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# Darlinghurst Academy



## Complaints Policy

March 2022

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## **1. Introduction**

Legra Academy Trust values good home/academy relationships. We seek to resolve any concerns or complaints promptly, and to the satisfaction of all concerned. It is the academy's policy to ensure that any concerns expressed by parents/carers and others about the academy curriculum and related matters will be dealt with initially in informal discussion with the appropriate member of staff at the academy.

We welcome feedback on what parents feel we do well, or not so well, as an academy. We will consider carefully all feedback, whether positive or negative, and will review our policies and practices accordingly. We will treat all concerns and complaints seriously and courteously and will advise parents/carers and others of the academy's procedures for dealing with their concerns. In return, we expect parents/carers and other complainants to behave respectfully towards all members of the academy community. In particular, any disagreement with the academy should not be expressed inappropriately or in front of students.

All academy staff, teaching and operational; and members of the Governing Body, will be aware of this policy statement and will be familiar with the academy's procedures for dealing with parental concerns and complaints.

The academy's procedures will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. If there are cases which cannot be resolved informally, arrangements do exist to consider formal complaints. For further details, please see below.

## **2. Procedure**

Parents of students attending an academy within Legra Academy Trust:

As mentioned above, the procedure is to speak to the child's class teacher/subject teacher/year leader in the first instance to arrange an appointment to discuss your complaint with the relevant person. If necessary, the issue may be referred to a Vice Principal to resolve.

Members of the public:

Members of the public should make a complaint using the following methods:

- write to the PA to the Principal via [generalenquiries@darlinghurst.co.uk](mailto:generalenquiries@darlinghurst.co.uk)
- email your concern through the enquiry form on the academy website FAO PA to the Principal.

Legra Academy Trust aim to respond to public complaints within 2 working days of receipt.

For parents of students attending Darlington Academy, the procedure is divided into four stages:

**Stage 1:** The academy will aim to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in academy within 2 working days of receiving the complaint. If the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made at this stage, they must then put their complaint in writing as outlined in stage 2.

**Stage 2:** This is the first formal stage where written complaints are considered by the Principal. For a stage 2 complaint, please write to the PA of the Principal. The Principal considers written complaints very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Stage 2 complaints will be dealt with within 5 working days of receipt of the letter and a written response will be provided. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

**Stage 3:** This is the next step once Stage 2 is complete and should be carried out only if the complaint made at Stage 2 fails to resolve the matter. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the Principal has handled it so far. The parent/carer should address this written complaint to the Chief Executive Officer of Legra Academy Trust, Mrs Bev Williams. The reception at any of our academies will ensure that this is passed on to her. The Chief Executive Officer considers all complaints very seriously and a Stage 3 complaint will be dealt with within 10 working days of receipt of the letter and a written response will be provided.

**Stage 4:** In the unlikely case that the dispute remains unresolved at Stage 3, a complaint must then be made in writing, to the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter can be delivered to the academy reception or emailed FAO Chair of Governing Body via [generalenquiries@darlington.ac.uk](mailto:generalenquiries@darlington.ac.uk); this will then be passed to the Chair of Governors. The Chair will consider all written complaints within 7 working weeks of receipt and will do all he/she can to resolve the complaint to the parent's/carer's satisfaction and a written response will be provided.

This stage may involve a complaints review panel of Governors/Directors, in addition to one independent member (who is independent of the management and running of the academy) from a neighbouring academy's governing body or business representative. The Chair of Governors together with the academy Governing Body/Directors will ensure that 2 weeks' notice of the panel will be given to the complainant. Parents are invited to attend and may be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish.

If the complainant is deemed to behave inappropriately throughout any part of this process the Chair of Governors will not uphold the complaint and abandon the procedure. This will be confirmed in writing to the complainant.

Beyond the Chair of Governors, the final recourse for a complainant is to The Secretary of State for Education using the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

All staff across the trust are familiar with our guidelines and have a duty to help

parents needing advice. These procedures have been carefully compiled and their reference, however rare, is routine to help students, parents/carers and the academy.

Our procedure sets realistic goals and reasonable time limits for each stage. Where we feel further investigations are necessary and its clear our published timescales cannot be met we will:

- set new time limits
- send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay.

### **3. Monitoring and Review**

The Principals across our academies, log all complaints received by the academy and records how they were resolved. The Local Governing Bodies will monitor the log of written complaints.

Please note, complaints made during an academy holiday or half-term holiday that necessitate action by the Principal, Chief Executive Officer of Legra Academy Trust or the Chair of Governors will be dealt with as soon as practical and will not follow the normal timescale.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

### **Addendum (Covid-19)**

If the academy is in tier 2, 3 or 4, the DfE does not expect the academy to handle new or existing complaints while partially closed. Legra Academy Trust will, however, still engage with parents and students where they can.