

# Complaints Policy

A clear, fair and proportionate route for raising and resolving concerns

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|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Policy owner</b>     | Eleanor McInerney, Compliance and Candidate Lead |
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| <b>Version</b>          | 2026.1                                           |

## 1. Purpose

Certus Education takes concerns about its people, candidates, clients and services seriously. We aim to resolve issues promptly, fairly and proportionately while protecting confidentiality and, where relevant, prioritising safeguarding.

## 2. Who this policy covers

This procedure is available to clients, candidates, workers, employees and other organisations or individuals with a legitimate concern about Certus Education's services, a candidate supplied by us, or a client placement. Employees raising employment-related grievances should normally use the appropriate grievance route.

## 3. Safeguarding concerns

### **IMMEDIATE SAFEGUARDING ACTION**

If a concern suggests that a child may have been harmed, may be at risk of harm, or that an adult may be unsuitable to work with children, it must be escalated immediately under the applicable safeguarding/allegations process. This complaints procedure must not delay protective action.

## 4. Informal resolution

Where appropriate, concerns should initially be raised with the relevant Certus Education contact. We will seek to understand the issue and, where possible, resolve it without a formal investigation. If the concern remains unresolved, a formal complaint may be made.

## 5. Formal complaints

Formal complaints should be submitted in writing and should explain what happened, when it occurred, who was involved, what impact it had and what outcome is sought. Certus Education will record the complaint and identify an appropriate person to manage the response.

### 5.1 Complaints about candidates

Where a complaint concerns a candidate, the candidate may be given the opportunity to respond. Depending on the evidence and seriousness, Certus Education may provide guidance or warnings, record the matter, investigate further, end an assignment or remove the candidate from future work.

- Failure to follow reasonable instructions.
- Lateness or attendance concerns.
- Failure to complete reasonable duties.
- Inappropriate clothing or presentation.
- Unprofessional attitude or behaviour.
- Any other conduct that a client reasonably considers unacceptable.

### 5.2 Complaints about clients

Candidates and workers are encouraged to raise concerns about their placement or working environment. We will handle their comments sensitively and, unless disclosure is necessary for safeguarding, legal or

other overriding reasons, will seek to agree with the candidate before raising the matter with the client. Serious concerns may be escalated to the relevant school leader, governing body or authority.

### 5.3 Complaints about Certus Education

Complaints about Certus Education will be allocated to an appropriate manager or Director who is sufficiently independent of the issue. Both the complainant and relevant staff will be treated fairly and given a reasonable opportunity to provide information.

## 6. Investigation and response timetable

1. Within 5 working days of receipt, we will normally acknowledge the complaint, confirm the person handling it and ask for clarification or supporting information where necessary.
2. Within 5 working days of receiving a substantive response from the complainant, we will normally confirm the next steps.
3. The investigation will then take place. Where appropriate, the relevant staff member may be asked to respond within 5 working days, followed by review of the evidence.
4. Where a meeting is useful, the responsible manager or Director will normally invite the complainant to discuss the matter within 5 working days after the investigation is complete.
5. Within 2 working days of that meeting, we will normally confirm the outcome and agreed actions in writing.
6. If a meeting is unnecessary or cannot take place, a written response will normally be issued within 5 working days of completing the investigation.

If a stated timeframe needs to change because of complexity, availability or another legitimate reason, Certus Education will explain the reason and provide an updated timescale. Statutory safeguarding, regulatory or legal procedures will take precedence where applicable.

## 7. Further escalation

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after Certus Education has completed its internal process, they may have access to external routes depending on the nature of the complaint, including an appropriate regulator, professional body or other competent authority.

## 8. Whistleblowing

Nothing in this policy prevents a person from raising a genuine public-interest concern through an appropriate whistleblowing route. Certus Education expects concerns about serious wrongdoing, safeguarding failures, legal breaches or significant risks to be raised promptly and will not tolerate retaliation against a person who raises a genuine concern appropriately.

## Document control

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