BRIGHTFIELD

ACADEMY

Inclusion. Choice. Growth.

Complaints & Compliments Policy & Procedures

We welcome feedback.
We listen. We respond.
We learn and improve together.

Inclusion. | Choice. | Growth. | Last Update: June 2026

Complaints & Compliments Policy & Procedure

The Brightfield Academy
Policy Owner: Head of Provision
Approved by: Directors of The Brightfield Academy
Date Adopted: March 2026
Review Cycle: Bi-Annually
Next Review: September 2026

1. Policy Statement

Brightfield Academy is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and high-quality educational environment in which learners, families, staff, volunteers, commissioners and partner organisations are treated with dignity, fairness and respect.
We welcome compliments, feedback, concerns and complaints as valuable opportunities to strengthen relationships, improve our services and continually enhance the quality of our provision.
We are committed to resolving concerns as early as possible through open communication wherever appropriate. Where formal complaints are necessary, they will be managed fairly, impartially, confidentially and without discrimination.
No individual will be disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out how Brightfield Academy will:
respond to complaints fairly and consistently;
encourage concerns to be raised promptly;
provide a clear and accessible complaints procedure;
ensure complaints are investigated objectively;
maintain confidentiality wherever possible;
learn from complaints to improve services;
provide opportunities for escalation where appropriate.
The policy supports Brightfield Academy's commitment to openness, accountability and continuous improvement.

3. Scope

This policy applies to complaints made by or on behalf of:
learners;
parents and carers;
referring schools;
local authorities;
commissioners;
staff;
volunteers;
contractors;
visitors;

partner organisations;
members of the public.
It applies to complaints concerning any aspect of Brightfield Academy's services or activities.

4. What Is a Complaint?
A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction regarding an action, decision, omission or standard of service provided by Brightfield Academy where the complainant wishes the matter to receive a formal response.

Complaints may relate to:
teaching and learning;
communication;
behaviour management;
equality and inclusion;
safeguarding practice (where appropriate);
health and safety;
administration;
educational visits;
facilities or resources;
staff conduct;
service delivery.

Brightfield Academy encourages concerns to be raised promptly so that they can be investigated fairly and resolved wherever possible.

5. Matters Not Covered by This Policy
The following matters are managed under separate procedures:

safeguarding allegations against staff (Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy);
whistleblowing disclosures (Whistleblowing Policy);
subject access requests (Data Protection Policy);
assessment appeals;
staff grievances;
disciplinary matters;
criminal investigations;
matters currently subject to legal proceedings.

Where appropriate, Brightfield Academy will direct individuals to the correct procedure.

6. Guiding Principles

Brightfield Academy will ensure complaints are:

listened to respectfully;
acknowledged promptly;
investigated fairly;
handled confidentially where appropriate;
considered objectively;

resolved proportionately;
used to improve future practice.
Complainants can expect:
courteous and respectful communication;
regular updates where investigations take longer than expected;
impartial consideration;
clear explanations of decisions;
information about further stages where applicable.

7. Informal Resolution
Brightfield Academy encourages concerns to be resolved informally wherever appropriate. Many issues arise through misunderstanding or incomplete information and can often be resolved quickly through discussion with the relevant member of staff.
Informal resolution is not appropriate where concerns involve:
safeguarding;
allegations of serious misconduct;
unlawful discrimination;
criminal behaviour;
significant health and safety concerns.
These matters will be managed through the appropriate procedures.

8. How to Make a Complaint
Complaints may be submitted:
in writing;
by email;
in person;
by telephone;
using any complaint form provided by Brightfield Academy.
Reasonable adjustments will be made where required to ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities or communication needs.
Formal complaints should normally be submitted within twenty working days of the matter occurring or becoming known.

9. Stage One Complaint
The Director (or nominated senior leader) will:
acknowledge the complaint within five working days;
appoint an appropriate investigator;
explain the investigation process;
advise expected timescales.
Investigations may include:
interviews;
review of documentation;
examination of records;
consideration of policies;
obtaining professional advice where appropriate.
A written response will normally be issued within fifteen working days.
Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed together with revised timescales.

10. Stage Two Review

If dissatisfied, the complainant may request a formal review within ten working days.
The review will normally be undertaken by the Director or another suitably independent person not previously involved wherever practicable.
The review will consider:
whether procedures were followed correctly;
whether the investigation was fair;
whether the conclusions were reasonable;
whether further action is required.
The outcome of the review will be confirmed in writing.

11. External Escalation

Where the internal complaints procedure has been completed and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may seek advice from or refer the matter to an appropriate external organisation where relevant.
Depending upon the nature of the complaint this may include:
the commissioning Local Authority;
the referring school;
the Information Commissioner's Office;
Ofsted;
the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (where applicable);
an awarding organisation;
the Police;
other regulatory bodies.
Brightfield Academy will cooperate fully with any legitimate external investigation.

12. Whistleblowing

Where concerns relate to malpractice, unlawful conduct, safeguarding, financial irregularity or matters of significant public interest raised by staff, volunteers or contractors, they should normally be managed through the Brightfield Academy Whistleblowing Policy.
Nothing in this policy prevents an individual from making a protected disclosure under whistleblowing legislation.

13. Complaints Relating to Safeguarding

Any complaint indicating that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm will immediately be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
Safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and, where necessary, referred to external safeguarding agencies.
The welfare of children always takes precedence over the complaints process.

14. Anonymous, Persistent and Unreasonable Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be considered where sufficient information exists to enable investigation.
Brightfield Academy reserves the right to manage complaints that are:
abusive;
threatening;
malicious;
repetitive;
vexatious;
unreasonably persistent.
Any restrictions applied will be proportionate, reasonable and documented.

15. Record Keeping
Brightfield Academy will maintain secure records of:
complaints received;
investigations undertaken;
correspondence;
evidence considered;
outcomes;
actions implemented;
learning identified.
Records will be retained and disposed of in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule.

16. Learning and Continuous Improvement
Complaints provide valuable opportunities for organisational learning.
Themes arising from complaints will be reviewed at least annually to identify:
trends;
safeguarding implications;
equality considerations;
training needs;
policy improvements;
quality assurance priorities.
Learning identified through complaints will inform Brightfield Academy's Quality Assurance Framework and annual improvement planning.

17. Compliments
Brightfield Academy also welcomes compliments recognising positive experiences and good practice.
Compliments may relate to:
staff professionalism;
learner progress;
safeguarding practice;
communication;
educational activities;
support provided;
inclusion;
partnerships;
overall service quality.
Compliments help celebrate success, recognise staff contributions and identify examples of effective practice that can be shared across the organisation.

18. Linked Policies
Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
Managing Allegations & Low-Level Concerns Policy
Whistleblowing Policy
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Behaviour Policy
Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy
Quality Assurance Policy
Assessment Appeals Policy
Health & Safety Policy