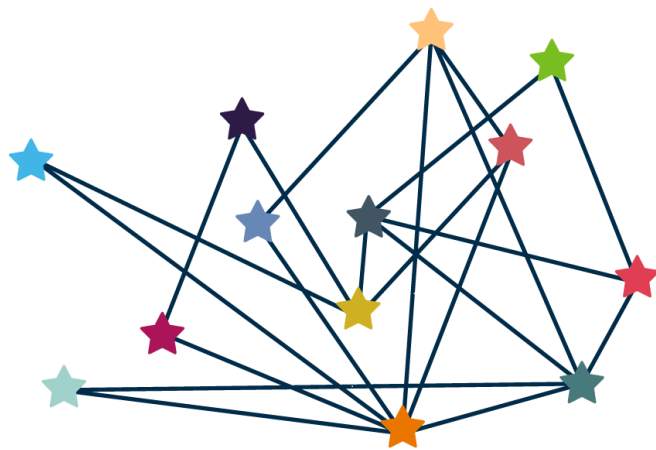


ULT Complaints Policy



UTTOXETER
LEARNING TRUST
INSPIRED TEACHING
INSPIRING CHILDREN

Approved: Autumn Term 2019
Due for review: Autumn Term 2021

Uttoxeter Learning Trust

Complaints Policy

Purpose

All schools in the Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT) are committed to providing a high quality education for your child but occasionally you may have some concerns regarding your child's education. When this happens it is important that those concerns are raised as soon as possible with the school direct. All of our schools have a good track record of responding with sensitivity and with the primary concern of resolving matters as quickly as possible so that:

- there is the minimum of disruption to your child's education
- good relations are restored between all concerned
- issues are addressed with as much discretion as possible

All schools have a detailed complaints policy and procedure that has been approved by Trustees of the ULT and will provide you with a copy of that policy on request. It can also be accessed through each school's website.

There are three stages to the complaints policy and procedure:

Policy and Procedure

Stage 1 – Expressing Concerns

Talking informally with the class teacher or member of staff responsible for the area you are concerned about. If your concern is more serious you may prefer to make an appointment to discuss it with the headteacher or a member of the school's leadership team. At this stage, all staff will make every effort to resolve your concern promptly and at least within 48 hours.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint (Headteacher or Chair of Governors)

It may be that the headteacher has not been aware of your concerns prior to this point. An appointment should therefore be made to discuss your concerns with the headteacher, who will then seek to investigate your concerns, as well as attempting to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of all concerned. Alternatively, the headteacher may request that the deputy headteacher leads on the investigation.

If your complaint is about the headteacher then you should contact the school's chair of governors who will seek to resolve the matter through discussion with both you and the headteacher.

Any communication with the headteacher or chair of governors will be acknowledged within 5 working days and a written response will be sent within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint. Where concerns cannot be resolved by the headteacher (or the chair of governors if applicable) then you can request that your complaint is referred to the governing body's complaints committee. The school will be able to provide you with a form for this purpose, should you wish. (See appendix 1 for example of complaints form)

Stage 3 – Formal Complaint (Governing Body Complaints Committee)

If your complaint is referred to the governing board's complaints committee then it will meet to consider the complaint and you will be invited to attend the meeting to make representations in person. You are able to be accompanied at the panel meeting if you wish. The meeting will be held at a time and a venue convenient for all parties.

Acknowledgement of your complaint will be sent within 5 school days and the governing board's complaints committee will meet within 20 school days of receiving the complaint. The complainant and members of the complaints committee will receive at least 5 school days' notice of the date, time and venue for the meeting.

To ensure impartiality the complaints committee will be made up of a cross-section of governors who have not been directly involved in the complaint and one member who is independent of the management and running of the school. A trustee of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust will also attend. The headteacher and chair of governors will not be members of the complaints committee, although one or both may also be requested to attend the meeting.

Whether the complaint has been investigated by the headteacher, chair of governors or a complaints committee, a written response will be sent to you within 10 school days outlining the outcome of the investigation and detailing how the conclusion has been reached. The letter will also tell you where to next take the complaint if you are not satisfied with the response provided.

