

Complaints Procedure

Ark Tuition / Ark Education

Date Prepared: 01-10-2024 | Last Reviewed: 28-03-2025 | Next Review Date: 01-10-2026

For **Examination related** complaints please also refer to Ark Education Centre Complaints and Appeals Procedure

1. Introduction

Ark Tuition and Education Centre is committed to providing high-quality tuition and examination services. We value feedback and take all complaints seriously. This procedure ensures that complaints are handled fairly, efficiently, and with appropriate confidentiality.

We aim to resolve concerns informally wherever possible. However, where this is not appropriate or successful, we have a formal complaints procedure in place.

2. Purpose and Scope

Purpose:

- To provide a clear, accessible process for raising and resolving complaints
- To ensure complaints are dealt with fairly, consistently, and promptly
- To identify and address service improvements
- To maintain positive relationships with students, parents, and stakeholders

Scope:

This procedure applies to complaints regarding:

- Quality of tuition or teaching
- Staff conduct or behaviour
- Facilities and resources
- Communication with the Centre
- Safeguarding responses (subject to safeguarding procedures)
- Discrimination or unfair treatment

This procedure does NOT cover:

- **Examination results or marking** - these must be appealed through the relevant awarding body (JCQ appeals process)
- **Matters subject to legal proceedings** - complaints already being dealt with by courts or tribunals
- **Vexatious or malicious complaints** - repeated complaints without substance or made to cause disruption
- **Anonymous complaints** - we cannot investigate complaints without contact details, except in safeguarding situations
- **Staff grievances or employment matters** - these are covered by internal HR procedures

3. Principles

Our complaints procedure is based on the following principles:

- **Accessibility** - The procedure is easy to understand and accessible to all
- **Fairness** - All parties are treated fairly and given opportunity to present their case
- **Confidentiality** - Information is shared only with those who need to know
- **Impartiality** - Complaints are investigated objectively without bias
- **Timeliness** - Complaints are dealt with promptly within stated timescales
- **Transparency** - Processes and outcomes are clearly communicated
- **Learning** - We use complaints to improve our services

4. Who Can Make a Complaint?

Complaints can be made by:

- Students or candidates attending our services
- Parents, guardians, or carers of students under 18
- Any individual directly affected by our services

Third parties may make a complaint on behalf of a student with appropriate consent.

5. Time Limits for Making a Complaint

Complaints should be raised as soon as possible after the incident or issue arises. We will consider complaints made within:

- **3 months** of the incident occurring, or
- **3 months** of the complainant becoming aware of the issue

Complaints outside these timescales may be considered at the Centre's discretion where there are exceptional circumstances or good reasons for the delay.

6. Informal Resolution (Stage 1)

We encourage you to raise concerns informally in the first instance. Many issues can be resolved quickly through direct communication.

How to raise an informal concern:

Step 1: Contact the relevant person directly:

- **Tuition concerns** - Speak to your tutor or the Tuition Coordinator
- **Examination concerns** - Contact the Exams Officer
- **General concerns** - Contact the Centre reception or administrative staff

Step 2: Explain your concern clearly:

- What happened
- When it happened
- Who was involved
- What outcome you are seeking

Step 3: Allow time for resolution:

- Most informal concerns are resolved within **5 working days**
- You will receive a verbal or written response explaining the outcome

If you are not satisfied:

If your concern is not resolved informally, or if the matter is too serious for informal resolution, you may proceed to the formal complaints procedure (Stage 2).

7. Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 2: Formal Written Complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you may make a formal written complaint.

How to submit a formal complaint:

Submit your complaint in writing to:

Centre Manager

Ark Tuition Centre

Unit 2, 388, High Road, Ilford Essex

Email: info@arktuition.co.uk;

Your complaint should include:

- Your full name and contact details
- Name of the student/candidate (if different)
- Date(s) of the incident(s)
- Details of what happened and who was involved
- What steps you have already taken to resolve the issue
- What outcome or resolution you are seeking
- Any supporting evidence (emails, documents, photographs)

Acknowledgement:

- You will receive written acknowledgement of your complaint within **3 working days**
- We will confirm the complaint has been received, provide a reference number, and outline the investigation process

Investigation:

The Head of Centre (or designated senior staff member) will:

- Review all relevant information and evidence
- Interview relevant staff, students, or witnesses where appropriate

- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process
- Consider any relevant policies or procedures
- Reach a fair and impartial conclusion

Response:

You will receive a full written response within **15 working days** of your complaint being received.

