Cabot Learning Federation

Parent/Carers Guide to School Complaints

Your step-by-step guide to raising concerns and complaints clearly, fairly and positively with your school

Working together to resolve issues

Cabot Learning Federation

At the CLF, we believe that strong relationships between families and schools are essential to supporting every child's education

We want all parents and carers to feel confident that concerns will be listened to, taken seriously and resolved as quickly and fairly as possible.

This guide explains how to raise concerns and complaints in a simple, transparent way - based on the Cabot Learning Federation Complaints Policy.

Understanding your concern

Before making a complaint, it can help to identify what type of issue you have:

- **Feedback** – You want to share your views and be heard.
- **Concern** – You are worried and would like an explanation or reassurance.
- **Complaint** – You are dissatisfied with an action or decision and are seeking a formal response or resolution.

We encourage concerns to be raised early so they can be resolved quickly and informally where possible.
For concerns around homework, friendships, behaviour or general day-to-day concerns, speak to your child's Tutor or classroom teacher. They are usually best placed to support with anything that directly involves your child's daily school experience. They know your child best and can usually sort things quickly.

For concerns around bullying, any additional support you think they may need or repeated behavioural issues, take your concern to your child's Pastoral Leader (this will vary in each academy, but will usually be Head of College or Head of Year) or classroom teacher in Primary settings. These Pastoral Leads have oversight across classes and coordinate support if required.

For whole school concerns such as safeguarding, health and safety, school policies or staff conduct, or if previous steps taken as above haven't worked, then you should follow the complaints process.

The complaints process

The Cabot Learning Federation operates a three-stage complaints procedure, starting informally wherever possible.

Informal Resolution – when you want to share your views and be heard

- Raise your concern directly with the academy via the Academy Complaints Coordinator, details can be found within the Academy Complaints Policy available on the Academy website. The Complaints Coordinator will ensure your concerns are looked into by the most appropriate colleague
- Discussions may take place in person or by phone.
- Many issues can be resolved quickly at this stage.

If the concern is not resolved within **30 school days**, or you remain dissatisfied, you can move to Stage 1.

STAGE 1 Formal Complaint (Academy Level)

- Submit your complaint **in writing** to the Academy Complaints Coordinator. There is a form included as part of the Complaint Policy. Complainants are encouraged to use the form provided within this policy to ensure all relevant information is captured, including any actions taken prior to submission, and to outline the outcome they are seeking, enabling a more efficient and effective resolution process. (If you would prefer a paper form, contact the Academy who can provide one for you)
- The academy will investigate and provide a **written response**.

What to expect:

- Acknowledgement within **3 school days**.
- A response within **30 school days** (where possible).

The outcome may be:

- Upheld (in full or part)
- Not upheld
- Not substantiated (insufficient evidence)

STAGE 2 Executive Review (Academy Level)

- If you remain dissatisfied with any elements of the complaint, you can escalate to stage 2, within **10 school days** of receipt of the Stage 1 outcome.
- Submit your complaint to the CLF Governance Team via email: Governance@clf.uk
- A member of the Executive Team will review the Stage 1 process and outcome.

What to expect:
- Acknowledgement within **3 school days**.
- A review outcome within **15 school days**.

This stage reviews how the complaint was considered at stage 1, ensuring that the investigation was thorough, fair and carried out in line with the complaints procedure.

STAGE 3 Panel Hearing

- If still dissatisfied, request a panel hearing within **10 school days.**
- A panel of Academy Councillors will review the complaint.

What to expect:
- Panel arranged within around **20 school days.**
- Final written decision issued (typically within **20 school days**).

The panel decision is **final within CLF procedures.**

How to raise your complaint effectively

To help resolve your issue quickly:

- **Start local** – speak to the person closest to the issue first.
- **Be clear and factual** – include dates, names and key details.
- **Stay constructive** – focus on resolving the issue.
- **Keep records** – note who you contacted and when.
- **Explain what outcome you want** – this helps schools respond effectively

Timescales for raising complaints

- Complaints should usually be raised within **3 months of the incident.**
- Late complaints may still be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Possible Outcomes

CLF aims to resolve complaints positively. This may include:

- An explanation or clarification
- An apology
- A review or improvement of procedures
- Actions to prevent the issue happening again

If you remain dissatisfied

Once all CLF stages are complete, you may contact external bodies such as the Department for Education if you believe the correct process has not been followed.

Maintaining positive relationships

We understand that complaints can be stressful. However, respectful communication is essential to resolving issues effectively.

Unreasonable behaviour (e.g. abusive or threatening conduct) may lead to communication restrictions or other action.

Need help?

If you need support making a complaint or completing the complaints form, your academy or the CLF Governance Team can assist you.

Contact: Governance@clf.uk

Working together for the best outcomes

By following this process, parents and schools can work together to resolve concerns fairly, strengthen relationships and keep the focus on what matters most - your child's education.

Cabot
Learning
Federation

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