If the committee upholds the complaint, redress will be appropriate to the complaint and may include:

- an appropriate expression of regret
- provide the solution desired by the complainant
- change school procedures to avoid future problems

The letter will also make clear who is responsible for taking remedial action and to ensure that the remedy is carried out.

If the committee does not uphold the complaint you will be given a response and informed of any further action that might be considered appropriate.

Your complaint will always be kept confidential and a written record of each stage of the process will be kept in school.

Role of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

There is not a general right of appeal against the decision of the governing body's complaints committee. However, if you feel that proper procedures were not followed or reasonable consideration given to the complaint, you can raise the matter with the ULT's Trust Board.

A letter should be sent to the Chief Executive Officer of the ULT explaining:

- what your complaint to the committee was
- the response made to it
- why you think that the committee has not followed a proper procedure in considering the complaint
- why you think that the committee's consideration of it was unreasonable

If your complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer then your letter should be sent to the chair of the Trust Board.

The Chief Executive Officer, or the chair of the Trust Board, will review the complaint on behalf of the ULT and provide a written response, within 10 school days, to inform you of any further enquiries made into your complaint. If the committee is perceived not to have followed the proper procedure and considered the complaint reasonably the Chief Executive Officer, or the chair of the Trust Board may make practical suggestions to the committee, including a request to further investigate the matter if considered appropriate.

If you wish to raise the matter with the ULT then please contact the Chief Executive Officer or chair of the Trust Board at:

Post – Thomas Alleyne’s High School, Dove Bank, Uttoxeter, ST14 8DU

Email – office@tahs.org.uk

Role of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

This complaints policy and procedure follows the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 2016 guidance “Procedure for dealing with complaints about academies”. The guidance is clear that before submitting a complaint to the ESFA the first step must be to make a complaint direct to the school or academy.

If you still remain dissatisfied and feel that the neither the school or the ULT has followed the appropriate procedure, any relevant policies, or has failed to discharge a statutory duty, you should refer your complaint to the ESFA. However, the ESFA cannot change any decision a school has made about the complaint and will only look at whether the school considered the complaint properly by following its complaints policy. If considered appropriate the ESFA may ask the school to reconsider the complaint from an appropriate stage and/or change its complaints procedure so that it complies with legal requirements.

It should also be noted that the ESFA will only look at complaints about schools that fall into the following areas:

- undue delay or non-compliance with a school’s own complaints procedure
- a school’s failure to comply with a duty imposed on it under its funding agreement with the Secretary of State
- a school’s failure to comply with any other legal obligation, unless there is another organisation better placed to consider the matter.

If you feel that your complaint is eligible for escalation to the ESFA, you should send it via:

- the Department for Education’s ‘school complaints form’ at www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/school-complaints-form
- by post to: Ministerial and Public Communications Division
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

Persistent or Vexatious Complaints

You may remain dissatisfied despite all the procedures having been followed and reasonable responses being provided. It may be the case that it is not possible to resolve all your concerns and meet all your wishes. Sometimes it is preferable to ‘agree to disagree’ and move on.

If you do continue to make representations to the school on the same issues, the governing body reserves the right to inform you, in writing, that the appropriate procedures have all been followed, that all reasonable actions have been taken to try to resolve the issue and that the matter is now closed. Should you then write to the school again on the same issue (s), there is no obligation on the School to respond to you in that case.

Correspondence received from any complainant subsequent to closure will be kept on file, indefinitely, as will notes of telephone calls and any further personal calls referring to the matter.

Appendix 1

School Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it in a sealed envelope marked 'Private and Confidential' to the Head teacher / Chair of Governors of the school in question who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name

Relationship with school
(eg parent of a pupil on the school's roll)

Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint).....

Your Address

Daytime telephone number Evening telephone number
.....

Please give concise details of your complaint (including dates, names of witnesses etc...), to allow the matter to be fully integrated :

You may continue on separate paper if you wish (please attach additional paperwork)

Number of additional pages attached =

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (ie who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

What action do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

For School use:

Date form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:

Date: