

Tubers Academy

Complaints Policy

Version	3.0
Owner	Head of Operations
Review Cycle	Annually
Approval	Managing Director
Date	January 2026

Supporting Document

A Parent-friendly Guide to raising a complaint is available as Appendix 3 of this policy and is provided to all complainants at the point they make a complaint. This guide should be read alongside this policy.

1. Introduction

1.1 This Policy and Procedure sets out the framework for how concerns and complaints are managed across all Tubers Academy centres/ buildings. Tubers Academy reserves the right to alter this process in exceptional circumstances.

1.2 We ensure that all complaints are dealt with confidentially for those involved and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality and not share confidential issues widely.

1.3 Tubers Academy's complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of young people registered at our centres. Any person, including members of the public, may raise a concern or make a complaint about any provision, facilities or services that Tubers Academy provides. Please refer to Section 7, which outlines complaints not captured by this policy.

How to Submit a Complaint

All concerns and complaints must be directed to the Head of Operations, Rebecca Jones. Complaints must be received in writing or by email. Texts, WhatsApp messages and phone calls must be followed up with a written or emailed complaint. It is not acceptable to initiate a complaint via social media.

1.4 Complaints should be made as soon as possible after an incident arises and within 3 months from the date of the original incident, or of the last in a series of incidents. Complaints received after 3 months may be considered only in exceptional circumstances.

1.5 We value our relationship with parents, carers and our local community. Our centres welcome suggestions and comments that help identify areas of success and areas for improvement. Anyone who raises a concern will be treated seriously and their concerns will be dealt with promptly, courteously and fairly.

1.6 A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or lack of action'.

1.7 You are encouraged to discuss your concerns with the Provision Coordinator in the first instance so that they can be addressed in partnership. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, the Head of Operations will refer you to another appropriate member of staff.

1.8 Where people wish to raise concerns formally, the Head of Operations will attempt to resolve the issue using Stage 2 of this procedure. The complainant will be given clear information about how to proceed, along with a copy of this procedure.

1.9 We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, we may determine exceptionally that an anonymous complaint warrants investigation.

2. Investigating Complaints

2.1 The aim is to address concerns wherever possible without the need for formal procedures. This policy outlines the complaints procedure but does not undermine efforts to resolve concerns informally. Formal procedures are invoked when initial attempts to resolve a concern have been unsuccessful and the complainant has indicated they wish to take the matter further.

2.2 When investigating a concern or complaint, the aim is to:

- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Seek to establish what has happened and who has been involved
- Speak to the complainant or contact them if further information is required
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right, using the appropriate appendix for the level of complaint
- Interview those involved in the matter
- Conduct interviews with an open mind but be prepared to persist in questioning
- Keep notes of interviews and include a clear chronology of events

2.3 At every stage of the procedure, the aim is to find a resolution. It may be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. As a result, one or more of the following may be appropriate:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been, or will be, taken to prevent recurrence, including timescales for any changes
- An undertaking to review Tubers Academy policies in light of the complaint

2.4 Following investigation, it is sometimes the case that no clear conclusion can be drawn. We accept that this may be frustrating for all parties.

2.5 If following investigation the complaint is considered to be vexatious, the complainant will be informed in writing and no further action will be taken.

3. Complaints Procedure Overview

The complaints procedure follows a three-stage process, as detailed in Sections 4 and 5 below. The relevant forms can be found at Appendix A and Appendix B.

Stage 1	Informal Concern or Complaint
Stage 2	Formal Complaint
Stage 3	Complaints Committee Meeting / Appeal

4. Stages of the Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 - Informal Concern or Complaint

1. If a concern or worry cannot be fully resolved through the usual channels of communication with the Provision Coordinator, an informal complaint may be submitted in person or by telephone to the Centre Manager. It must be recorded using Appendix 1 by the complainant and submitted to the Head of Operations. It is not acceptable to initiate any complaint via social media, text messaging or WhatsApp.
2. It is in all parties' interests to resolve a complaint at the earliest possible stage. The aim is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between Tubers Academy and the complainant.
3. The concern or complaint will be heard by the Centre Manager. The head of Operations may be involved if considered appropriate.
4. Complaints about the Head of Operations must be directed to the Managing Director.
5. The aim is to resolve all informal complaints within ten working days.
6. If the complaint remains unresolved, the complainant may request that it be dealt with under Stage 2. This request must be submitted within 10 working days of receipt of the Stage 1 outcome, using the form at Appendix 2, giving details of the complaint, actions already taken, and proposed further actions to resolve the matter.
7. A complaint may be escalated directly to Stage 2 by the Head of Operations if it is assessed as requiring investigation or as a more serious dissatisfaction with Tubers Academy's policies, procedures, administration or management.

