



Complaints and Appeals Policy

Secondary Alternative Education Provision

Policy Owner	In-Tuition Learning
Effective Date	August 2026
Review Date	August 2027

Our commitment

In-Tuition Learning welcomes concerns, complaints and appeals as an opportunity to put matters right, learn from experience and improve the quality of our provision. No learner will be disadvantaged because they, or someone acting for them, raises a concern in good faith.

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1. Purpose and principles

This policy explains how learners, parents, carers, commissioners and other people directly affected by In-Tuition Learning's services can raise concerns, make complaints and challenge academic decisions.

The procedure is intended to be clear, fair and proportionate. In-Tuition Learning will:

- seek early and practical resolution wherever possible
- listen to the complainant and establish the facts
- avoid conflicts of interest and use an independent reviewer when necessary
- give clear reasons for decisions and identify any action to be taken
- protect confidentiality while sharing information where it is necessary and lawful
- make reasonable adjustments so that the process is accessible
- ensure that raising a concern in good faith does not adversely affect a learner's education or support

Safeguarding and immediate risk

A complaint is not a substitute for urgent safeguarding action. Where a child, young person or adult may be at immediate risk, staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and contact emergency services or the appropriate safeguarding service without delay.

2. Scope and who may use this procedure

This policy applies to complaints about education, tuition, support, communication, facilities, conduct, administration and other services provided by In-Tuition Learning. It also includes academic appeals against decisions made by the centre in relation to assessment or qualification processes.

A complaint may be made by:

- a learner, including an adult learner
- a parent, carer or person with parental responsibility
- an advocate or representative authorised by the learner or parent/carer
- a commissioning school, local authority or other commissioning organisation
- another person directly affected by the matter

Where a learner is aged 18 or over, information will not normally be shared with a parent or carer without the learner's consent unless there is another lawful basis to do so, such as a safeguarding concern or a relevant commissioning agreement.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
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Concern	An issue that may be resolved promptly and informally.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction about an action, omission, service or decision where a response or remedy is sought.
Academic appeal	A request to review an academic or assessment decision, the procedure used to reach it, or the application of awarding-body rules.
Working day	A weekday when In-Tuition Learning is open, excluding bank holidays and planned closure periods.
Complainant	The person making the complaint or appeal.

4. Matters dealt with under another procedure

Some matters require a specialist process or external route. In-Tuition Learning will explain the correct route and, where appropriate, refer the matter promptly.

- safeguarding or child-protection concerns - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and local safeguarding procedures
- allegations about staff or adults working with learners - safeguarding allegations procedure and, where applicable, the Local Authority Designated Officer
- staff grievances or disciplinary matters - internal employment procedures
- whistleblowing by workers - Whistleblowing Policy
- data protection, access to personal information or privacy - Data Protection Policy and the Information Commissioner's Office route
- discrimination or a failure to make reasonable adjustments - this procedure may be used, but legal rights and external equality routes remain available
- exam malpractice or maladministration - the relevant awarding body's procedures
- disputes about an Education, Health and Care plan or a local authority decision - the statutory SEND complaint, mediation or tribunal route
- criminal conduct or immediate danger - the Police or emergency services

5. Accessibility, support and confidentiality

Complaints do not have to use legal language or a particular format. In-Tuition Learning will provide reasonable support, including accepting a complaint by email, letter, an agreed verbal account, accessible format or through an authorised representative. An interpreter, advocate or supporter may attend meetings where this is reasonable.

Information will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need it to investigate, respond, protect welfare or meet legal and commissioning duties. Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information indicates a safeguarding risk, possible crime, serious misconduct or another matter that must be referred externally.

6. How to raise a concern or complaint

Stage	What happens	Target response	Who leads
1	Informal resolution	Usually within 5 working days	Relevant tutor or Director
2	Formal written complaint and investigation	Acknowledged within 3 working days; written outcome normally within 10 working days	Director or an appropriate person not directly involved

Stage	What happens	Target response	Who leads
3	Review of the handling and outcome	Requested within 10 working days; outcome normally within 15 working days	Independent reviewer, or panel where required

Complaints should normally be raised within three months of the event, or of the complainant becoming aware of it. A later complaint may still be considered where there is a good reason for delay, the matter is serious, or a fair investigation remains possible.

Formal complaints and academic appeals should include, as far as possible:

- the complainant's name and contact details
- the learner's name and relationship to the complainant, where relevant
- what happened, including relevant dates, people and locations
- what steps have already been taken
- the outcome or remedy being sought
- copies of relevant documents or evidence

Contact details

Email: john@in-tuitionlearning.uk

Post or hand delivery: Mr J Burchall, In-Tuition Learning, Unit 30, BSS House (Bizspace), Cheney Manor Industrial Estate, Swindon, SN2 2PJ.

7. Stage 1 - informal resolution

The complainant should normally raise the matter with the tutor or person most directly involved. They may instead contact the Director where the issue is sensitive, involves the tutor, or cannot reasonably be discussed with that person.

The person receiving the concern will listen, clarify what outcome is sought and try to resolve the matter promptly. Possible outcomes include an explanation, correction, apology, practical adjustment, review of arrangements or a meeting. A brief note will be kept where the concern is significant or further action is agreed.

A concern may move directly to Stage 2 where it is serious, has not been resolved informally, or informal resolution would be inappropriate.

8. Stage 2 - formal complaint

A formal complaint must be made in writing or recorded in writing with the complainant's agreement. It will normally be acknowledged within three working days.

The investigator will be the Director or another suitable person who was not directly responsible for the matter. The investigator may:

- meet or speak with the complainant and learner
- obtain accounts from staff or other relevant people
- review correspondence, records, policies and commissioning information
- seek specialist or external advice
- consider whether interim action is needed to protect welfare or maintain education

A written outcome will normally be issued within 10 working days of receipt. Where more time is required, the complainant will be told why and given a revised date. The outcome will summarise the issue, the evidence considered, findings, reasons, action or remedy, and how to request a Stage 3 review.

9. Stage 3 - review

A complainant who remains dissatisfied may request a review within 10 working days of the Stage 2 outcome. The request should explain why the outcome or procedure is considered unsatisfactory and what remains unresolved.

The review is not normally a complete reinvestigation. It will consider whether the complaint was handled fairly, relevant evidence was considered, conclusions were reasonable, and appropriate action was taken. It may confirm the outcome, require further investigation, change a finding or recommend a different remedy.

The review will normally be undertaken by a suitably experienced independent person with no prior involvement in the matter. Where a commissioning agreement, awarding-body rule or applicable legal requirement specifies a panel or another review arrangement, that requirement will be followed.

The final outcome will normally be issued within 15 working days. It will explain any remaining external route.

10. Complaints about the Director

A complaint about the conduct or decision of the Director, Mr John Burchall, must not be investigated solely by the person complained about. It should be submitted using the contact details in this policy and clearly marked “Private and confidential - complaint about the Director”.

In-Tuition Learning will appoint a suitable independent person to investigate or review the complaint. Where the complainant is a commissioned learner, the commissioning organisation may also be informed or invited to nominate an appropriate independent person, subject to confidentiality and data-protection requirements.

Conflict of interest

Anyone with a personal interest, prior involvement or other conflict that could reasonably call their impartiality into question must not determine the complaint or appeal.

11. Academic appeals

An academic appeal is separate from a complaint about teaching or service quality. It concerns an assessment decision, the process used to reach it, or the application of qualification rules. Appeals must not be raised directly with an examiner or assessor unless the relevant awarding body requires this.

