



# Complaints Policy

## Statutory

Reviewed: December 2025

Next Review Date: December 2027

Role Responsible: Executive Head



## 1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how Humberstone Infant and Junior Academies will respond to and resolve complaints in a fair, consistent, and timely manner.

It applies primarily to complaints raised by **parents and carers of pupils currently registered at the school**. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any concerns or complaints are handled with respect, transparency, and a focus on resolution at the earliest possible stage.

At the school's **discretion**, complaints may also be considered from other members of the community where the issue relates directly to the provision of services or facilities by the school.

Complaints relating to staff employment, safeguarding, admissions, exclusions, SEND assessments, or any other matter covered by a separate statutory or HR procedure are not covered by this policy. In such cases, the relevant separate procedure will apply.

## 2. Distinguishing a Concern from a Complaint

A **concern** is an expression of worry or doubt over an issue for which reassurance is sought. A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action.

It is in everyone's best interest to resolve concerns informally at the earliest opportunity. Most concerns can be resolved quickly by speaking with the class teacher, Head of School or relevant member of staff. If the concern remains unresolved, the matter should be raised formally under this complaints procedure.

## 3. Reasonableness Check

Before progressing to Stage 1, the Head of School, or relevant senior leader, will determine whether the complaint is **reasonable and appropriate** to investigate under this procedure.

Complaints may be deemed unreasonable if they:

- Relate to matters that are **beyond the school's control**
- Concern **very minor, everyday issues** that can be resolved informally
- Have already been **fully addressed or where the complaint process has been fully exhausted**
- Are **vexatious, malicious, repetitive or personal in nature**
- Where the academy is satisfied that the **complainant is intent on causing disruption or inconvenience**

If a complaint is deemed unreasonable, the complainant will be informed in writing by the Executive Head or Head of School, with an explanation and details of how to contact Ofsted and/or the DfE, should the complainant wish to pursue escalation

beyond the school.

Ultimately, if a complainant persists in pursuing a complaint to the point where the academy considers that the behaviour of the complainant constitutes harassment, discrimination and/or is threatening or intimidating to the staff of the academy, and/or a threat to the welfare or well-being of any child at the academy, it may be necessary for the academy to take further and proportional action, including (by way of example) the imposition of a ban on the complainant from contacting the academy and/or attending academy premises and/or taking legal action (which may include seeking an injunction or court order).

#### **4. 4. How to raise a concern or make a complaint**

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. Complainants should not approach individual Trustees or The Trust Board to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at further stages of the process.

Complaints against school staff (except the Head of School) should be made in the first instance, to the Head of School via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. **It is assumed they will already have sought resolution through informal means first. (stage 1)**

Complaints that involve, or are about the Head of School should be addressed to the Executive Head Teacher, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that are about the Executive Head Teacher should be addressed to the Chair of Board of Directors, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of the Board of Directors, any individual Trustee or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Trust Board via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

In accordance with equality law, 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.

#### **Anonymous complaints**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. The Executive Head Teacher or Chair of The Trust Board, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

#### **Time scales**

You must raise the complaint 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 only if exceptional circumstances apply. This decision will be made by the Executive Head Teacher.

### **Complaints received outside of term time**

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## **5. 5. Stages of the Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage 1: Informal Resolution**

In most cases, concerns should be resolved informally through discussion with the class teacher/other relevant member of staff in the first instance or Head of School/ member of the leadership team. If the concern cannot be resolved informally, the complainant may choose to proceed to Stage 2.

### **Stage 2: Formal Complaint**

Formal complaints should be made to the Head of School (unless the complaint concerns them) via the school office. This can be done in person, by telephone, by email, or in writing using the school's complaint form (see appendix A).

**The Head of School will acknowledge receipt within five school days**, clarify the nature of the complaint and desired outcome, and decide whether a meeting would help resolve the issue. The Head of School may delegate the investigation to another senior leader but will retain responsibility for the final decision.

During the investigation, those involved may be interviewed, and written records may be kept of meetings and discussions. **A written response will be provided to the complainant within ten school days of receipt (or an update given if more time is needed)**. The response will explain the findings, decisions, and any actions taken to resolve the matter, along with details of how to escalate the complaint if the outcome is not satisfactory.

If the complaint concerns the Head of School, it should be directed to the Executive Headteacher. Complaints about the Executive Headteacher or Trust Board members (including the Chair or Vice Chair) will be investigated by a suitably independent Trustee. Where the complaint involves the whole Board or the majority of its members, it will be escalated to the CEO of the Trust.

### **Stage 3: Panel Hearing**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2, they may request a **panel hearing** within **five school days** of receiving the written response from stage

The panel will consist of three people, at least one of whom is independent of the

management and running of the school. The Clerk to the Trust Board will arrange the meeting within **20 school days** of the request and will confirm the date, time, and venue in writing.

The complainant may attend and be accompanied by a friend or relative. All relevant written material will be shared with both parties at least **five school days before the meeting**.

**The panel's role is to ensure that the complaint has been handled fairly, thoroughly, and in accordance with this policy rather than to re-investigate the original issue.** The panel will review the evidence presented, ask questions as necessary, and decide whether the complaint should be upheld in full, upheld in part, or dismissed.

Within ten school days of the hearing, the Chair of the Panel will provide a written outcome summarising the findings, the panel's decision, and any actions to be taken. This outcome will be final within the school's internal procedure and will include details of how to contact Ofsted and/or the DfE if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

## **6. Escalation Beyond the School**

If the complainant believes the complaint was not handled in accordance with this policy or that the school acted unlawfully or unreasonably, they may contact Ofsted and/or the DfE.

## **7. Record-Keeping and Confidentiality**

A written record will be kept of all complaints, including whether they were resolved at the informal stage or progressed to a panel hearing, along with any actions taken. All correspondence, statements, and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required by law or by a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act.

## APPENDIX A - Complaint Form

*Please complete and return to Miss A Williams – Executive Head*

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>
<b>Address &amp; Postcode;</b>
<b>Day time telephone number:</b>
<b>Evening telephone number:</b>
<b>Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.</b>
<b>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</b>
<b>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.</b>
<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>OFFICIAL USE ONLY</b>
<b>Date acknowledgement sent:</b>
<b>By who:</b>
<b>Complaint referred to:</b>
<b>Date:</b>