

PRIME TUTOR'S COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Management of the Prime Tuition adopted this policy on 24th June 2021 & It will be discussed annually by the management and will remain applicable for Prime Tuition until the management notifies the Institute for any changes to the policy. It should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedures

Principal/Managing Director	Signature	Date
Mr Z Ahmed	Ahmed	24-06-2021
Director	Signature	Date
Mr Usman Javed	Usman Javed	24-06-2021
Review Date	20 June 2022	

INTRODUCTION:

No-one likes criticism but an open organisation will always be willing to listen to concerns and anxieties and be ready to learn from them if appropriate. In a Tuition Centre, most concerns are likely to be expressed by the parents or guardians of its pupils, though some may come from pupils themselves, or from other interested parties.

It is appropriate for a complaint to be processed from wherever it arises. For the purposes of this policy all references to Tuition Centre may include academies. As the first educators of their children, parents/carers have a duty to take an active interest in their educational institute. Nearly all concerns or questions can be resolved very quickly and informally if parents/carers feel able to voice them as soon as they arise.

Obviously, the more information the Tuition Centre gives to them the less scope there is for misunderstanding. As part of this information, parents/carers should be told that feedback is always welcome and that, therefore, they are warmly encouraged to voice any concerns straightaway, preferably to the person concerned.

In most cases, discussion, explanation, further information, or an apology, if appropriate will resolve the issue. Every effort should be made to allay concerns at this level and with the least possible formality.

The ideal is that no concern should ever become a formal complaint. Occasionally, however, a concern will be too serious to be handled in this way, perhaps needing greater investigation; or the person concerned may not feel that the answers given so far have been acceptable or adequate. In such circumstances,

the concern will become a complaint and the formal procedure should be rigorously followed. Even in these cases, every effort should be made to resolve the issue at the lowest possible level of the procedure. It should be very rare indeed that a complaint needs to be decided at the Appeal Stage by a Third-party panel.

It is very important that all Department Supervisors/Head of Department, staffs including Tutors and members of Administration be familiar with the Tuition centre's complaints procedure and that they know who the complaints co-ordinator for the Centre is so that they can refer complaints to that person when approached by someone with a complaint. Regular training on complaints procedures is provided by the management. In all circumstances the published procedure must be followed closely. THE FORMAL PROCEDURE Principles At every stage of the formal procedure, the handling of the complaint will be: • non-adversarial; • Swift (using agreed time limits); • Fair (using independent investigation where necessary); • Confidential.

Throughout the process, the institute will be willing:

- To listen.
- To learn.
- To admit mistakes.
- To apologise if appropriate.
- To address any issues raised.
- To change centre practice if appropriate.

In using this procedure:

- Staff are asked to be aware that complainants may feel intimidated by the Tuition centre as an institution and unsure whether they will be treated fairly.
- Complainants are asked to be aware that those complained about, especially individual members of staff, may feel very vulnerable during this process.

Throughout the procedure, therefore, the aim of all parties should be not only to resolve the complaint but also to develop and sustain good relationships between all members of the Prime Tuition. However formal or serious the complaint, or however dissatisfied the complainant, the aim will always be reconciliation between all parties and a renewed commitment to work together amicably.

This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

Concerns about the delivery of the National Curriculum is totally separate from any Disciplinary, Capability or Whistleblowing Procedures. If the investigation of any complaint were to lead to concerns on the part of the Head of Department/Department Supervisor about the capability or conduct of a member of administration staff, these would not be discussed or dealt with within this procedure.

Outline of the Procedure There are three stages to the formal procedure. It is possible that at any stage it will become necessary to involve other members of staff, management in the investigation of a complaint. To comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 written consent should be obtained from the complainant before any information is disclosed to a third party.

Throughout the procedure audio and/or video recordings may only be made in exceptional circumstances (e.g., as reasonable adjustments) and with the consent of all those present (including witnesses). Covert recordings obtained without the written consent of all parties will not be accepted as evidence.

STAGE 1

Complaint heard by a member of staff (not the subject of the complaint).

Educational Institutes are recommended to designate a member of staff or the deputy head as the Complaints Coordinator, to whom all complaints will be addressed in the first instance.