11.1 Grounds for an academic appeal

- the assessment procedure was not followed correctly
- relevant evidence was not considered
- there was an administrative or recording error
- the published assessment criteria were applied inconsistently or unreasonably
- reasonable adjustments or approved access arrangements were not implemented
- new evidence is available that could not reasonably have been provided earlier
- the learner seeks access to an awarding-body review or appeal service

Disagreement with academic judgement alone will not normally be sufficient unless there is evidence that the process, criteria or judgement was unreasonable or inconsistent.

11.2 Internal review

The learner should first ask for clarification from the tutor or assessor. If the concern is not resolved, a formal appeal should be submitted promptly and within any awarding-body deadline. The appeal will be reviewed by a person who was not the original decision-maker wherever this is practicable. The learner will receive the decision and reasons in writing.

11.3 Externally assessed qualifications

For examinations and qualifications regulated or administered by an awarding body, the awarding body's current rules, forms, deadlines and fees take precedence. In-Tuition Learning will explain the

available services, obtain the learner's written consent where required, submit requests accurately and communicate the outcome. Marks or grades may go down, stay the same or go up following a review.

Where a learner remains dissatisfied after the centre and awarding-body procedures have been completed, any further route will be the one specified by that awarding body or regulator.

12. External escalation

The appropriate external route depends on the provider's status, the learner's placement and the subject of the complaint. The complainant should normally complete this procedure first unless there is an immediate safeguarding risk, serious legal issue or another body directs otherwise.

- the commissioning school, local authority or other commissioner, where the complaint concerns a commissioned placement
- the Department for Education, where it has a regulatory or funding role and its published criteria are met
- Ofsted, for concerns about matters within its inspection or regulatory remit; Ofsted does not normally resolve individual disputes
- the Information Commissioner's Office, for data-protection complaints after the organisation's internal process
- the relevant awarding body or Ofqual, for qualification or exam matters within their remit
- the Police, local authority safeguarding service or emergency services where safety or criminal conduct is involved

In-Tuition Learning will provide accurate signposting in the final response. The availability of an external route does not mean that the external body can overturn every decision or award compensation.

13. Unreasonable or persistent contact

In-Tuition Learning will not treat a complaint as unreasonable merely because it is persistent, strongly expressed or difficult. However, contact may be managed where behaviour becomes abusive, threatening, discriminatory, knowingly false, excessively repetitive, or continues to place disproportionate demands on staff after the complaint has been fully considered.

Any restriction will be proportionate, time-limited where possible, confirmed in writing and reviewed. It may include a single point of contact, agreed communication method, limits on frequency, or declining to revisit matters where no new evidence is provided. Safeguarding information and genuinely new complaints will always be considered.

14. Records, monitoring and learning

In-Tuition Learning will keep a secure record of formal complaints and academic appeals, including the issues raised, evidence considered, decisions, action taken, correspondence and whether the matter was resolved. Records will be retained in accordance with the organisation's records-retention schedule, commissioning requirements and any applicable awarding-body rules.

Complaint information will be used to identify themes, training needs, policy changes and service improvements. Personal information will not be disclosed more widely than necessary. Complaints involving safeguarding will also be recorded and retained under safeguarding requirements.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation, guidance, commissioning requirements, awarding-body rules or organisational arrangements change.

Related guidance and policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice
- Equality and Accessibility arrangements
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Behaviour and conduct procedures
- Relevant awarding-body regulations and appeals procedures
- Department for Education complaints guidance and Alternative Provision guidance

Appendix 1 - Complaint form

This form is optional. A complaint may also be made by email, letter or another accessible method.

Your name

Contact details

Learner's name (if relevant)

Your relationship to the learner

What happened? Include dates, people and locations

What action has already been taken?

What outcome are you seeking?

Documents or evidence enclosed

Signature and date

Appendix 2 - Academic appeal form

Learner name

Qualification / subject / unit

Assessment or decision being appealed

Date the decision was communicated

Grounds for appeal

Outcome sought

Evidence enclosed

Learner consent (where an external review may affect the grade)

I understand that a review may result in the mark or grade going down, staying the same or going up.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3 - Process summary