Stage 2 - Formal Complaint

1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 1 outcome, or the complaint involves a more serious dissatisfaction with Tubers Academy's policies, procedures, management or administration, it will be dealt with under Stage 2.
2. The complainant must set out their complaint in accordance with this section. Formal complaints must be made to the Head of Operations in the first instance (unless the complaint is about the Head of Operations, in which case it must be directed to the Managing Director). The complaint must be submitted in writing using Complaint Form Appendix B and lodged with the Regional Manager.
3. The Head of Operations will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt in writing within 3 working days. If full information has not been provided, the acknowledgement will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, what remains unresolved and what outcome is sought. If full information has been provided, the acknowledgement will indicate the action being taken and the likely timescale for resolution.
4. The Head of Operations may delegate the investigation to another appropriate senior leader.

5. The person investigating the complaint will, if necessary, interview those involved and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish. A written record of all meetings and interviews will be kept.
6. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Head of Operations will provide a formal written response setting out the outcome and proposed resolution within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint. If the complaint is received within 15 days of the end of term it may take longer to resolve.
7. If it is not possible to meet this deadline, the complainant will be provided with an update and a revised response date.
8. The response will detail the actions taken to investigate the complaint, a full explanation of the decision made and the reasons for it, and where appropriate details of how Tubers Academy will resolve the complaint.
9. The Head of Operations will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

Complainants will receive a more effective response if they behave reasonably and:

- Explain the complaint in full as early as possible, using Appendix 1 or Appendix 2
- Cooperate with Tubers Academy in seeking a resolution
- Respond promptly to requests for information or meetings
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- Refrain from publicising their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality

Unreasonable behaviour is defined as behaviour that hinders our consideration of the complaint. This is outlined in Section 8.

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration through:

- Sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish the full facts
- Interviewing staff, young people and others relevant to the complaint
- Consideration of records and other relevant information
- Analysing information and evidence
- Liaising with the complainant to clarify what they feel would put things right

The investigator should:

- Conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in questioning
- Keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes
- Ensure that all papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- Be mindful of timescales and respond within the deadlines set out in this procedure
- Prepare a comprehensive report for the Head of Operations setting out the facts, identifying solutions and recommending courses of action

Head of Operations

The Head of Operations will determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, including appropriate escalation details. The Head of Operations must:

- Ensure the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- Be aware of issues regarding sharing third party information
- Provide additional support to the complainant where appropriate (for example if they are a child or young person)
- Keep records of all correspondence, meetings and decisions
- Ensure that all people involved are aware of their legal rights and duties, including under the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Set the date, time and venue of any meeting, ensuring dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- Collate all written material relevant to the complaint and send it to the parties in advance of any meeting
- Record and circulate minutes of any meeting
- Notify all parties of the management decision

6. Record Keeping

A copy of the management's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on request by the complainant. A written record will be kept of all complaints dealt with under Stages 2 or 3, including:

- Whether they were resolved following a formal procedure
- Action taken by Tubers Academy as a result of those complaints, regardless of whether they were upheld
- All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints, kept confidentially except where a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them

7. Exempt Complaints

This procedure covers all complaints about services provided by Tubers Academy and its centres, other than complaints dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below. If other bodies are investigating aspects of a complaint (for example the police, local authority safeguarding teams or Tribunals), this may affect our ability to adhere to the timescales in this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those bodies have completed their investigations.

Exception	Further Information
Complaints previously dealt with	A complaint raised by a complainant which has already been dealt with using the procedures outlined in this policy, and which raises no new matter and presents no new information. This includes complaints that differ slightly from the original but are substantially the same.
Serial, persistent and unreasonable complaints	A complaint which may be substantially different from previous complaints but is submitted by a complainant who may be considered unreasonably persistent. Volume of correspondence, impact on Tubers Academy resources, the importance or triviality of

	the complaint, and the direct impact on the complainant will all be considered. See Section 8 for full details.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Tubers Academy internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Tubers Academy internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint, but will be notified of the outcome of the investigation.
Whistleblowing	We have an internal Whistleblowing Policy for all employees. See the Whistleblowing Policy for the appropriate reporting route.

8. Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

Tubers Academy is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our centres. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will act to protect staff from behaviour that is abusive, offensive or threatening.