The name should be publicised to parents with the Procedure. At Prime Tuition the Complaints Co-ordinator is Nahima Nur.

The member of staff designated as complaints co-ordinator will, obviously, need to be held in high professional esteem by staff, management, and parents. Status in the Educational institute's hierarchy will be less important than personal qualities and interpersonal skills. Sensitivity, assertiveness, efficiency, and articulateness are likely to be particularly required.

The complaints co-ordinator will either hear a complaint personally or, where appropriate, refer the matter to management.

The co-ordinator will also keep records of each complaint and of action taken in regard to it (preferably using an agreed proforma e.g., as in Appendix A) so that the Department Supervisors/Head of Department and Management of the Tuition

Centre can be kept informed of all issues that arise and as a result can change or develop Institute's practices where necessary or appropriate.

Thus, complaints about the Tuition Centre can be used positively as a self-evaluation tool. If a person is unable to articulate their complaint or would have difficulty in presenting it in writing e.g., through disability, learning or language difficulties, then the complaints co-ordinator or another member of staff should assist the complainant in formulating the complaint.

THE FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE IN DETAIL

Complaint Department Supervisor/Head of Department The complaint should be addressed in the first instance to the designated member of staff (the complaints co-ordinator). This may be done in person, by telephone or in writing e.g., letter, email, or text. Sometimes a complaint may be made by a third party on behalf of the complainant. In small educational institutes like tuition Centres, the designated member of staff may have to be the Department Supervisor/Head of Department, in which case the procedure will start at Stage 1.

1. The complaints co-ordinator will log the complaint (See Appendix A for a sample record form) and either investigate the complaint personally or refer it to an appropriate member of staff. In making this decision, the co-ordinator will be sensitive to any indication that the complainant would have difficulty discussing the complaint with a particular member of staff. All records will be kept securely and confidentially.
2. If the complaint concerns the Department Supervisor/Head of Department, or the any of the Tutors', the co-ordinator should refer it to the Management and, in courtesy, inform the

Department Supervisor/ Head of Department that this has been done.

3. Whoever investigates the complaint will:
 - establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved.
 - a. Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved; • meet with the complainant or contact them.
 - b. Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right, clearing up any areas of misunderstanding, identifying areas of agreement and discussing what might be possible.
 - c. Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish (this should include adults and pupils as appropriate, whether main players or witnesses);
 - d. Conduct each interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
 - e. Keep secure and confidential notes of each interview.
4. Timescales. Within ten working days of receiving the complaint, the investigator will complete the investigation and contact the complainant to arrange a meeting.
5. At any point in the process, the management may decide or agree to commission a further investigation, whether by a member of staff or an independent person. If this occurs, the timescale may be extended, and the complainant must be informed of the extension and the reason for it.
6. When the investigation is complete, the member of staff investigating will meet the complainant to try to resolve the complaint. Every effort should be made to try to resolve the

complaint at this meeting. Any of the following may be appropriate at this point:

- a. An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part.
- b. An apology.
- c. An explanation.
- d. A clarification of misunderstandings.
- e. An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- f. An assurance that the event complained of will not recur.
- g. An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again.
- h. An undertaking to review Tuition Centre's policies considering the complaint. Some of the above may require that the investigator seek authority from the Department Supervisor/ Head of Department. Naturally, nothing should be offered or promised that cannot be justified or fulfilled.

Complaint Heard by Department Supervisor/ Head of Department:

Department Supervisor will contact the complainant and arrange a meeting. At any point in the process, the Supervisor may decide or agree to commission a further investigation, by one of the Management staff or an independent person. If this occurs, the timescale may be extended, and the complainant must be informed of the extension and the reason for it.

When the investigation is complete, the Supervisor will consider the evidence and, whether or not he or she

investigated the matter personally, will meet the complainant (with or without the person who conducted the investigation if different) to try to resolve the complaint. Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint at this meeting. Any of the suggestions in section 6 may be appropriate at this point. If the complaint cannot be resolved, the complainant will be advised that they may refer it to management directly. This should be done within one month of the investigation outcome meeting

This is the final stage of the Institute's procedure. It is, therefore, vital that, in the spirit of the procedure, the Appeal Panel (Either third part or the members of the management committee) should:

- a.** Be prepared to hear complaints without preconceptions.
- b.** Examine and discuss the matter fully so that they ensure that they have every piece of information or evidence that they require.
- c.** Be prepared to commission, organise or conduct further investigations if necessary.
- d.** Give the complainant the opportunity to express their dissatisfaction and worries and to suggest what might put things right.
- e.** Be prepared to take whatever action is required.

