



RESPECT. RESILIENCE. INTEGRITY.

Complaints Policy

FINAL APPROVAL

15 October 2026

NEXT DOCUMENT REVIEW

July 2027

Document owner	Vicki Sainsbury, Complaints Coordinator
Confirmed by	Krystian Liptrot, Chair of the proprietor board, for Life Changing Education Ltd
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Applies to	Parents and carers of current pupils and all staff involved in receiving, investigating or reviewing complaints. Proposed school site: Unit 4, Howarth Court, Oldham Gateway, Gateway Crescent, Chadderton, Oldham, OL9 9XB.

LCE ACADEMY

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1 Purpose scope and principles

This procedure applies to complaints from parents/carers of pupils currently receiving education at LCE Academy about the education or welfare of their child. The school may use the same principles for other legitimate concerns, but the Part 7 statutory procedure is designed for parents of current pupils.

- Accessible, impartial, non-adversarial and focused on full and fair investigation.
- Early resolution is encouraged but never used to prevent access to the formal procedure.
- Clear records, reasons, findings, recommendations and learning are retained securely.
- No pupil or parent is disadvantaged for raising a concern in good faith.
- Safeguarding, whistleblowing, staff grievance, data protection, examinations and criminal matters follow the appropriate separate route while the complaint is coordinated appropriately.

2 Who handles the complaint

Complaint concerns	Stage 1/2 route	Review route
Member of staff/ service	Relevant leader informally; Headteacher at formal Stage 2	Stage 3 panel if unresolved
Headteacher Sam Gray	Krystian Liptrot, Chair of the proprietor board and company, at Stage 2	Stage 3 panel appointed by the proprietor; no prior involvement
Krystian Liptrot, Chair of the proprietor board and company	Vicki Sainsbury, acting under a standing written delegation, appoints a conflict-free independent investigator from the documented local-authority or secondary-headteacher panel pool for Stage 2.	If Stage 3 is requested, Vicki Sainsbury appoints a separate three-person panel on behalf of the proprietor; no investigator or panel member may have had prior involvement.
Safeguarding allegation about an adult	Immediate safeguarding/allegations procedure; DSL/LADO/local authority route as applicable	Not delayed by the complaints process

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is not an ordinary complaints stage and is not used simply because a complaint concerns the proprietor. The LADO route is used where a concern or allegation about an adult working with children may meet the relevant safeguarding threshold, or where national/local procedures require direct referral because of conflict.

3 Stage 1 informal resolution

- 1 Raise the concern with the relevant member of staff, form tutor, key adult or leader, verbally or in writing.

- 2 The school acknowledges the concern within two school days and identifies the person handling it.
- 3 The handler listens, checks relevant facts and seeks a practical resolution, normally within five school days.
- 4 A brief note is retained where necessary for safeguarding, equality, recurring issues or improvement.
- 5 If unresolved, the parent is told how to make a formal Stage 2 complaint; informal resolution is not a compulsory barrier where the matter is serious or conflicted.

4 Stage 2 formal written complaint

The complaint should be sent to LCEAcademy@lifechangingeducation.uk or posted to the school, marked 'Private and Confidential - Formal Complaint'. It should identify the issue, relevant dates, steps already taken and the outcome sought. The school will provide reasonable assistance where disability, communication or language creates a barrier to putting the complaint in writing.

- 1 Acknowledge within two school days and confirm the appropriate conflict-free investigator.
- 2 Clarify the issues and desired resolution; secure relevant records and obtain fair representations from those involved.
- 3 Apply safeguarding, data-protection, equality and confidentiality controls throughout.
- 4 Provide a reasoned written outcome normally within 15 school days. If more time is needed, explain why and provide a revised date.
- 5 State whether each element is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld; record action taken or recommended regardless of outcome.
- 6 Explain how to request Stage 3 within 10 school days of the response.

5 Stage 3 complaints panel hearing

A Stage 3 hearing is convened by or on behalf of the proprietor within 20 school days of a valid request. Where exceptional circumstances prevent this, Vicki Sainsbury gives written reasons, confirms the earliest available date and keeps the complainant updated. The hearing takes place even if the parent does not attend; the panel considers the parent's written representations and all circulated evidence before reaching findings and recommendations. The panel consists of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters complained about, and at least one member is independent of the management and running of LCE Academy.

