

<b>Date of last review:</b>	26 September 2018	<b>Review period:</b>	Every 3 years
<b>Date of next review:</b>	September 2021	<b>Owner:</b>	Company Secretary



## Complaints Procedure

Magna Learning Partnership (MLP) encourages all those who interact with us and our institutions to raise any concerns they may have with us. In this way we believe that misunderstandings can be rectified and problems can be addressed.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about MLP as a whole, a particular School or College, a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent or another person believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unfairly. Parents and carers can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially, subject to our Safeguarding Policies. You can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.

This procedure covers all complaints against MLP where there is no other avenue of complaint. It does not cover:

- Admissions
- Exclusions
- Delivery of National Curriculum
- SEND Assessments; or
- Employee Grievances

Complaints relating to safeguarding will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding Policies, but complaints relating to the way in which a safeguarding issue was handled may be brought under this procedure.

## Purpose

This document outlines the way in which complaints made against the School/College will be handled, whether made by 'phone, letter or in person. Any complaints made are likely to be from parents, pupils or members of the public, and would probably be about the conduct of staff, the management of the school, the curriculum, internally assessed coursework or the behaviour of pupils. Complaints will always be taken seriously.

## Process

### Stage 1

Any complaint should initially be directed towards the member of staff concerned, such as the subject teacher or tutor.

If the above is not appropriate, the complaint should be referred to that staff member's line manager, who may be the Pastoral Leader, Subject Leader, Deputy Head, Headteacher or Executive Headteacher. Only if a complaint is about a Headteacher should it be referred directly to the Executive Headteacher.

Complaints will be acknowledged by the recipient and passed on to the appropriate member of staff to investigate and respond.

### Stage 2

If the response by the appropriate member of staff is considered by the complainant to be unsatisfactory, the complainant should refer the matter in writing to the Headteacher of the relevant school or Executive Headteacher if the complaint is about the Headteacher. Written complaints should be acknowledged as soon as possible (within 2 working days) and a full response provided, (after investigation and within 14 school days).

If still unsatisfied, the complainant should proceed to Stage 3.

### Stage 3

If the complainant seeks to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) the matter will then be referred to a Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will be appointed by MLP and will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, at least one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the relevant school (this may be a MLP Trustee or a member of a Local Governing Body from another MLP school). The Clerk to Governors of the relevant school or Company Secretary will, on behalf of the Panel, acknowledge the complaint and schedule a meeting to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 school days.

The Panel will require that all particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties normally not later than 7 school days prior to the meeting. The staff member, department or school complained of may submit a response to the complaint which shall be supplied to all parties

normally not later than 7 days before the meeting (dependent on receipt of complaint particulars).

The complainant may attend the meeting but will not be invited to provide any further particulars relating to the complaint during the meeting. The complainant may be accompanied at the meeting by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not be appropriate. The Panel shall determine whether to invite a person to attend the meeting, or part of the meeting, to respond to the complaint.

The Panel will ask the complainant and any person invited to attend to respond to the complaint, such questions as the Panel deems appropriate. If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will respond formally to the complaint and may make recommendations.

The Panel will write to the complainant informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 school days of the meeting. The decision of the Panel will be final.

## **Responses to Complaints**

The member of staff dealing with a complaint will investigate it as fully as reasonably possible and decide on what action, if any, needs to be taken. The member of staff will inform the complainant in writing, by telephone or in person of the outcome of the investigation. It is MLP's intention to respond in a way which demonstrates that we have taken the complaint seriously. It must be recognised that this action may not always be the outcome hoped for by the complainant, and that the school must act within the law, be that criminal, civil, employment or educational statute.

Where a complainant seeks to reopen a matter the same as, or similar to, a matter previously considered under this procedure MLP may decline to take any action in respect of that complaint.

If not satisfied with the outcome from the Complaints Panel, the complainant can refer the matter to the Minister for Schools at the Department for Education (DfE) via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) that handles all complaints about academies. Details of how to complain can be found on <https://www.education.gov.uk/form/school-complaints-form> 3

## **Whistle Blowing**

"Whistle Blowing" is the common term for making a protected disclosure (Protected Disclosures Act 2014) alerting an outside agency to wrong-doing in an organisation.

## **Anonymous Complaints**

It is not possible for MLP or any individual partner school to deal with anonymous complaints, or with complaints which rely on second hand information. If you believe that someone else should complain then please encourage them to do so in order that the complaint can be dealt with properly.