If the complainant or the Supervisor wishes to submit information in writing to the panel, they should send it to the management at least five working days before the meeting. As far as possible, the meeting should not be delayed if the referral comes at the end of a term, especially at the end of the summer term. Since

the aim of the procedure is to resolve the issue and effect reconciliation, if necessary, it will be best if the matter can come to the panel as quickly as possible, especially as the complainant will already have been engaged over a protracted period in attempts to put things right.

Failure to agree a date:

If a party to the complaint fails to agree to attend a Complaints Panel meeting having been offered 2 or more alternative dates, within the 20-working days period, to accommodate their attendance, then the Complaints Panel may decide the meeting should take place in any event on the date last offered to the parties to the complaint. This particularly so if otherwise the complaint will not be heard within their school term or if the event giving rise to the complaint extends back sometime before the complaint was made. The complainant will be notified in writing of the time and date the Complaints Panel has agreed to meet to consider the complaint.

Failure to Attend:

If a date is agreed or if pursuant to above the complainant fails to agree a date and it is decided that the meeting should proceed and on the date and time notified to the parties the complainant fails to attend without reasonable excuse, notified to the Complaints Panel by the time of the meeting then the Complaints Panel will consider whether it is appropriate either to dismiss the complaint summarily for absence of the complainant or to proceed to conduct the meeting in the absence of the complainant using such evidence as was already before it on

paper and as is available orally from the other party. The Meeting of the Complaints Appeal Panel

Before the meeting:

Members of the panel should carefully consider any documentation from the Supervisor or the complainant but should not discuss the matter with anyone, including the other staffs of the Institute before the meeting. This is in the interest of fairness and natural justice. The appeal panel must operate scrupulously as an independent arbiter of the complaint. The panel may, however, liaise before the meeting to decide whether it is appropriate:

A. The meeting room should be private and as informally laid out as possible to encourage a spirit of partnership. It is very important that there should be nothing adversarial about the proceedings. The tone of the whole meeting will be set by the atmosphere of the room in which it is set and by the way people are greeted. Panel members should be sensitive to the vulnerabilities and sensitivities of all concerned. Parents/Carers may be emotional when talking about their child; the Supervisor and others involved in the earlier investigations may fear that their professionalism could be under attack. Everyone needs to remember that the aim and purpose of the meeting is to resolve the complaint and find ways of going forward together. It is possible that the complainant may not be satisfied with the outcome if the panel does not find in their favour, but the conduct of the meeting can go a long way towards smoothing such dissatisfaction. At the very least, every complainant should feel at the end that

their complaint has been taken seriously and examined impartially.

- B.** If the complainant is a child or if there are child witnesses. Children's views should be given equal consideration to those of adults. If a parent/carer has complained on behalf of a child, the parent/carer should be given the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting the child needs to attend.
- C.** The parent/carer must be told that they are permitted to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.
- D.** The Supervisor may question the complainant; • The panel may ask questions at any time; If there are any witnesses for the complainant, each one is invited into the meeting in turn and in each case the witness is invited to speak, then the Supervisor may question them. In each case, the witness will leave after their evidence.
- E.** The Supervisor is invited to explain the Tuition Centre's actions; • The complainant may question the Supervisor.
- F.** If there are any witnesses for the Tuition Centre, they are treated in the same way as the witnesses for the complainant.
- G.** When the management is sure that all parties have asked all that, they need to, the complainant is invited to sum up their complaint; • The Supervisor is then invited to sum up the Tuition Centre's actions and response to the complaint.
- H.** The management explains that both parties will hear from the panel within three working days following the day of the final meeting.
- I.** Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.

The panel may:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- Recommend changes to the Institute's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

After the Final complaints Meeting the following action needs to be taken:

If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the management can inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. The procedure for dealing with serial and persistent complaints is attached to the back of this document at page 11.

