


Complaints Policy (Exams) 2025/26

This procedure is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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| Approved/reviewed by | |
|  J Bates | |
| Date of next review | December 2026 |

Key staff involved in the policy

| Role | Name(s) |
|------------------|--|
| Head of centre | J Bates |
| Exams officer | C Markham |
| Senior leader(s) | N Robertson A Smith M Balal L Parkinson |

Purpose of the policy

This policy confirms West Craven High Schools compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (5.3, 5.8) in drawing to the attention of candidates and their parents/carers our written complaints policy which covers general complaints regarding the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification and our internal appeals procedure.

Grounds for complaint

A candidate (or their/parent/carer) may make a complaint on the grounds below (This is not an exhaustive list).

Teaching and learning

- Quality of teaching and learning, for example
 - Non-subject specialist teacher without adequate training/subject matter expertise utilised on a long-term basis
 - Teacher lacking knowledge of new specification/incorrect core content studied/taught
 - Core content not adequately covered
 - Inadequate feedback for a candidate following assessment(s)
- Pre-release/advance material/set task issued by the awarding body not provided on time to an exam candidate
- The taking of an assessment, which contributes to the final grade of the qualification, not conducted according to the JCQ/awarding body instructions
- Candidate not informed of their centre assessed marks prior to marks being submitted to the awarding body
- Candidate not informed of their centre assessed marks in sufficient time to request/appeal a review of marking prior to marks being submitted to the awarding body
- Candidate not given sufficient time to review materials to make a decision whether to request a review of centre assessed marks
- Candidate unhappy with internal assessment decision (complainant to refer via [insert who] to the centre's internal appeals procedure)
- Centre fails to adhere to its internal appeals procedure

Access arrangements and Special Consideration

- Candidate not assessed by the centre's appointed assessor
- Candidate not involved in decisions made regarding their access arrangements
- Candidate was not informed that, an application for access arrangements was to be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Candidate not informed/adequately informed of the arrangements in place and the subjects or components of subjects where the arrangement(s) would not apply
- Exam information not appropriately adapted for a disabled candidate to access it
- Adapted equipment/assistive technology put in place failed during exam/assessment
- Approved access arrangement(s) not put in place at the time of an exam/assessment
- Appropriate arrangements not put in place at the time of an exam/assessment as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment
- Candidate unhappy with centre decision relating to access arrangements or special consideration (complainant to refer via Senior Leader to the centre's *internal appeals procedure*)
- Centre fails to adhere to its *internal appeals procedure*

Entries

- Failure to clearly explain a decision of early entry for a qualification to candidate (or parent/carer)

- Candidate not entered/entered late (incurring a late entry fee) for a required exam/assessment
- Candidate entered for a wrong exam/assessment
- Candidate entered for a wrong tier of entry

Conducting examinations

- Failure to adequately brief candidate on exam timetable/exam regulations prior to exam/assessment taking place
- Room in which exam held did not provide candidate with appropriate conditions for taking the exam
- Inadequate invigilation in exam room
- Failure to conduct exam according to the regulations
- Online system failed during (on-screen) exam/assessment
- Disruption during exam/assessment
- Alleged, suspected or actual malpractice incident not investigated/reported
- Eligible application for special consideration for a candidate not submitted/not submitted to timescale
- Failure to inform/update candidate on the accepted/rejected outcome of a special consideration application if provided by awarding body.

Results and Post-results

- Before exams, candidate not made aware of the arrangements for post-results services and the accessibility of senior members of centre staff after the publication of results
- Candidate not having access to a member of senior staff after the publication of results to discuss/make decision on the submission of a review/enquiry
- Candidate request for return of work after moderation and work not available/disposed of earlier than allowed in the regulations
- Candidate (or parent/carer) unhappy with a result (complainant to refer via exams officer to awarding body *post-results services*)
- Candidate (or parent/carer) unhappy with a centre decision not to support a clerical re-check, a review of marking, a review of moderation or an appeal (complainant to refer via Senior Leader to the centre's *internal appeals procedure*)
- Centre fails to adhere to its *internal appeals procedure*
- Centre applied for the wrong post-results service/for the wrong script for a candidate
- Centre missed awarding body deadline to apply for a post-results service
- Centre applied for a post-results service for candidate without gaining required candidate consent/permission

Raising a concern/complaint

If a candidate (or their parent/carer) has a general concern or complaint about the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification they are following, West Craven High School encourages the candidate to try to resolve this informally in the first instance. A concern or complaint should be made in person, by telephone or in writing to the head of centre.

