



**LANCASTER UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS**

Lancaster University

School of Mathematics

Complaints Procedure

Title	Complaints Procedure
Approved	December 2024
Review Date	December 2027

The Rigby Education Trust was set-up to operate and oversee the Lancaster University School of Mathematics.

The Rigby Education Trust is an academy trust and a charity. The Lancaster University School of Mathematics is the charitable activity of the academy trust. Therefore, in this document references to the Maths School apply to the Rigby Education Trust.

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1.0 Introduction

The Maths School aims to provide a high quality of service to students and other key stakeholders. If you have a concern or a worry, please follow the Complaints Procedure set out below. It is designed to ensure that all complaints are considered in a fair, consistent and timely manner.

Maths School staff will do their very best to help resolve all complaints. Please note that complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner.

2.0 Complaints procedure

In any organisation, there are times when misunderstandings or concerns arise. The Maths School is committed to trying to resolve any such concerns as quickly and effectively as possible.

This policy applies to anyone who has a complaint against the Maths School relating to its services except where those complaints should be made through another Maths School policy and process. For example:

- Complaints and concerns about safeguarding matters are handled under our safeguarding policy.
- Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Maths School's internal grievance procedures where applicable.
- Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Maths School's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate

The provisions of this policy will not apply when complaints are demonstrably vexatious in the sense that they are:

- obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, or repetitious; or
- designed to cause disruption or annoyance; or
- resubmission of substantively the same complaint by the same complainant once the initial complaint has been closed.

3.0 Timescales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against the Maths School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first Maths School day after the holiday period.

If the complaint is a complex one and a full response is not possible within the required deadline, the complainant will be sent a letter within this timescale informing them of the delay, the reasons for this and an anticipated response date.

The Maths School may appoint appropriate parties to investigate complaints where there is a need for independent and expert involvement. As far as possible, this will be done within the timescales set out in this Policy.

4.0 Anonymous complaints

On receiving an anonymous complaint the Maths School Office will forward it to a Lead Officer who will determine whether or not any action needs to be taken. Clearly an acknowledgement cannot be sent but there may be a need to carry out an investigation or a need just to log the complaint. Staff should be sensitive to the possible reasons why a complainant has chosen to remain anonymous.

5.0 Stage 1: Informal

Often the best way to resolve an issue is to talk to the person/people directly concerned. If, however, you do not feel confident in taking this approach, please contact the Maths School Office which will seek to resolve the issue informally on your behalf. Other members of staff can also pass your concern to any of the above.

If you do not want to follow the informal approach outlined above, or you have tried the informal approach and feel that the issue has not been resolved, you should proceed to Stage 2.

6.0 Stage 2: Formal

If you wish to make a formal complaint, please submit in writing the issue(s) that you would like to be investigated, to nfleming@lusom.ac.uk

Your complaint will be dealt with much more effectively if you provide as much detail and evidence as possible about the issue(s) that you wish to be investigated along with details of any communication that you have already had with the Maths School about the matter.

You will receive an acknowledgement of your formal complaint within two working days of receipt, this may be via a telephone call or by email. In this acknowledgement will be informed of the Lead Officer who will manage your complaint along with their contact details. The Lead Officer will be your point of contact with the Maths School throughout the duration of your complaint at Stage 2.

The Lead Officer will organise an investigation of the issue(s) that you have raised.

The outcome of the investigation will be reported to you in writing within 20 working days. You will be notified of the outcome of the investigation by the same method of communication that you used to submit your formal complaint. For example, if you email your formal complaint the investigation outcome notification will be sent via email.

Please note that due to data protection requirements the Maths School may not be able to provide you with detailed feedback about the outcome of the investigation or any action that is taken as a result. You will be informed that an investigation has been undertaken and whether your complaint has been upheld or not.

If the complaint is about the Head of School, the Executive Principal will organise an investigation and report the outcome of the investigation as above.

If the complaint is about the Executive Principal or a member of the Board of Trustees, a suitably skilled trustee will be appointed to organise an investigation and report the outcome of the investigation as above.

Complaints about the Executive Principal or a member of the Board of Trustees must be made to the Company Secretary.

If the complaint is about the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Vice Chair will organise an independent investigator and will report the outcome of the investigation as above.

7.0 Stage 3: Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation at Stage 2, you may appeal to the Executive Principal. Your appeal should be sent to eccles@cardinalnewman.ac.uk

Your appeal must be received by the Maths School within five working days of the notification of the outcome at Stage 2 being sent to you.

The Executive Principal or their designate will review your appeal and will respond in writing with a final decision normally within 10 days of receipt of your appeal. The decision by the Executive Principal (or Executive Principal's designate) is final, there is no further right of appeal.

Please note that due to data protection requirements the Maths School may not be able to provide you detailed feedback about the outcome of the appeal or any action that is taken as a result. You will be informed that a review of the Stage 2 outcome has been undertaken and whether your appeal has been upheld or not.

If the complaint is about the Executive Principal, Head of School or a member of the Board of Trustees, the Complaints Appeal Panel comprised of at least three trustees who have no knowledge of the matter concerned will be convened.

8.0 Stage 4: Procedural appeal

The decision reached at Stage 3 is final and not open to appeal. Your only recourse beyond Stage 3, if you are not satisfied of appeal, is if you believe the Maths School has not followed the procedures outlined in Stage 2 and 3 above. If you think that this policy has not been followed you must submit a Stage 4 Procedural Appeal to eccles@cardinalnewman.ac.uk

You will receive an acknowledgement of your procedural appeal within two working days of receipt, this may be via a telephone call or by email. In this acknowledgement you will be informed of the representative of the Board of Trustees who will investigate your procedural appeal.

The Company Secretary will respond in writing with a final decision within 10 days of receipt of your procedural appeal.

After the completion of Stage 4, you can complain to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk) about how your complaint was handled.

Please note that due to data protection requirements the Maths School may not be able to provide you with detailed feedback about the outcome of the procedural appeal or any action that is taken as a result. You will be informed that a review of the procedure followed in your case has been undertaken and whether your procedural appeal has been upheld or not.

9.0 Record Keeping

If a complaint reaches Stage 2, records are kept in order to learn from and to try to prevent any similar complaints in the future about the Maths School's service.

10.0 Annual review of complaints

Annual reports will be produced to monitor trends and identify areas of concern. These reports will be considered by leadership team and Board of Trustees, normally through the relevant committee.

11.0 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every three years.