

Beacon Alternative School CIC (and Alternative Provision)

Complaints Policy



Date: October 2025

Written by: O'Connell/Field

Review Due by: October 2026

Note: Beacon Alternative Provision operates under Beacon Alternative School CIC, which is not currently a registered school but is working toward future registration.

1. Introduction

Beacon AP is committed to providing a high-quality, safe, and supportive learning environment. This policy sets out the procedures for raising, managing, and resolving complaints in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

Complaints may relate to:

- Education provision or support services
- Staff conduct
- Health, safety, or safeguarding issues
- Facilities or learning environment

Safeguarding or child protection concerns are addressed immediately under the **Safeguarding Policy** and must not wait for this process.

2. Informal Resolution

- Wherever possible, concerns should be raised informally with the staff member involved or the Head of Provision.
- Staff will acknowledge concerns within 2 working days and aim to resolve them promptly.
- Informal resolution often prevents escalation to formal complaints.

3. Formal Complaints

3.1 Submitting a Formal Complaint

If the issue is unresolved or the complainant prefers a written approach:

- Put your concerns **in writing**
- Include as much detail as possible (dates, names, description of events)
- Explain the **desired outcome**

Send formal complaints to:

- Fiona Field / Steven O'Connell
- Address: 28 Warwick Road, Exeter, EX1 3HB

3.2 Investigation

- Formal complaints will be **investigated thoroughly**.
- Complainants will receive a written response within **3 working days** of receipt.

4. Complaint Review Panel

4.1 Requesting a Review

- If unresolved after the formal process, the complaint can be escalated to a **Complaint Review Panel**.

4.2 Panel Composition

- 3 or more members not previously involved in the complaint
- At least one **independent person** (not involved in Beacon AP management)

4.3 Panel Hearings

- Arranged at a convenient time, may be held **in person or online**
- Complainants may attend and bring a supporter
- Panel findings and recommendations provided within **5 working days**
- Written summary sent via email or alternative agreed method

5. Record-Keeping

- **All complaints**—whether resolved informally, formally, or escalated to a panel—are **recorded in the Complaints Log**.
- Records support:
 - Accountability and transparency
 - Learning and service improvement
 - Reference for inspections or audits by Directors, Ofsted, or local authorities
- **Confidentiality:** Records are confidential unless disclosure is required by the **Secretary of State**, inspectors, or legal authorities.
- Complainants may request **annual statistics** on the number of complaints received.
- **Health & Safety Link:** Complaints related to **site hazards or incidents** are also recorded in the **Health and Safety Log** alongside risk assessments and follow-up actions.

6. Support During the Complaints Process

- Complainants may be supported by:
 - A friend or family member
 - A staff member
 - An external organisation (e.g., Citizens Advice – www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

7. Safeguarding Concerns

- **Immediate Danger:**
 - Refer immediately to **Children's Social Care** and the **police** if necessary.
- **Non-Immediate Risk:**
 - Consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy
 - Follow local safeguarding guidance and referral thresholds
 - Contact the local safeguarding advice line if needed
- **Recording:** All safeguarding concerns must be recorded in the **safeguarding recording system**.
- For full details, refer to the **Safeguarding Policy** or contact the **DSL**.

8. Monitoring and Review

- The Head of Provision and Governance Committee **review complaints records** regularly to identify trends and improve processes.
- This policy is reviewed **annually** or sooner if there are legislative or operational changes.