

Date written/reviewed:	13th May 2026 (reviewed)	
Written/reviewed by:	Andy Moughtin (Director of Services)	
Board approval:	Date:	22 nd May 2023
	Signed:	
	Position:	Trustee
Review due by:	13th May 2027	
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Substantive changes since last review:		

Complaints Procedure

Complaints Procedure for Students, Parents/Carers and Referrers at Acorn AP. As outlined in paragraph 7 of the Schedule to The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014.

Introduction

Acorn AP feels that our students and their parents/carers and referrers have the right to receive a high standard of service. The Complaints Procedure is in operation to enable our service users to be listened to and to ensure that any complaints are dealt with fairly, quickly and confidentially.

For further details about confidentiality contact the Head of Centre who will talk you through the appropriate policy. A copy of the Confidentiality Policy can be made available for inspection on request.

We view complaints positively as they give us the opportunity to improve the quality of our services. Many complaints can be resolved before they reach the formal stage. If this is not possible, it is important that fair, accessible action is taken.

You may wish for a staff member or another organisation to support you in your complaint.

Complaints Procedure

Informal Complaints

An informal complaint would be delivered verbally to your Acorn teacher, key worker or Head of Centre. This complaint would be listened to and addressed by talking to relevant people and producing a solution which is agreeable by all parties (where possible). Acorn staff will seek to resolve an informal complaint quickly and where possible, this will take place on the same day that the complaint is raised.

Formal Complaints

A formal complaint would be in writing, addressed to the most appropriate person(s) below. Be as detailed as possible about the complaint, giving dates/times of incident, any other people involved, and how you would like to see this complaint being resolved. These issues will be investigated in full and responded to in writing outlining our response to the complaint within 3 working days of receiving the complaint.

Acorn Head of Centre	Acorn Senior Leaders	Chair of Trustees
	Andy Moughtin or Gill Viner	Scott Halligan
	11 Nab Wood Terrace Shipley BD18 4HU	11 Nab Wood Terrace Shipley BD18 4HU

If you have completed this procedure, but believe your complaint has still not been dealt with, your complaint can be reviewed by a Panel of 3 or more people, appointed by the Chair of Trustees, who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and containing at least one member who is independent of the management and running of the Acorn Centre. The Chair of Trustees may delegate this responsibility to another member of the Board to avoid any potential conflicts of interest that may exist as a result of the Chair's close working relationship with the Directors.

Panel Procedures

Parents/carers would be welcome to attend the Panel Hearing(s), arranged at a time suitable for them to attend. The Panel Hearing should take place as soon as possible after it is requested and must be within 14 days. Parents/carers may be accompanied if they wish. This may well be held via an online meeting.

The Panel is expected to make findings and recommendations available within 5 working days. Copies of these written findings and recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and where relevant, the person complained about. They will also be available for inspection on the centre premises by the Chair of Trustees and the Head of Centre.

Records

Written records of all formal complaints, responses, meetings, and action taken regardless of whether they are upheld or resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a Panel Hearing, will be kept by Acorn AP. Documents will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. A further record of the number of 'formal complaints' received in the preceding school year will be available on request.

Further support and advice is also available from:

- Citizens Advice Bureau - www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Safeguarding related complaints (follows procedure below, as set out in our safeguarding policy)

For all safeguarding disclosures or concerns, workers must speak to the centre-based DSL (contact details in Appendix A).

If the child is in immediate danger or risk of harm, a referral **MUST** be made to children's social care and where appropriate, to the police, **IMMEDIATELY**.

If the child is not in immediate danger or risk of harm, staff can:

- Seek advice from the centre-based DSL, deputy, or Acorn AP safeguarding lead (contact details in Appendix A).

- Refer to local thresholds for referrals and early help, provided by the local safeguarding partnership. Thresholds from local safeguarding partnerships can be found on their websites (local links in Appendix A).
- Contact the local service desk to obtain advice (contact numbers in Appendix A).

Local procedures for making referrals to Children's Social Care can be found on the local safeguarding partnerships websites (local links in Appendix A). Workers should provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

All concerns and disclosures must be recorded on CPOMS

Complaints Procedure – Flow Chart

