

TRIDENT ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Complaints Procedure



Compiled by	Parvinder Kaur - Headteacher	September 2025
Approved by	Gurdial Singh - Proprietor	September 2025
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Version		3

Introduction

At Trident Alternative Provision, our mission is to **build firm foundations for the future**. We will: **nurture** the pupils in our care - addressing the social, emotional, and learning needs of individual pupils by providing the necessary help to remove the barriers to learning; **build** on their existing knowledge, skills, and state of personal development; **release** them into the world ready for their next stage of education and for adult life. It is our intention to ensure that we achieve our mission and that our stakeholders are satisfied with our facilities and services. To that end, we invite stakeholders to let us know if they think we are not living up to our commitment. This policy outlines the procedures that can be used to raise concerns or complain about our facilities or services. An up-to-date copy of this

policy will be published on the school website according to the requirements of paragraph 32 of the Independent School Standards

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Who can make a complaint?

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

Definitions: concern and complaint

For the purposes of this policy:

- a concern is defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*
- a complaint is 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 this complaints' procedure. Trident Alternative Provision takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve every matter as quickly as possible.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

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

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Proprietor(s), if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Confidentiality

Correspondence, statements, and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting a standard inspection of a non-association independent school requests access to them.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

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 Trident Alternative Provision 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, Trident Alternative Provision 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, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- Informal complaints can be raised in person or over the telephone.
- If a parent/ carer is raising the concern, this can initially be raised with the teacher of the young person concerned. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Headteacher.
- Complaints about school facilities, services, or staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to Parvinder Kaur (the Headteacher) via the school office.
- Complainants should not approach individual proprietor(s) to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 3 of the procedure.
- Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be made to Name to be confirmed (the Chair of Proprietor(s), via the school office.
- The person dealing with the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within **14 working days** complainants may proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

- Formal complaints must be made in writing to the Headteacher (unless the complaint is about the Headteacher). For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure, and it is also available on the school's website. It can be mailed or handed in to the school office marked private and confidential for the attention of the Headteacher. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you. 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.
- The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 14 school days. Within this response, the Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Headteacher can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

- During the investigation, the headteacher (or 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 Headteacher will provide a formal written response within 14 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.
- If the Headteacher 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 Trident Alternative Provision will take to resolve the complaint.
- The Headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.
- Complaints about the Headteacher must be made to the Proprietor who will deal with the complete as described above.
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Stage 3: Appeal

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3 – an appeal to a committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, Proprietor(s) available and a person who is not involved in the management of the school. This is the final stage of the complaint's procedure.
- A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Proprietor(s), within 21 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response.
- The Proprietor will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 21 school days.
- Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.
- The Proprietor will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 21 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Proprietor will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.
- If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the proprietor will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence based on written submissions from both parties.
- The complaints committee will consist of at least three members of the business with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint and a person who is not involved in the management of the school. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three members of the business from Trident Alternative Provision available, the Chair will source any additional, independent staff in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 3.
- The committee will be 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. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- At least 14 school days before the meeting, the Chair will:
 - 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 committee at least 10 school days before the meeting.
- Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 7 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.
- The committee will also 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 committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee 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 school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.
- The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Trident Alternative Provision with a full explanation of their findings, recommendations, and the reason(s) for these, in writing, within 7 school days. A copy of those findings and recommendations is to be made available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Headteacher.
- 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 Trident Alternative Provision.
- Stage 3 will be heard by a committee of independent staff.
- 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 Trident Alternative Provision will take to resolve the complaint.
- The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

Records

- Trident Alternative Provision will keep records of all concerns and complaints
- The number of formal complaints received each year will be published on the school's website according to the requirements of paragraph 32 of the Independent School Standards

Next Steps

- If the complainant believes the school 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 3
- The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Trident Alternative Provision. They will consider whether [Trident Alternative Provision](#) 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.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness and update it as necessary.

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Parvinder Kaur or Gurdial Singh who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the Pupil (if relevant):
Address:
Postcode:
Day time telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.

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

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: