

Coast Tuition – Complaints Procedure

August 2025

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Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the organisation. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Coast Tuition about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

Third Parties

We reserve the right for third parties to be involved at any stage of the process.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns, and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure.

Coast Tuition takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, you should contact the Admin and Marketing Assistant who will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Admin and Marketing Assistant will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Coast Tuition will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with either the teacher or the Admin and Marketing Assistant in the first instance. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complaints against the organisations staff (except the Directors) should be made in the first instance, to the Directors. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Directors should be addressed to the Admin and Marketing Assistant via the organisations office who will determine the appropriate person to investigate. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Directors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Coast Tuition, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Coast Tuition in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Coast Tuition wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, please do this in writing to the Admin and Marketing Assistant.

Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the relevant Director via the organisation's office. This may be done in person, in writing, or by telephone.

The Director will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within a reasonable timeframe.

Within this response, the Director will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Director can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The Director may delegate the investigation to another member of the organisations management team or third party.

During the investigation, the Director or appointed investigator will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Director or appointed investigator will provide a formal written response within a reasonable timeframe of the date of receipt of the complaint.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Coast Tuition will take to resolve the complaint.

The Director or appointed investigator will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about a Director, another Director or a suitably skilled third party will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about a Director must be made to the Admin and Marketing Assistant, via the organisation's office.

Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with an alternative Director or appointed investigator. This is the final stage of the complaint's procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Admin and Marketing Assistant via the organisation's office, within 5 working days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The Admin and Marketing Assistant will refer the complaint to the appropriate Director, or appointed investigator, who will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within a reasonable timeframe.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Director will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within a reasonable timeframe of receipt of the Stage 2 request.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Director will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The Director or appointed investigator will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

The Director or appointed investigator will write to the complainant within a reasonable timeframe to:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the

venue and proceedings are accessible

- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the Director or appointed investigator before the meeting.

The Director or appointed investigator will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The Director or appointed investigator will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. They can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the organisations systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Director or appointed investigator will provide the complainant and Coast Tuition with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within a reasonable timeframe.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Coast Tuition.

Next Steps

If the complainant believes the organisation did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Coast Tuition. They will consider whether Coast Tuition has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD.