



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**Prepared by Richard Middlebrook
AMAT Chief Executive Officer
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**Presented for approval to
AMAT Trustees Standards Committee
on March 16th 2022
and subsequently approved and adopted on the same date.**

Chair of AMAT Standards Committee: Mr Peter Cox

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Peter Cox", written over a light blue circular background.

**Date:
16/03/22**

Complaints Procedure

From time-to-time parents/carers may be unhappy about the way their child has been treated at a school within AMAT. When this is the case parent/carers should communicate in the stages outlined below. The Trust operates a 6-month time frame in which a complaint can be lodged. This means 6 months from when the incident/complaint occurred (or if it is a series of events, when the last incident occurred) to contacting the school / Trust about it.

Throughout the procedure, the complainant can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times. We expect that the school / Trust dealing with the complaint will be shown the same courtesy, respect and fairness. We will aim to respond to a complaint and each stage of the procedure within 10 working days.

AMAT will not investigate anonymous complaints.

Complaint details, outcomes and actions taken are recorded by AMAT and used for service improvement. We will handle your information so that it is processed and retained appropriately and legally, in line with data protection legislation.

- 1. STAGE 1 – INFORMAL** - directly with the member of staff
Usually, it will be helpful to talk with the member of staff concerned and parents/carers could give a telephone number and time for the member of staff to call. (Please ask your son/daughter for the times of breaks or lunch or suggest a time after school for the member of staff to call you). If the matter is not resolved at stage 1, you should move to stage 2 of the process.
- 2. STAGE 2 - INFORMAL** - If the matter cannot be resolved at Stage 1 (with the member of staff) or if the parent/carer feels the matter is so serious that the first contact should be with a more senior member of staff, ie a Key Stage or Pastoral Lead, subject or senior leader. If this fails to resolve the matter, parents/carers should move to stage 3 of the process.
- 3. STAGE 3 – FORMAL (WRITTEN)** if the matter has not been resolved at stage 2, parent/carers should put their complaint in writing within 10 working days of the stage 2 meeting to the Headteacher/Head of School and then telephone the school and ask for an appointment with the Headteacher/Head of School. When writing, the parent/carer must make it explicit that it is a formal complaint. Clearly state what the complaint is and what the school/Trust has done so far to address it and why they feel it hasn't been resolved. If this is the first the school/Trust is aware of this issue, the parent/carer should go to Stage 1 (see above). In the event that the Headteacher/Head of School cannot resolve the problem, parents should move to stage 4 of the process.

- 4. STAGE 4 - FORMAL – (WRITTEN)** write to the Chair of Governors, (following the same guidance as Stage 3) c/o the school concerned. The Chair will then arrange to meet with the parents/carers.
If the meeting with the Chair of Governors does not resolve the matter parents/carers should then move to stage 5 of the process
- 5. STAGE 5 – FORMAL – (WRITTEN)** put their complaint in writing (following the same guidance as stage 3) within 10 working days of the stage 4 meeting to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and then email the Clerk to AMAT requesting an appointment with the CEO. They can be contacted at the following email address clerk@AlsagerMAT.org
In the event that the CEO cannot resolve the problem, parents should move to stage 6 of the process
- 6. STAGE 6 – APPEAL FORMAL** - the complainant has the right to **appeal to an Independent Complaints Panel** set up by AMAT.
This panel will comprise of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of which is independent of the management and running of the school or Trust. The complainant shall be allowed to attend the panel and be accompanied if they so wish.

The panel's decision is final. Written minutes of the panel appeal will be taken and shared with both parties. The findings and any recommendations of the panel will be put in writing and shared with both parties within 5 working days of the panel hearing. These are also available for inspection in the school/Trust premises by the proprietor and Headteacher.

Contact and correspondence with this Independent Complaints Panel can be made in writing.

Please address all correspondence to: AMAT, Independent Complaints Panel, c/o Clerk to AMAT, Alsager School, Hassall Road, Cheshire, ST7 2HR. The panel will be convened **within 4 school/working weeks** of receipt of the complainants' correspondence advising that they wish for the Independent Complaints Panel to meet to discuss their complaint.

For all complaints which get to the formal stages, the school/Trust will keep a written record. This will include how/if the complaint was resolved, and any actions taken by the school/Trust following the complaint. All records of formal complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act request access to them.

NEXT STEPS:

If the complainant believes the school/Trust did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the ESFA after they have completed Stage 6.

The ESFA will not reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by AMAT/the school. They will consider whether AMAT/the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint and whether they have followed Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the ESFA online at www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit,
Education and Skills Funding Agency,
Cheylesmore House,
5 Quinton Road,
Coventry,
CV1 2WT

In summary the complaints procedure is:

1. Contact with the relevant member of staff - informal
2. Contact senior member of staff ie, Key Stage lead, Pastoral Lead, Subject or Senior Leader – informal
3. Letter to and appointment with Headteacher/Head of School – formal
4. Letter to and appointment with the Chair/Vice Chair of Governing Body – formal
5. Letter to and appointment with CEO – formal
6. Write to the Independent Complaints Panel c/o AMAT - appeal

Step 6 is the end of the procedure.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher/Head of School, please go straight to stage 4.

If your complaint is about the CEO please put it in writing and contact the Clerk to AMAT, at clerk@AlsagerMAT.org who will arrange a meeting with the Chair of AMAT.

This procedure works alongside the Vexatious / Persistent Complainants Policy.