



# Complaints Policy

VLondon Maths & Science College (LMSC)

Version: 1.0

Status: Approved

Publication Date: 31st October 2025]

Next Review Due: 31st October 2026](annual, or following significant change/serious complaint)

Policy Owner: Head of Centre (HoC)

Operational Lead: Complaints Manager (Vice Principal/Student Experience or nominee)

Supporting Leads: DSL; SENCo/Access Arrangements Lead (AAL); Examinations Officer (EO); Quality Nominee (Pearson); Data Protection Officer (DPO); EDI Lead

# **1. PURPOSE / RATIONALE**

London Maths & Science College (LMSC) exists to provide high-quality, rigorous STEM and Business education that enables every learner to progress to leading universities, professional qualifications and skilled employment.

We are committed to:

- Developing confident, resilient and independent learners who think critically and solve problems.
- Providing a safe, inclusive and ambitious learning environment where all students are known, valued and supported.
- Upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, professional conduct and examination practice.
- Preparing our students to thrive in a rapidly changing, technology-rich and globalised world.

Through excellent teaching, strong pastoral care and close partnership with families, universities, employers and awarding organisations, LMSC aims to transform potential into high achievement and responsible citizenship.

# **2. SCOPE**

LMSC's educational values shape our curriculum, teaching, assessment and day-to-day practice in all modes of delivery (in-person, online and hybrid).

## **1. Academic Excellence and High Expectations**

- We set ambitious academic standards for all students, particularly in STEM and Business subjects.
- We design programmes that stretch and challenge learners, with clear progression routes to higher education and professional qualifications.
- We use assessment intelligently to monitor progress and to intervene early where students need additional support or challenge.

## **2. Learner-Centred Education**

- We recognise that each student has unique strengths, needs and aspirations.
- We personalise learning, offering guidance, stretch and support so that every learner can make sustained and substantial progress.
- We involve students in reviewing their own learning and setting meaningful academic and personal targets.

## **3. PRINCIPLES**

- Accessibility & fairness: simple process, reasonable adjustments, and assistance offered.
- Timeliness: prompt acknowledgement and investigation with clear target timescales.
- Proportionality: investigations appropriate to the seriousness/complexity.
- Impartiality: decision-makers uninvolved in the matter; panel includes independent member at Stage 2.
- Confidentiality: information shared on a need-to-know basis; records kept securely.
- Learning culture: outcomes inform service improvement and the QIP.

## **4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Head of Centre (HoC) – overall accountability; appoints Investigation Leads and Stage 2 Panel Chair; signs final responses where required.

Complaints Manager – ensures due process, triage, tracking, communications and reporting.

Investigation Lead – impartial manager responsible for fact-finding, evidence review and recommendations.

Stage 2 Panel – at least three members: Panel Chair (SLT not previously involved), a manager from another area, and one independent person (e.g., governor/proprietor representative or external education professional).

DPO – advises on data handling, redaction and disclosure.

All Staff – cooperate with investigations and implement learning actions.

## **5. ACCESSIBILITY & REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS**

- Alternative formats (large print, plain English), interpreter/advocate support, and meeting adjustments are available on request.
- Complaints can be made in writing, by email, online form, or verbally (a written record will be made and shared with the complainant for confirmation).
- Anonymous complaints will be considered where there is sufficient information and/or safeguarding/public interest.

## **6. TIMELINES**

Unless otherwise agreed due to complexity/holiday periods: - Within 10 working days of the incident/outcome, complainants should raise the issue (informal stage).

- Stage 1 acknowledgment within 3 working days of receipt; investigation outcome within 20 working days.
- Stage 2 panel request within 10 working days of Stage 1 outcome; panel held within 20 working days; written decision within 5 working days of the panel.
- Target timescales may be extended (once) for complex cases; reasons will be provided.

## **7. PROCEDURE**

### **7.1 STAGE 0 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

Raise concern with the relevant staff/manager as soon as possible. Many issues can be resolved quickly via explanation, apology (where appropriate) or prompt action. A note of the resolution will be recorded.

### **7.2 STAGE 1 – FORMAL COMPLAINT (INVESTIGATION)**

How to submit: complete the Complaints Form (Appendix A) or email the Complaints Manager. Provide details, dates, witnesses, supporting evidence, desired outcome, and consent for us to contact relevant parties.]

Acknowledgement: within 3 working days.

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- Investigation: assigned to an Investigation Lead not previously involved. Evidence may include interviews, records/MIS logs, emails, CCTV (if lawfully available), policies, and awarding-body rules.
- Outcome response: written outcome with findings, decision (upheld/partially/not upheld), reasons, and any remedy/action plan. Includes escalation rights and deadline for Stage 2.

## **7.3 STAGE 2 – REVIEW PANEL**

Available where the complainant believes the Stage 1 decision was procedurally flawed, the outcome was unreasonable, or new evidence is material.