If a complaint fails to be resolved informally, the candidate (or their parent/carer) is then at liberty to make a formal complaint.

How to make a formal complaint

This can be undertaken by following PET's Complaints Procedure a concern or complaint the initial communication may be made by letter, telephone conversation or in person by appointment. Where

this action does not lead to the problem being resolved then the complaint should be dealt with through the formal stages of this procedure.

If a concern or complaint fails to be resolved informally, the candidate (or parent/carer) is then at liberty to make a formal complaint.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the informal stage or if the complaint is of a serious nature, the complainant should be advised that the next stage is to put their complaint in writing to Mr J Bates, Principal. When writing to the principal the complainant should seek to include details that might assist the investigation, such as witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents.

The Principal will be responsible for carrying out an investigation or appointing another senior member of staff to carry out the investigation and report their findings to the Principal who will then reach a conclusion based on the investigation. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the Chief Executive Officer to be responsible for carrying out or appointing another senior member of staff to carry out the investigation and report their findings to the Chief Executive Officer.

The person appointed as the investigator should keep notes of any interviews held as part of the investigation. In order to clarify the specific details of the complaint, the nature of the complaint and any background to the complaint, the investigator may feel it necessary to meet with the complainant first. It is good practice to supply interviewees with the notes and ask them to sign the notes for accuracy.

How a formal complaint is investigated.

The Principal should write to the complainant within 5 school days of receipt of their letter, setting out who is conducting the investigation and that the Principal will write again to the complainant within a further 20 school days setting out the actions taken to investigate the complaint and their findings. However, the investigation period for a more complex complaint could be longer than 20 days. The complainant should be advised if this is the case.

Before the investigator interviews a member/s of staff, they must be informed that they can be accompanied by a colleague or representative of a recognised union or professional association.

Once satisfied that the investigation has been concluded and a decision on the complaint has been reached the Principal will notify the complainant in writing of the conclusion and decision made. The complainant will be informed of any action that will be taken as a result of the complaint except where this would be a breach confidentiality e.g. taking any formal action against individual members of staff.

Appeals

In the outcome letter the complainant will also be informed that if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they may request that the Governors Complaints Review Panel review the process followed by the Principal in handling the complaint.

The complainant must be advised in writing of exactly who to contact and the timescale by which they should make contact, should they wish to pursue the matter to stage 3 – the Complaints Review Panel.

This request must be made in writing to the Trust Clerk within 10 school days of receiving the outcome from the Principal and must include a statement specifying reasons for the request for the review and any perceived failures arising from the outcome of the investigation.

Any review of the process followed by the Principal, Chair of Governors or the investigating governor shall be by a panel of at least three members of the governing body appointed to be the Review Panel.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written evidence but any requests received to make an oral representation should be considered sympathetically.

The panel will consider the letter from the complainant and if needed request that the complainant submit in writing (within a reasonable timescale) any further information needed by them relating to their reasons for requesting a review and any perceived failures arising from the investigation process

followed. Principal or investigating governor will be invited to make a written response to the complainant's submissions.

The panel will be provided with all records, notes or information considered during the investigation (unless prevented from doing so for reasons such as GDPR).

The panel should communicate its findings to the complainant, Principal and Chair of Governors within 25 school days of receipt by the clerk of the complainant's letter requesting a review.

For further information please refer to the latest Pendle Education Trust Complaints Procedure available at <https://www.westcraven.co.uk/policies/643.html>

