THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL GROUP LTD

Complaints Procedures Policy

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This policy has been prepared in accordance with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014, updated 2019), which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of pupils at the school. Copies are available on the school website www.thealternativeschool.co.uk, and from the school office upon request. The new DfE guidance issued in early 2026 applies to maintained schools and academies in England – for independent schools it is strictly advisory.

Introduction.

The Alternative School Group Limited welcomes suggestions and comments from pupils; parents; carers and members of the public and takes seriously any concerns that you may have. All concerns will be treated in a professional and appropriate manner, and in accordance with this procedure. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns can be resolved quickly and informally.

The Alternative School Group Limited prides itself on its individual and nurturing approach towards each child's education.

Compliant process for parents/carers

STAGE 1 – (informal resolution)

If you have any problems, concerns or are not happy with any part of the TAS programme, please talk directly to your child's teacher in the first instance. The teacher will arrange to meet with you within 2 working days of your concern being made with the aim of resolving the matter. In many cases the matter will be resolved straight away to the parent's/carer's satisfaction.

The member of staff will make a written record of all concerns and complaints on the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved at this stage then the parent/carer will be advised that their complaint will be referred to the Headteacher in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

STAGE 2 – (formal resolution)

At this stage the parent/carer should notify the school's Headteacher in writing. After considering the concern/complaint the Headteacher will decide upon the appropriate action to be taken. The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days of receiving it.

It may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations. The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Once the Headteacher is satisfied that all of the relevant facts have been established, a meeting will be arranged with parents and/or carers. The Headteacher's aim would be to inform the parents of the outcome of the investigation to the complaint within 7 working days of receipt of the letter from the parents. Please note that any complaint received within one month of the end of term or half term is likely to take longer to resolve owing to the presence of School holidays.

If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage that satisfies the parent/carer, the pupil and the school.

Where the parent/carer is not satisfied with the school's response at Stage 2 and indicates that they wish to progress their complaint to Stage 3, a panel hearing should take place, unless the parent/carer later decides that they are now satisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and no longer wishes to proceed further with their complaint.

STAGE 3

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If you remain unhappy at the response you have been given and would like to take this further, please provide your concern in writing within 5 working days of your meeting, to Ann Flynn, (01282 851800 option 8) or e-mail ann@thealternativeschool.co.uk

A meeting with a panel of no less than 3 people, who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, will be arranged to take place within the following 10 working days, where you will be given the opportunity to discuss your concerns with the panel. The original person you made the complaint to will not be included as part of this panel.

The panel may be made up of TAS teachers, senior leaders, school business managers, members of the TAS Advisory Board or Non-Exec Board, all of whom will have the interest and well-being of your child at the centre of their findings. The campus Headteacher and/or Ann Flynn will be responsible for the appointment of the panel where at least one person will be independent of the management and running of the school. You will be notified by phone and by writing of the panel hearing date at least 3 days in advance of the meeting and may be accompanied by a friend, relative or support worker if you wish.

The school's arrangements for the panel hearing should be reasonable in order to facilitate you to attend. If you do not attend the planned panel hearing, this does not remove the school's obligation to hold the hearing in conformity with its complaints policy.

During the meeting you will be given the opportunity to put forward your concerns to the panel who will then decide on the outcome and make recommendations. If possible, the panel will resolve your concern immediately, without the need for further investigation. After due consideration of the matters discussed at the hearing, the Panel shall reach a decision unless there is an agreed position. The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations may be notified orally at the hearing or subsequently and shall be confirmed in writing to you by electronic mail or otherwise given within seven working days. If you do not wish to receive the decision by electronic mail, a copy will be given or posted to you. The decision may include recommendations and will be sent to you, the Headteacher and where relevant, any person about whom the complaint has been made.

Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how to carry out the investigation. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the panel will form a decision and may make recommendations which it shall complete within seven working days of the hearing. If, after establishing the facts the Panel consider that the complaint is valid, they will uphold the complaint. If the Panel consider that the complaint is not valid, they will dismiss the complaint. They will make these decisions on the balance of probabilities.
All correspondence, statements, recommendations and records of complaints / actions taken as a result of a formal complaint will be kept confidential but will be shown to HMI/ISI if they request access to them during a school inspection.

Copies must also be made available to the registration authority upon their request and available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher.

A written record of all complaints will be kept from all stages of this process.

1. Whether they are resolved following an informal or formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
2. Action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

If you have any other ideas as to how you would like to resolve complaints, please feel free to discuss these ideas with your child's class teacher, campus headteacher or the Ann Flynn, Head of CPD and Teacher Training. We are always open to new ideas and suggestions and want to ensure that you and your child are treated fairly at all times.

Complaints from members of the public

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If a complaint is from a member of the public, this should be raised in writing with the Headteacher from the relevant TAS school. The Headteacher will acknowledge the receipt of the compliant within 2 working days.

It may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations and will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Head teacher is satisfied that all of the relevant facts have been established, a written response will be sent to the complainant to advise what course of action has been taken. The Headteacher's aim would be to inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation to the complainant within 7 working days of receipt of their written complaint, and a resolution agreed that satisfies the complainant.

Please note that *any* complaint received within one month of the end of term or half term is likely to take longer to resolve owing to the presence of School holidays.

Complaints against the Headteacher

In the event the complaint is against the Headteacher, these should be referred to Kirsty-Anne Pugh, Founder, by email kirsty@thealternativeschool.co.uk, who will follow the procedure set out in this policy.

Appendix A - Complaint record form (this form must be sent to Ann Flynn)

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PART A - RECORD OF COMPLAINT

Complainant's Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Details of the Complaint:

Date Complaint Made:

Action Already Taken to Resolve the Matter:

Complainant's View of what might resolve the issue:

PART B - ACTION TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaint Investigated By:

Action (with dates):

Date of formal meeting with complainant:

Outcome of the Meeting:

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