Panel composition: see Roles. The complainant may be accompanied by a friend/advocate (not a legal representative acting in a professional capacity unless agreed).

Papers: circulated 5 working days before the panel.

Hearing: fair opportunity for both parties to be heard; reasonable adjustments provided.

Decision letter: within 5 working days, confirming final internal outcome and actions.

## **7.4 AFTER STAGE 2 – EXTERNAL ROUTES (WHERE APPLICABLE)**

- Ofsted: accepts concerns about safeguarding, welfare or regulatory non-compliance affecting learners. Ofsted does not overturn individual decisions but may inspect or require improvement.
- Awarding Bodies (JCQ, Pearson, AAT): complaints about assessment/administration should normally follow centre processes first; some matters (e.g., malpractice/maladministration) may be reported directly.
- ESFA or Funding Bodies (if applicable): where the complaint relates to funding rules/learner entitlement after exhausting centre processes.
- Contact details/routes are provided on LMSC's website and from the Complaints Manager.

## **8. REMEDIES & OUTCOMES (ILLUSTRATIVE)**

Explanation; apology; service change; replacement/re-performance; reassessment/re-mark via internal procedures; staff training; timetable/resource adjustments; policy review; ex-gratia payment (rare and at HoC discretion); or confirmation that no fault was found.

## **9. VEXATIOUS OR PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS**

- We distinguish between persistent complainants and persistent/vexatious behaviour. Where behaviour is unreasonable (e.g., abusive language, repeated pursuit of closed matters, excessive demands), restrictions may be applied (single point of contact, communication schedule, or declining further correspondence on the issue) in line with our Unreasonable Behaviour Protocol (Appendix C). This will not impede access to safeguarding routes or valid new issues.

## **10. CONFIDENTIALITY & DATA PROTECTION**

- Records are maintained on a secure system with unique case reference and audit trail.
- Lawful basis: public task/legitimate interests; special category data processed under substantial public interest where relevant (e.g., safeguarding).
- We may need to share information with third parties (e.g., awarding bodies, insurers, legal advisers, regulators) where necessary and lawful.
- Complainants may request access to their personal data via Subject Access Request.

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## **11. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS, EDI & SAFEGUARDING**

- We make reasonable adjustments to reduce barriers to using this process.
- We monitor complaints by theme and equality characteristics (where lawfully collected) to identify disparities.
- Issues indicating risk of harm are referred to the DSL and managed under safeguarding procedures.

## **12. MONITORING, REPORTING & LEARNING**

- Termly reports (themes, timeliness, upheld rates, learning actions) go to SLT/Governance—no identifying data.
- Action plans are tracked to completion; learning feeds the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and staff training.

## **13. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS & REFERENCES**

- LMSC: Safeguarding & Child Protection; Whistleblowing; Behaviour & Discipline; Anti-Bullying; SEND & Inclusion; EDI; Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments; Malpractice & Maladministration; Internal Appeals; Examinations; Data Protection & Privacy Notices.
- External: Ofsted—raising concerns about schools/FE providers; JCQ/Pearson/AAT complaints & malpractice guidance; UK GDPR/DPA 2018; KCSIE 2025; EIF.

## **14. APPROVAL & REVIEW RECORD**

Version	Date Approved	Approved By (Signature)	Role	Next Review
1	[DD/MM/YYYY]		Head of Centre	[DD/MM/YYYY]

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## **APPENDICES (OPERATIONAL TEMPLATES)**

### **APPENDIX A – COMPLAINT FORM (CENTRE USE / WEB FORM FIELDS)**

- Your details: name; relationship to LMSC (student/parent/staff/visitor/other); programme (if student); contact details; accessibility needs.
- About your complaint: what happened; who was involved; when/where; what outcome you seek.
- Evidence attached: emails, screenshots, letters, medical notes, etc.
- Have you raised this informally? yes/no; who with; outcome.
- Consent: I consent to LMSC sharing my information with relevant staff/partners to investigate this complaint.
- Signature/Date.

### **APPENDIX B – INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST (STAGE 1)**

Scope clarified; policy references; chronology compiled; interview notes; evidence logged; equality/safeguarding considered; findings drafted; remedy/actions; quality check; response letter issued; actions assigned with deadlines; learning logged.

### **APPENDIX C – UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR PROTOCOL (SUMMARY)**

Criteria; examples; steps before restriction; communication of restriction; review period; escalation routes; staff support (wellbeing & security).

### **APPENDIX D – MODEL LETTERS**

- Acknowledgement (Stage 1) • Outcome (Stage 1) • Panel invitation (Stage 2) • Panel decision (final).

*Printed copies are uncontrolled. The Complaints Manager retains the master version and ensures an online form and accessible routes are available to all stakeholders.*

# Contact



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COLLEGE

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