provision that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

1.3 Head of Provision

The Head of Provision, acting as complaints coordinator, will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details. The Head of Provision is responsible for:

- ensuring that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure;
- overseeing liaison between all relevant parties;
- being aware of issues regarding:
    - sharing third party information
    - additional support for complainants;
- ensuring accurate records are kept of every stage of the process; and,
- ensuring that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Section 2: Procedures

2.1 How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. Complaints may be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints unless the Head of Provision determines that the complaint warrants investigation.

Complaints must be made within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints against school staff (except the Head of Provision) should be made, in the first instance, to the Head of Provision. They should be marked as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Head of Provision should be addressed to Stephen Fern, Finance Director. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this policy (Appendix A). If you require help in completing the form, you could ask third party organisations like Citizens Advice to help you.

To uphold our duties under the Equality Act 2010, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

2.2 Stage 1

The Head of Provision will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 working days. Within this response, the Head of Provision will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the headteacher will provide a formal written response within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Venture Learning will take to resolve the complaint.

The Head of Provision will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the Head of Provision, a suitably skilled member of the business team will be appointed to undertake the actions required in Stage 1.

2.3 Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can submit a request to escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with a complaints committee.

Venture Learning will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 30 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. The committee may request the service of the governors of a local school or the LA's governor services team to assemble a committee with no prior involvement with the complaint.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs. If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part; or,
- dismiss the complaint in whole oor in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint; and,
- where appropriate, recommend changes to Venture Learning's policies, systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Head of Provision with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing. The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

2.4 Alternative Procedures for Complaints

Complaints of a specific nature may need to be dealt with through procedures that differ from the standard process. These may be guided by statutory regulations, internal policies or the need for external investigation.

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). <insert LADO/MASH details>.
• Exclusion of children*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions. **complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.*
• Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. Please refer to the whistleblowing policy. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed

	person for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain directly to the Local Authority or the Department for Education (see link above) for serious complaints.
• Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
• Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant 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 service. Please contact them directly.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA), safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this prolicy or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

2.5 Resolving the Complaint

At each stage in the procedure, Venture Learning wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following, where appropriate:

- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made;
- an undertaking to review relevant policies in light of the complaint; and/or,
- an apology.

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