We define unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with Tubers Academy, such as where the complainant:

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought, despite offers of assistance
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of this procedure
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways incompatible with this procedure or with good practice
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information and expects it to be considered and commented upon
- Raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeks to have them replaced
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint despite previous investigations or responses concluding it is groundless or has been addressed
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation where the procedure has been fully and properly implemented, including referral to the Department for Education
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome
- Makes excessive demands on Tubers Academy's time through frequent, lengthy and complicated contact while the complaint is being dealt with
- Uses threats to intimidate
- Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence

- Knowingly provides falsified information
- Publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums

Complainants should limit their communication with Tubers Academy to what is necessary while their complaint is being progressed. Repeated correspondence can delay the outcome being reached.

Wherever possible, the Head of Operations will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' designation. If the behaviour continues, the Head of Operations will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Tubers Academy causing significant disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan, reviewed after six months.

Tubers Academy reserves the right to conclude an investigation without further involvement from the complainant, or to choose not to conclude an investigation, if the complainant's behaviour remains unreasonable.

Serious Incidents of Aggression or Violence

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, Tubers Academy will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from any Tubers Academy centre or taking legal action.

This section also applies to unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints.

9. Review History

Name and Position	Reviewed Date and Updates
Nick Ellison	February 2020 - Policy created
Nick Ellison Annie Callan	February 2021 - Reviewed and updated
Annie Callan Sarah Sullivan	February 2022 - Reviewed and updated
Sarah Sullivan Annie Callan	February 2023 - Reviewed and updated
Sarah Sullivan Annie Callan	May 2024 - Reviewed and updated
Sarah Sullivan Annie Callan	February 2025 - Reviewed and updated
Rebecca Jones Head of Operations	May 2026 - Reviewed and updated. Reformatted to current Tubers Academy policy template. Updated contact details and role references throughout.

10. Document Information

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Author	Head of Operations
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Approval	Managing Director

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Appendix 1 - Informal Complaint Record

To be completed by the complainant and submitted to the Head of Operations. Use this form for Stage 1 informal concerns or complaints.

Name of Centre	
Date of Complaint	
Complainant Name	
Address	
Contact Numbers and Email	
Name of learner (if applicable) and relationship	
Details of the concern or complaint	
What would resolve this concern for you?	

Office Use Only

Who complaint has been passed to:

Date and time received:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Appendix 2 - Formal Complaint Form

To be completed by the complainant and submitted to the Head of Operations. Use this form for Stage 2 formal complaints. An acknowledgement will be sent within 3 working days.

Name of Centre	
Address	
Contact Numbers and Email	
Name of learner (if applicable) and relationship	
Details of the complaint	
Action already taken to resolve the complaint	
What actions do you feel will resolve the problem at this stage?	
Details of any additional information or evidence attached	
Signature (email submission counts as signature)	
Date	

Appendix 3 - Parent-friendly Guide to Raising a Complaint

This guide is designed to support parents and carers through the complaints process. Please read it alongside the full Tubers Academy Complaints Policy.

Step 1: Centre Resolution (Informal)

If you are concerned or unhappy with the way Tubers Academy or a member of its staff has treated you, or with the way Tubers Academy is operating its policies and procedures, you can raise your concerns or make a complaint.

Usually, the best first step is to approach the Centre Manager directly, who will talk with you to understand your concern and take appropriate action to put things right. If your complaint is about the Centre Manager, please contact the Head of Operations.

It is not acceptable to initiate your complaint via social media. We ensure that all complaints are dealt with confidentially and we expect complainants to do the same.

For your part, you will need to:

- Tell Tubers Academy what happened and how you felt about it
- Say how you think the situation could be resolved
- Agree a process for resolving your concern

This stage is not about apportioning blame or taking formal action against a member of staff. It is about learning from what happened and working with you to make sure it doesn't happen again. Most concerns will not involve lengthy enquiries and you should expect a proportionate response.

Step 2: Formal Investigation

If your concern requires more detailed investigation, or the Centre Resolution stage has not delivered a satisfactory conclusion, a formal Tubers Academy Investigation will follow.

This is a formal investigation into your complaint, but it remains focused on reaching an effective outcome quickly and maintaining positive relationships. More information may need to be gathered before the investigator can provide a full explanation of what happened. The person investigating your concern should keep in regular contact with you to provide updates.

Step 3: Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation, you may appeal. We will invite you to attend an appeal meeting and, if the proposed date is inconvenient, we will offer an alternative.

Whilst this is part of the formal complaints procedure, we aim to make the meeting as informal as possible so that all parties can put forward their views in a positive and respectful manner.

If you would like support at any stage of this process, please let the Head of Operations know and we will do our best to assist you.