



Saffron Appropriate Body

Complaints Policy & Procedure

September 2024

<https://www.saffronteachingschoolhub.net/>

Introduction

This document outlines the legal framework, definitions, and policy expectations for Saffron Teaching School Hub (Saffron TS Hub), which serves schools in the Essex LA districts of Braintree, Chelmsford, Epping Forest, Harlow, and Uttlesford. Saffron TS Hub supports schools by investing in their workforce to recruit, retain, inspire, and develop high-quality teachers, support staff and leaders, recognising that excellent teaching significantly impacts student outcomes. Saffron TS Hub provides accredited professional development and collaborates with various educational bodies.

Saffron TS Hub uses complaints as opportunities to improve systems and services. This policy aims to resolve concerns and complaints locally, objectively and swiftly through a Four-Stage Procedure.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all service users, including Early Career Teachers (ECTs), mentors, Induction Tutors and school leaders who have concerns regarding the Appropriate Body service provided by the Teaching School Hub.

Definitions

- **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction regarding the standard of service, actions, or lack of actions by the Teaching School Hub as an AB.
- **Complainant:** The person making the complaint.
- **Service User:** Any individual or organization using the AB services provided by the Teaching School Hub.

Legal Framework

Our policy complies with The Equality Act 2010 and follows the Department for Education's guidance on establishing complaints procedures for academies.

Appropriate Body Responsibilities

Since September 2021, teacher induction extends to two years, underpinned by the Early Career Framework (ECF). Appropriate Bodies play a crucial role in this process by monitoring Early Career Teachers (ECTs) to ensure they receive their statutory entitlements and the necessary support.

Complaints Procedure

Concern or Complaint?

A concern is an expression of worry or doubt seeking reassurance, while a complaint is dissatisfaction with actions taken or not taken. This procedure addresses complaints about the Appropriate Body Service, not individual schools.

Principles:

- Whether the complaint concerns the school or the Appropriate Body Service is clearly distinguished
- Confidentiality is maintained and records kept of all complaints
- Generally, anonymous complaints are not investigated unless exceptional circumstances arise
- Complaints about the Teaching School Hub Director are addressed initially at Stage 4
- The local authority does not participate in complaints about the Teaching School Hub
- Complaints involving staff conduct related to child safety follow safeguarding and HR procedures

Timeline of Complaint Stages and Responsibilities

Stage	Responsibility	Timeline	Process	Outcome
Stage 1	Appropriate Body Lead/Deputy Director of the Teaching School Hub	Within 10 school days	Discuss and resolve the concern/complaint quickly. If the complainant feels unable to approach the staff member involved, the concern/complaint is referred to the Teaching School Hub lead for assignment to another staff member.	Aim to resolve the issue and advise the complainant of the next steps and findings/conclusions.
Stage 2	Teaching School Hub Director	Within 10 school days of receiving the written complaint from the complainant after Stage 1 conclusion	The complainant submits a written complaint specifying the grounds and desired outcome. The Director investigates and meets with the complainant to resolve the issue.	Summarise findings and outcome in writing to the complainant.
Stage 3	Three Members of the Complaints Panel	Within 10 school days of receiving the complainant's letter after Stage 2 conclusion	The complainant writes to the Teaching School Hub, specifying dissatisfaction with Stage 1 and Stage 2 outcomes. The panel members review the complaint and attempt to resolve it.	Summarise findings and outcome in writing to the complainant.
Stage 4	Appropriate staff or panel member(s)	Arranged as soon as practicable during Stages 1-3	A mediation meeting between the complainant and appropriate staff or panel member(s) to facilitate resolution.	Summary note of proceedings provided to the complainant.

Unreasonable Complaints and Behaviours

The Hub may close the procedure if the complainant is deemed unreasonable. This includes:

- refusing to specify the complaint or desired outcome
- making unjustified complaints or allegations
- refusing to accept investigation findings
- making excessive demands on the Hub's time
- using abusive language or behaviour

Complaints Not Covered by the Procedure

Issues Not Covered by this Procedure	Whom to Contact
Whistleblowing	Refer to the Whistleblowing policy.
Staff Grievances and Disciplinary Procedures	Managed by Saffron Academy Trust's procedures.
Third-Party Services Complaints	Addressed by the third party's complaints procedure unless it involves safeguarding issues, ensuring accessibility and responsiveness.