

Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Our Aim

Abacus NW Maths Hub is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our hub is by listening and responding to the views of the people we serve, and wider stakeholders.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent framework for addressing complaints, raised informally or formally, related to the activities, services, or conduct of the hub. This policy outlines the procedure for making a complaint, informally and formally, the steps involved in investigating and resolving complaints, and the avenues for escalation if necessary. The policy applies to all stakeholders interacting with the hub.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- ☐ making a complaint is as easy as possible
- ☐ we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our provision which calls for a timely response
- ☐ we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
- ☐ we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken, etc.
- ☐ we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly.

Our aims are to:

- ☐ resolve informal concerns quickly
- ☐ keep matters low-key
- ☐ enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

Where complaints cannot be resolved informally, the formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

2. Definitions

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or concern about the actions, decisions, behaviour, services, or activities of the hub.

A Maths Hub is the partnership of schools, colleges and other organisations providing maths system leadership through the Maths Hubs Programme to improve maths education in a geographical area. Each hub is led by the Maths Hub Lead (MHL). At Abacus NW Maths Hub it is Kathryn McGregor.

A Lead School, College or Trust receives this DfE grant on behalf of the Maths Hub. The Senior Leadership Links (SLL) are members of the Lead School/Trust leadership team and are the formal representative of the Lead School and link to the DfE. At Cardinal Newman College it is Katie O'Reilly.

3. Responsibilities

Abacus NW Maths Hub's responsibility will be to:

- ☐ acknowledge the complaint, if formal, in writing;
- ☐ respond within a stated period of time;
- ☐ deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
- ☐ take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- ☐ bring their informal complaint to Abacus NW Maths Hub's attention within four school weeks of the issue arising;
- ☐ if required, bring their formal complaint, in writing, to Abacus NW Maths Hub's attention normally within eight school weeks of the issue arising;
- ☐ raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff in Abacus NW Maths Hub;
- ☐ explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- ☐ allow Abacus NW Maths Hub a reasonable time to deal with the matter, and

- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Abacus NW Maths Hub's control.

4. Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Abacus NW Maths Hub maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

5. Complaints Procedure

Written records must be made by Abacus NW Maths Hub at each stage of the procedure.

Stage 1: Informal investigation and resolution

In the first instance, a member of the MHLM team must establish the complexity and seriousness of the complaint. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Stage 2: Formal complaint

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant should be advised that a formal complaint may be made, and the following procedure should be explained to them. It may sometimes be appropriate for a different member of staff, preferably the MHL, to make this explanation.

- a) A formal complaint should be made in writing. The attached form should be used.
- b) In all cases, the complaint must be passed on to MHL. In the event of a complaint about the MHL the complaint should be passed to the SLL, and if the complaint is about the SLL, this must be passed on to the principal of Cardinal Newman College, Nick Burnham. **If the complaint is about the Lead School/Trust, then the complaint must be raised directly by the complainant with the DfE (email: Maths.PROGRAMME@education.gov.uk).**
- c) The MHL or SLL, depending on the nature of the complaint, must acknowledge the complaint in writing within one week of receiving it.
- d) One of the above will investigate the complaint. Any conclusions reached should be discussed with the relevant hub member involved and their line manager.
- e) The person making the complaint will receive a response based on the investigation within four weeks of the complaint being received. If this is not possible, a letter must be sent explaining why.

Stage 3: Appeal

- a) If the complainant is not satisfied with the above decision, they can appeal to the Lead School/Trust. The Lead School/Trust will convene a sub-group of senior leadership representatives.

- b) The sub-group will examine the complaint and may wish to carry out further interviews, or examine files/notes. They will respond within four weeks in writing. **Their decision will be final.**

6. Publication and Accessibility

This Complaints Policy will be made available on the Maths Hub's website and in any relevant communications materials.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with best practices.

Date of Policy Implementation: 27/08/2024

Date of Last Review: 21/10/2025

Next Scheduled Review: 21/10/2026

8. Contact Details

Formal complaints should be addressed to -

The Maths Hub Lead (or The Senior Leadership Link in the case of a complaint about the Maths Hub Lead)

Abacus NW Maths Hub
c/o Cardinal Newman College
Larkhill Road
Preston
PR1 4HD

Email: hello@abacusnwmathshub.co.uk

Abacus NW Maths Hub

FORMAL COMPLAINTS FORM

hello@abacusnwmathshub.co.uk

You may use this form to make a complaint about Abacus NW Maths Hub.

We would like you to return this form as soon as possible.

Your name:

Email address:

Telephone:

Date of incident:

Approximate time of incident:

Complaint:

What actions do you think would help to resolve the situation?

What times are convenient for you to have an appointment to discuss this?