



Complaints Policy

Policy agreed (date):	December 2023
Next review (date):	August 2025

Aims

At Achievio, we work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents/carers. Our aim is to deal with issues and problems before they become a 'complaint'.

However, there is a clear protocol to follow if necessary and the steps to follow and their outcome are outlined in this document.

Who can make a complaint?

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

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

If you have any difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views and arrange for you to discuss with another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, they 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, Achievio will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

Anonymous complaints

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

Complaints received outside of term time

Achievio will consider any complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first pupil day of attendance after the holiday period.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision provided by Achievio, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions

Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation

Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.

If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – 0300 456 0108.

Whistleblowing

We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees.

The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

Staff grievances

Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the provision's internal grievance procedures.

Staff conduct

Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the provision's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.

Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.

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 Achievio 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, Achievio 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 our policies in light of the complaint
- an apology

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

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. For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact Achievio. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equity 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.

Informal Expression of concern made to the Provision:

In the first instance, the matter should be discussed with a member of staff. They will work with you to clarify the issue, investigate if necessary and report directly back to the parents. The concern will be shared with the Director and an internal record stored in line with GDPR.

Formal – Stage 1:

Stage 1 – Formal complaints must be made to the Director. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), 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 1 school day.

Within this response, the Director will name the Tutor who will investigate the complaint, seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and outcome the complainant would like to see.

During the investigation, the nominated Tutor 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 nominated Tutor will provide a formal written response within 5 school days of receipt of the complaint.

If the Nominated Tutor is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

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 Achievio will take to resolve the complaint.

The nominated Tutor will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

Formal – 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 the Director. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate the complaint to Stage 2 must be made within 3 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The Director will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either in writing or email) within 1 school day. 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 5 days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Director will provide an additional date that is mutually convenient for both parties. The Director will consider the complaint and any evidence provided and will either

- Uphold the complaint in whole or part
- Dismiss the complaint in whole or part

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

- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the provision's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Director will provide the complainant with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 2 school days.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

Next Steps:

If the complainant believes Achievio 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 by Achievio. They will consider whether Achievio 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
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD



Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Caroline Thomas (Director) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Student's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Your Address: Your Postcode: Your phone number: Your email address:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at Achievio about it.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

Official Use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: