



# **The Complete Works Policies**

## **Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy**

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## Contents

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Aim   | 3 |
| 2. Scope   | 3 |
| 3. Legal Compliance and Policy Links                 | 3 |
| 4. Principles  | 4 |
| 5. Definitions                                       | 4 |
| 6. How to Provide Feedback                           | 4 |
| 7. Complaints Procedure                              | 4 |
| 8. Formal Complaints against Senior members of staff | 6 |
| 9. Persistent complaints                             | 6 |
| 10. Confidentiality and Data Protection              | 7 |
| 11. Monitoring and Reporting                         | 7 |
| 12. Contact Information                              | 8 |
| 13. Review of Policy                                 | 8 |
| APPENDIX A   | 9 |
| PROCEDURE FOR THE TRUSTEES' COMPLAINTS APPEAL PANEL  | 9 |

## 1. Aim

The Complete Works (TCW) values feedback as an integral part of improving and maintaining high standards in the education and support we provide for our students. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all users of TCW are able to comment on the service that we provide. We welcome feedback as opportunities to grow, address concerns, celebrate successes and to continuously enhance our services. This policy outlines how we handle compliments, comments, and complaints in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all stakeholders, including students, parents/carers, employees, referrers, contractors and external partners who wish to provide feedback regarding TCW's services.

This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaints.

## 3. Legal Compliance and Policy Links

This policy complies with:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Part 7: Complaints Handling).
- Equality Act 2010.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Relevant DfE guidance on handling complaints in schools.

This policy supports/complements the following policies:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Dealing with Allegations Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (TCW is obliged to pass on to Social Services any disclosures or suspicions of child abuse. This affects the nature of the confidentiality of any potential complaint.)
- Data Protection Policy

## 4. Principles

TCW is committed to:

- Listening to feedback and using it to improve our services.
- Addressing complaints promptly, respectfully, and impartially.
- Ensuring all feedback is handled confidentially and without discrimination.
- Providing clear procedures for stakeholders to share their experiences with us.

## 5. Definitions

- **Compliment:** A positive comment recognising excellent service or practice.
- **Comment:** A general observation or suggestion aimed at improving services.
- **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction requiring a formal resolution.

## 6. How to Provide Feedback

### 6.1. Compliments

We encourage stakeholders to share positive experiences with us. Compliments can be submitted:

- Verbally to any TCW staff member.
- Via email to [feedback@tcw.org.uk](mailto:feedback@tcw.org.uk).
- Through our website's "Contact Us" page.
- Through a written letter addressed to the Central Office.

All compliments will be acknowledged, and where appropriate, shared with the individual or team concerned.

### 6.2. Comments

Comments or suggestions can be submitted in the same way as compliments. We will review all suggestions and provide a response within 10 working days where a reply is requested.

### 6.3. Complaints

Complaints should follow the formal procedure outlined below.

## 7. Complaints Procedure

### 7.1. Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- Stakeholders are encouraged to discuss concerns informally with the relevant staff member or their line manager.
- TCW aims to resolve informal complaints within 5 working days.
- If the matter is not resolved informally, the stakeholder may escalate it to a formal complaint.

### 7.2. Stage 2: Formal Complaint

Formal complaints should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher or another senior leader.

Complaints must include:

- The nature of the complaint.
- Details of any previous attempts to resolve the issue informally.
- Desired outcomes.

Where appropriate the HR Department will appoint an 'Investigating Officer' to investigate the complaint thoroughly. It is the responsibility of the Investigating Officer to establish the veracity or otherwise of any complaint. No member of staff who is the subject of a complaint or their representative will be permitted to interview or confront the complainant. That role belongs unequivocally with the Investigating Officer, who may, however, wish to bring the parties together as part of the process whereby a resolution is achieved.

The Investigating Officer should take advice from the Headteacher, if at any point in the process they feel that the substance of the complaint may fall within the scope of the Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Policy. This should form part of the report to the Headteacher.

TCW recognises the potential negative effects for individual members of staff, which can occur if they become subjects of complaints. The Investigating Officer is charged with the duty, therefore, of dealing with these fairly, openly and within the principles of natural justice. However, a possible outcome of a complaint is that there is a recommendation to invoke the Disciplinary Policy. In these circumstances the provisions of the Disciplinary Policy take precedence, and in consequence the member of staff who is the subject of the complaint does not have access to the appeal process under this policy.

The member of staff identified in the complaint is not permitted to invoke the Grievance Procedure against the Investigating Officer for the actions the latter takes legitimately in furtherance of their role as Investigating Officer.

The complainant will receive an acknowledgment within 3 working days and a formal response within 15 working days.

### **7.3. Stage 3: Appeal**

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, they may appeal in writing to the Headteacher, Executive Head, CEO or the Board of Trustees.
- Appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 2 response.
- A new panel will review the appeal and provide a decision within 20 working days.
- If the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, the HR Department will set a date. The hearing will go ahead using written submissions from both parties. Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 3 working days before the date of the meeting.
- The decision at this stage is final.

## 8. Formal Complaints against Senior members of staff

Complaints made against the Headteacher, one of the Directors, Executive Headteacher or CEO can be addressed to any of the following:

- Executive Headteacher
- CEO
- Chair of Trustees

All complaints about senior members of staff will follow the same procedures as outlined in the previous sections. For details of complaints that reach the threshold to be handled by the Board of Trustees, please see appendix A.

## 9. Persistent complaints

### 9.1. Unreasonably persistent complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following TCW's complaints procedure.
- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive.
- Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure, beyond all reason.
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to cooperate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the time frames it sets out.
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time.
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value.

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns, and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact TCW in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place, for example:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address.
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term.
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as [Citizens Advice](#).
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary.

In extreme cases we may stop responding to the complainant when all of these factors are met:

- We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns.

- We have provided a clear statement of our position and their options.
- The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience.

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make. In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our school buildings.

## **9.2. Duplicate complaints**

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and that the process is complete.

If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

## **9.3. Complaint campaigns**

Where TCW receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with TCW, we may respond to these complaints by sending a template response to all of the complainants.

If complainants are not satisfied with TCW's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

## **10. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

- All feedback will be handled confidentially and in compliance with data protection regulations.
- Personal information will only be shared with individuals directly involved in handling the feedback.
- If any feedback by a complainant is related to suspicions of child abuse, there can be no guarantee of confidentiality. TCW will handle this information in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## **11. Monitoring and Reporting**

- TCW will keep records of all compliments, comments, and complaints to identify trends and improve services.
- Regular reports on feedback will be reviewed by senior leaders and the Executive Team.

## **12. Contact Information**

- Central Office Address: The Complete Works, 38 Commercial St, London E1 6LP.
- Email: [feedback@tcw.org.uk](mailto:feedback@tcw.org.uk).
- Phone: 020 7377 0280.

## **13. Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **PROCEDURE FOR THE TRUSTEES' COMPLAINTS APPEAL PANEL.**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

It is the Board's policy that, as far as possible, complaints will be handled by TCW management, within The Complete Works. Any complainant has the right of appeal to the Executive Headteacher/Chief Executive Officer. The Trustees Appeal Panel will meet only in circumstances where the Executive Headteacher/Chief Executive has been unable to resolve a complaint, at the first appeal stage, and the complainant has invoked the right to appeal to the Trustee's under TCW Complaints Policy

The Panel shall have full delegated powers to determine the Appeal.

#### **2.0 COMPOSITION OF THE PANEL**

The Panel will comprise of three members of the Board of Trustees nominated by the Chair of Trustees.

The Clerk to the Trustees (or another suitable person nominated by the clerk) shall act as Clerk to the Appeal Panel.

The Panel may have an adviser in attendance should they consider this to be appropriate.

#### **3.0 BEFORE THE HEARING**

At least ten working days before the hearing, the complainant will be notified of the time and venue of the hearing. At the same time they will be provided with a copy of any written statement (usually the report of the stage 2 outcome) or other documents to be considered by the Panel (unless such documents have already been provided).

This notification will invite the complainant to:

- Attend the hearing (accompanied, if they wish, by a representative).
- Submit any relevant written documents for consideration by the panel (to be received by the Chair of the Appeal Committee at least 3 working days before the appeal hearing).
- Call witnesses

#### **4.0 ORDER OF THE BUSINESS**

The complainant and their representative, the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher/CEO (representing TCW), the members of the Panel, the Clerk to the panel and any adviser to the Panel will assemble together.

The Chair will invite the complainant (or their representative) to explain the reasons for the complaint and, in doing so, they may call witnesses.

The Headteacher/Executive Headteacher/CEO may question the complainant and any witnesses.

The Panel may question the complainant and any witnesses.

The Headteacher/Executive Headteacher/CEO shall explain TCW's view of the complaint and may call witnesses.

The complainant may question the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher/CEO and any witnesses.

The Panel may question the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher/CEO and any witnesses.

The Headteacher/Executive Headteacher/CEO shall be invited to sum up.

The complainant (and their representative), any witnesses and the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher/CEO will withdraw.

(Note: At any time during the operation of this procedure, either side has the right to request an adjournment. The adjournment request shall be considered by the Panel and, if considered reasonable, shall be granted).

## **5.0 AFTER THE HEARING**

Within five working days of the Panel meeting (or as soon as practicable thereafter), the Chair of the Appeal Committee will inform the complainant and the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher/CEO in writing, of the decision of the Panel, which will be final.

This will:

- a) Be given to the person who made the original complaint in writing and where relevant a copy to the person being complained about.
- b) Be given to the Trustees of TCW and a copy kept on the premises for inspection.

All correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential unless required by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162a of the 2002 Act.