

Beacon Alternative School CIC (and Alternative Provision)

Complaints Policy



Date: September 2026
Written by: O'Connell/Field
Review Due by: September 2027

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: 6 Kew Court, Pynes Hill, Exeter, EX2 5AZ

3.2 Investigation

- Formal complaints will be investigated thoroughly.
- Complainants will receive a written response within 20 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.