GENERAL POINTS Using and Publicising the Procedure

The management needs to adopt the procedure formally and then to review and re-adopt it annually. They also need to ensure that all staff are confident in its use and that it is appropriately reviewed publicised to all interested parties, especially parents. It must be placed on the Institutes website and could also be included in the Tuition Centre's prospectus or sent out with a newsletter.

Recording and Reporting Complaints In order to turn complaints to positive effect, it is important that records are kept so that at regular intervals (perhaps termly) both the Management and the Department Supervisors/Head of department of the Institute and can reflect on issues that have arisen on the way in which they have been handled. The complaints co-ordinator is the most obvious person to hold these records and to collate them into a report for the Department Supervisor (if he or she is not the co-ordinator) and the management. Such a report could be a valuable self-evaluation tool. The management may also wish to consider reporting to parents any changes which have been made to the Institutes procedures because of parental feedback. (It need not be specified that the feedback was in the form of a complaint!)

Confidentiality All records of complaints must be kept strictly confidential, except where a legitimate subject access request is made under The Data Protection Act 2018. Complainants are entitled to a copy of the records of a complaint, including notes and outcomes. Records of complaints should be retained for three years following completion of the complaints process and then destroyed.

Complaints Made Other Than in Accordance with

the Procedure Sometimes a complainant may be unfamiliar with, or unaware of, the complaints procedure; sometimes they may choose to take their complaint straight to governors or to other parties, such as the diocese or the Local Authority. In every such case, the procedure must be strictly adhered to, and the complaint redirected to its proper stage in the procedure. It is, therefore, important that all members of staff and all governors are fully aware of the procedure and that it is publicly available. It is particularly important that governors know that they must not attempt to deal with complaints themselves but should tell complainants to take their complaint to the Tuition Centre's complaints coordinator.

It is not part of legal proceedings, and it is intended that the complaint should be heard, that the complainant and the Tuition Centre should be reconciled, and any mistakes rectified. It is not therefore appropriate for the complainant or the Institute to be legally represented. Legal representatives/advisers will only be admitted in exceptional circumstances and with written permission obtained in advance from the management.

Complaints to Ofsted the Education and Inspections Act 2006 at s.160 provides a procedure for Ofsted to investigate parents' complaints about an educational Institute. A complaint cannot be investigated unless the institute's complaints procedure has been exhausted, subject to the Chief Inspector's discretion to waive this requirement.

The Secretary of State has a duty to consider all complaints raised but will only intervene where the governing body has acted unlawfully or unreasonably and where it is expedient or practical to do so.

The School Complaints Unit (SCU) considers complaints relating to LA maintained schools in England on behalf of the Secretary of State which is normally applicable for schools and not for small educational institutes like a Tuition Centre. The SCU will look at whether the complaints policy and any other relevant statutory policies were adhered to. The SCU also looks at whether statutory policies adhere to education legislation. However, the SCU will not normally re-investigate the substance of the complaint. This remains the responsibility of schools. The SCU will not overturn a school's decision about a complaint except in exceptional circumstances where it is clear the school has acted unlawfully or unreasonably. If the SCU finds that the school has not handled a complaint in accordance with its procedure, they may request that the complaint is looked at again.

Further information can be obtained from the SCU by calling the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288 or going online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

POLICY FOR MANAGING SERIAL AND UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS

Prime Tuition is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants

have with our centre. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will act to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening.

Prime Tuition defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the institute, such as, if the complainant:

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaint's investigation process.
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaint's procedure.
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaint's procedure or with good practice.
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be considered and commented on.
- Raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales.
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeks to have them replaced.
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.

- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed).
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the Institute's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education.
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- Makes excessive demands on Institute's time by frequent, lengthy, and complicated contact with staff/supervisor/management regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.
- Uses threats to intimidate.
- Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence.
- Knowingly provides falsified information.
- Publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums. Complainants should try to limit their communication with the institute that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email, or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Department Supervisor or Head of Department or Management will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking. If the behaviour continues, the Department Supervisor

or Head of Department will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Prime Tuition causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months. In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from prime Tuition.