The response will include:

- A summary of your complaint
- Details of the investigation conducted
- Findings and conclusions
- Actions taken or to be taken (if upheld)
- Reasons for the decision
- Information about the next stage if you remain dissatisfied

If the complaint is upheld:

We will:

- Apologise where appropriate
- Explain what went wrong
- Detail corrective actions taken
- Outline steps to prevent recurrence
- Offer appropriate redress (e.g., fee adjustment, additional tuition)

If the complaint is not upheld:

We will:

- Explain clearly why we have reached this conclusion
- Provide evidence supporting our findings
- Offer to discuss the decision further if helpful

Stage 3: Appeal to Senior Management

If you are not satisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, you may appeal to senior management.

How to appeal:

Submit your appeal in writing within **10 working days** of receiving the Stage 2 response to:

Director / Senior Manager

Ark Tuition Centre

Unit 2, 388, High Road, Ilford Essex

Email: nalika@deccagroup.co.uk

Your appeal should include:

- Your original complaint reference number
- Reasons why you are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response
- What outcome you are seeking
- Any new evidence not previously considered

Review Process:

The appeal will be reviewed by a senior manager or director who was not involved in the Stage 2 investigation.

The reviewer will:

- Examine all documentation from Stage 2
- Consider whether the investigation was thorough and fair
- Review any new evidence presented
- May conduct further investigations if necessary
- Make a final decision on the complaint

Response:

You will receive a written response within **20 working days** of your appeal being received.

This response will:

- Summarize the appeal and reasons for dissatisfaction
- Detail the review process undertaken
- Provide the final decision with full reasoning
- Confirm whether the original decision is upheld, partially upheld, or overturned
- Detail any further actions or remedies
- Confirm this is the final stage of the internal complaints procedure

This is the final stage of our internal complaints process. The decision at Stage 3 is final.

8. External Review

If you have completed all stages of our internal complaints procedure and remain dissatisfied, you may be able to refer your complaint to an external body:

For Examination-Related Complaints:**JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications)**

If your complaint relates to examination administration, access arrangements, or malpractice procedures, you can contact the relevant awarding body or JCQ.

Website: www.jcq.org.uk

Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation)

For concerns about exam centre compliance with regulations.

Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual

Email: public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk

For General Service Complaints:**Citizens Advice**

For advice on consumer rights and next steps.

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Local Authority Trading Standards

For issues related to consumer protection.

For Safeguarding Concerns:

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Helen Curtis

Telephone 020 8708 5350

E-mail helen.curtis@redbridge.gov.uk

Ofsted

If we are registered and you have concerns about safeguarding.

Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

9. Safeguarding Complaints

If your complaint relates to safeguarding or child protection, it will be handled in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Safeguarding complaints will be:

- Referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate
- Investigated in line with statutory safeguarding procedures
- May involve external agencies (police, social services)

If you have immediate safeguarding concerns, please contact:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Nalika Danthasinghe

Phone: 020 3441 7272

Email: nalika@deccagroup.co.uk

10. Vexatious and Persistent Complaints

The Centre is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly. However, we will not tolerate behaviour that is:

- Abusive, offensive, or threatening towards staff
- Unreasonably persistent or demanding
- Designed to cause disruption or distress
- Lacking in substance or repetitive after a final response

Where the Centre considers a complaint to be vexatious or unreasonably persistent, we may:

- Limit contact to specific methods (e.g., written only)
- Restrict contact to one designated staff member
- Refuse to investigate further after a final decision
- Take legal action if behaviour is threatening or harassing

The decision to classify a complaint as vexatious will be made by the Head of Centre or Director and communicated in writing with reasons.

