

Providing Feedback & Raising Concerns (Complaints Policy)

The HLA Approach

At Horsham Learning Alliance, we strive for the highest standards and welcome feedback. Whether you would like to share a compliment or raise a concern, we value your views and are committed to responding fairly and constructively.

Working in partnership with all stakeholders, we promote an inclusive and positive culture that upholds our Mission, Vision and Values and drives continuous improvement in the experiences of our students, parents/carers and communities.

Most concerns can be resolved quickly when raised with the right person. This policy explains in simple terms how to share feedback and seek resolutions through a clear and transparent process.

It is primarily for parents and carers across the Trust's College and Schools, however students in post-16 provision can provide feedback directly to the College and members of the public may also share feedback about our Trust's services or facilities.

There are 4 stages to the overall process:

- **Informal Resolution** – Raise your comments or concern with the member of staff most directly involved so that it can be addressed as quickly as possible.
- **Stage 1 Complaint** – If your concern remains unresolved, submit it in writing to a more senior member of staff within the department or the relevant line manager.
- **Stage 2 Formal Complaint** – If your concern remains unresolved after Stage 1, or if it relates to the conduct of a member of the Senior Leadership Team, Executive Principal/Headteacher, Local Governor, or Trustee, complete the Formal Complaint Request Form (see Appendix).
- **Stage 3 Review Panel** – In exceptional circumstances, where no resolution can be reached through the earlier stages, a formal panel meeting will be convened. The panel will consist of Local Governors or Trustees, as appropriate.

Stages 2 and 3 are supported by formal Complaints Procedures, which set out the processes for investigating and resolving serious or unresolved complaints.

Some matters fall outside the scope of this policy. These are listed on page 4, together with information on the appropriate process to follow or organisation to which queries or complaints should be directed.

Raising an issue – important first steps

Stage	Type of Feedback	Contact
Informal	Specific feedback about your child or young person's educational experience	Email address of the teacher/tutor
Stage 1	Concerns that cannot be resolved by the teacher/tutor, are more serious, or relate more widely to the educational experience	Submit your concern in writing to the appropriate Head of Year, Head of Department, Line Manager or Director
Stage 1	Concerns about facilities, services or operational matters provided by the Trust or its College/Schools	Email enquiries@hla.education or write to the Trust's registered address
Stage 2	Concerns previously raised informally and at Stage 1 that remain unresolved	Submit a formal complaint in accordance with the Complaints Procedure Complete the complaint form in the Appendix
Stage 2	Complaints concerning the conduct of senior leaders, the Executive Principal/ Headteacher, a Local Governor or a Trustee	Submit a formal complaint in accordance with the Complaints Procedure Complete the complaint form in the Appendix
Stage 3	Formal complaints that remain unresolved following a Stage 2 investigation	A panel will consider whether the complaint was handled fairly and in line with the procedure

Please contact the relevant reception or school office team for contact details where needed.

Working together

We aim to resolve concerns quickly and effectively at the earliest opportunity, without the need for formal procedures. In most cases, concerns should be raised initially with the member of staff best placed to deal with the issue. Escalation to the Senior Leadership Team or the Executive Principal/Headteacher is not normally required.

Local Chairs of Governors and Trustees cannot act on individual concerns before a full investigation has taken place and early involvement may prevent them from considering a complaint later in the process.

We encourage:

- Early discussion with the appropriate person
- Clear and respectful communication

- Feedback that is factual, objective and specific to your situation
- A focus on the key issue and a realistic, desired outcome

Some people use AI tools to help organise their thoughts, however we recommend caution. Public AI systems may store personal information and can generate inaccurate or outdated content, which may delay our response. Please check any AI-generated content carefully. If key concerns are unclear or too lengthy, we may ask you to provide clarification or a briefer summary.

We will consider reasonable adjustments to support you in providing feedback or engaging with us regarding your child or young person, including signposting to other agencies where appropriate.

Reaching a resolution

At Stage 1 we commit to responding to any concerns within **10 working days** and will confirm the outcome in writing. If more time is needed, we will keep you informed.

We aim to resolve concerns through an explanation or apology, acknowledgement of lessons learned, or assurance that appropriate action has been taken. In some cases we may suggest meeting with you if it is helpful to discuss the issue and facilitate a resolution.

Some matters, such as anonymous concerns or those raised long after an event, may be more difficult to investigate and will be referred to the Executive Principal, Headteacher, or CEO as appropriate.

If you remain dissatisfied, you may refer the matter under Stage 2 through the Formal Complaints Procedures. We will ask you to complete a form explaining the reasons for this. Please include brief details of what happened, who was involved, who you have already spoken to and specifically what outcome you are expecting. We will acknowledge formal complaints within 5 working days.

We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our College/Schools. 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. Where concerns are raised in a manner that hinders resolution, the Trust, College, or School may refer the matter to its procedures for managing unreasonable or unacceptable complaints (see Formal Complaints Procedures).

Policy review

This document and the Formal Complaints Procedures will be reviewed and approved annually by the HLA Board with input from the Governance & Quality Committee.

Date approved: 20 October 2026

Scope

There are some matters that fall outside of the scope of this policy and the formal procedures as follows:

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions	Concerns about admissions should be handled through the admissions appeals processes
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	<p>Child protection matters are dealt with under the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policies and Procedures and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the Integrated Front Door (formerly MASH) 01403 229 900 or the Local Area Designated Office (LADO)</p>
School suspensions and permanent exclusions	<p>Further information on raising concerns about exclusions from schools can be found via https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions</p>
SEND	We provide teaching and reasonable adjustments to help your child/young person. Outside of support plans and monitoring, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to decide whether to assess for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and securing the necessary provision
Whistleblowing	<p>There is an internal whistleblowing procedure for all employees, including temporary staff and contractors which can be found here https://www.hla.education/Policies/</p>
Staff related complaints or staff conduct	<p>Concerns raised by staff will be dealt with initially by the line manager or under HLA Staff Grievance Procedures or conduct issues will be dealt with under HLA's internal Disciplinary Procedures, if appropriate</p> <p>It is not possible to be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of concerns or complaints other than to be notified that the matter is being addressed</p>