The documented panel pool draws on suitably experienced headteachers or senior leaders available through the school's secondary-school partnership/SLA arrangements; individual panel members are selected only after conflict and independence checks. Before appointment, each person is checked for prior involvement, management/governance links, personal interest and any other conflict. A person who regularly manages, advises or supplies the school is not treated as the independent member merely because they

work outside LCE Academy. Vicki Sainsbury coordinates complaint records. Kathryn McAuley holds the proprietor's panel pool and standing-delegation evidence. The Chair appoints an eligible replacement if a member is unavailable.

- The parent receives at least five school days' notice, the panel membership and the papers/timetable.
- The parent may attend and be accompanied by a friend, relative or supporter. Legal representation is not automatic, although the panel chair may permit it where fair and proportionate.
- The hearing is private, fair, accessible and non-adversarial; both parties can explain their case and respond to relevant evidence.
- The panel makes findings and recommendations and may uphold, partially uphold or dismiss the complaint.
- The written outcome is normally issued within 10 school days to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.
- A copy is available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and Headteacher.

6 Safeguarding and other specialist routes

Issue	Route
Immediate risk to a child	Protect the child and alert the DSL immediately; contact children's social care or police as required; create the pupil safeguarding record on CPOMS and do not wait for complaint stages. The complaint itself remains in the complaints record.
Allegation about a member of staff, the Headteacher or proprietor	Apply KCSIE 2026 and Oldham allegations/LADO procedures with conflict-free case management
Data protection	Use the school's data-protection complaints process and Information Commissioner's Office route
Whistleblowing	Use the whistleblowing procedure; staff concerns are not parent complaints
Examinations	Use awarding-body/Ofqual routes where applicable
Criminal conduct	Police; school safeguards and preserves evidence

7 Records confidentiality and reporting

- Maintain a secure written record of every formal Stage 2 complaint, whether it is resolved formally or proceeds to a panel.
- Record the issues, progress, evidence considered, findings, recommendations, outcome and action taken by the school regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.
- Record whether the complainant attended the panel and the panel membership/independence check.

- Keep correspondence, statements and records confidential except where the Secretary of State or an inspection body requests access, or where disclosure is required by law, court order or a safeguarding duty.
- Report anonymised themes, timeliness and action closure termly to the proprietor body, with advisory governance scrutiny. The number of formal complaints registered during the preceding school year is made available to parents and prospective parents through the website and on request.
- Apply the school's records-retention schedule and review it against limitation, safeguarding and data-protection requirements.

An accepted complaint continues fairly through this procedure if the pupil leaves. External safeguarding and statutory routes remain available. Accessible complaint records capture the issue, dates, previous steps, outcome sought, contact details and communication adjustments. Data-protection complaints follow their applicable acknowledgement and response arrangements.

8 Data protection complaints

A complaint by a data subject about the Academy's processing of personal data is handled under section 164A of the Data Protection Act 2018 alongside the Data Protection, Privacy and Information Governance Policy. The Academy will provide an accessible route for making the complaint, acknowledge it within 30 days, take appropriate steps to investigate without undue delay and communicate the outcome promptly. Vicki Sainsbury will route the complaint to Kathryn McAuley, Data Protection Lead, and ensure that the ordinary complaints timetable does not conflict with these duties. The complainant will be told of their right to raise the matter with the Information Commissioner's Office. Where the same facts also engage safeguarding, employment or another specialist process, the routes will be coordinated without delaying protective action.

9 Persistent serial or unreasonable conduct

A complaint is not unreasonable because it is persistent, difficult or critical. Contact restrictions are considered only after the school has completed the procedure fairly and where conduct is abusive, threatening, excessively repetitive or prevents proportionate school operation. Any restriction is tailored, time-limited, reviewed, communicated in writing and does not block safeguarding information or a new materially different complaint.

10 External regulatory contact

After completing the school procedure, a parent may report a serious alleged failure to meet the Independent School Standards to the Department for Education. DfE regulates independent schools but does not normally re-determine an individual complaint. Ofsted does not investigate individual complaints about independent schools; DfE may commission inspection activity where concerns indicate possible regulatory failure.

DfE private-school complaints information: [DfE guidance](#)

Publication approval and review

- Publish this procedure on the school website and provide a paper/accessibility-adjusted copy on request.
- Train staff to identify complaints, conflicts and safeguarding routes and to preserve records.
- Maintain the named independent panel pool and written conflict/independence checks before any hearing.
- Review annually in July and after any complaint that exposes a procedural weakness or statutory change.



Authoritative sources and operating references

- Authoritative sources: Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 7; DfE Independent school standards guidance (April 2026); DfE Complaints information for private schools; and DfE Keeping children safe in education 2026.