11. Anonymous Complaints

We generally cannot investigate anonymous complaints as we need to:

- Understand the full circumstances
- Gather evidence
- Communicate with the complainant
- Ensure fairness to all parties

However, anonymous complaints raising **safeguarding concerns** will always be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

12. Record Keeping and Data Protection

Records:

All complaints are recorded and stored securely. Records include:

- Complaint details and supporting evidence
- Investigation notes and findings
- Correspondence with the complainant
- Actions taken and outcomes
- Dates and timescales

Data Protection:

Complaint records are handled in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

- Records are stored securely with restricted access
- Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis

- Complainants have the right to access their complaint records
- Records are retained for **6 years** from the date the complaint is closed
- Personal data is processed lawfully and fairly

For more information, see our Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

13. Learning from Complaints

We view complaints as an opportunity to improve our services. The Centre will:

- Analyse complaints to identify trends or recurring issues
- Review policies and procedures in light of complaints
- Provide staff training where issues are identified
- Implement service improvements based on feedback
- Report annually to senior management on complaints and actions taken

14. Monitoring and Review

This procedure is reviewed annually or following:

- Significant complaints
- Changes in legislation or guidance
- Feedback from complainants or staff

The Head of Centre is responsible for:

- Overseeing the complaints process
- Ensuring timely responses
- Maintaining complaint records
- Analysing complaint data
- Reporting to senior leadership
- Recommending policy improvements

Annual Complaints Report is prepared summarizing:

- Number and types of complaints received
- Outcomes and resolution rates
- Trends and patterns identified
- Actions taken to improve services

15. Support for Complainants

We recognise that making a complaint can be stressful. We will:

- Treat all complainants with respect and courtesy
- Provide clear information about the process
- Keep complainants informed of progress
- Listen to concerns without prejudice
- Offer meetings where appropriate (with note-taker present)

If you require support or reasonable adjustments to access this procedure (e.g., due to disability, language barriers, or other needs), please inform us and we will make appropriate arrangements.

16. Staff Support

Staff who are the subject of complaints will be:

- Informed of the complaint (unless safeguarding concerns prevent this)
- Given opportunity to respond
- Supported throughout the process
- Treated fairly and without prejudice
- Protected from harassment or unfair treatment

False or malicious complaints against staff will be taken seriously and may result in withdrawal of services or legal action.

18. Fees and Refunds

Where a complaint is upheld and relates to service quality or failure, we may offer:

- Partial or full refund of fees
- Credit toward future services
- Additional tuition sessions at no charge
- Other appropriate remedies

Decisions on financial redress will be made on a case-by-case basis considering:

- The nature and severity of the issue
- The impact on the student
- The Centre's responsibility
- Previous remedial actions taken

Our Sales Terms & Conditions provides further details.

19. Related Policies

This procedure should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Managing Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Sales Terms & Conditions

20. Contact Information

For Complaints:

Centre Manager

Ark Tuition Centre

Unit 2, 388, High Road, Ilford, Essex

Email: info@arktuition.co.uk

Phone: 020 3441 7272

Website: www.arktuition.co.uk

For Safeguarding:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Nalika Danthasinghe

Phone: 020 3441 7272

Email: nalika@deccagroup.co.uk

For Appeals (Stage 3):

Director / Senior Management

Email: nalika@deccagroup.co.uk

Phone: 020 3441 7272

Appendix A: Complaints Form

[To be completed by complainant]

Your Details:

- Full Name:
- Address:
- Phone:
- Email:
- Preferred contact method:

Student Details (if different):

- Student Name:
- Date of Birth:
- Course/Service:

Complaint Details:

- Date of incident:
- People involved:
- What happened? (Please provide as much detail as possible):
- What have you done to try to resolve this?:
- What outcome are you seeking?:
- Supporting evidence attached? (Yes/No):

Declaration:

I confirm that the information provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Complaints Handling Timescales Summary

Stage	Action	Timescale
Stage 1: Informal	Concern raised and resolved informally	5 working days

Stage	Action	Timescale
Stage 2: Formal	Written acknowledgement	3 working days
	Full investigation and response	15 working days
Stage 3: Appeal	Submit appeal	Within 10 working days of Stage 2 response
	Review and final response	20 working days

All timescales are from receipt of complaint/appeal. Extensions may be necessary for complex cases - complainant will be kept informed.