

Matrix Academy Trust

Complaints Procedure for dealing with Unreasonable Complainants

Matrix Academy Trust is committed to dealing with complaints fairly and impartially. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Matrix Academy Trust defines unreasonable complainants as “those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s complaints”.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of the complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure.
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales.
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeks to have them replaced.
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed).
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school’s complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Education Funding Agency.
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- Maliciously
- Aggressively
- Using threats, intimidation or violence
- Using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- Using falsified information
- Publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers

Complainants should limit the number of communications with the school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Wherever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governance Advisory Board will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an “unreasonable” marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the individual schools within Matrix Academy Trust causing significant level of disruption, the individual school may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the school concerned.

In carrying out our duties relating to a complaint we ensure that we comply with the Equality Act 2010. This policy should also be read in conjunction with our procedure related to dealing with complaints.