

Complaints Policy (Exams)

Hazel Oak School



Hazel Oak School

Centre name	Hazel Oak School
Centre number	20750
Date policy first created	18/11/2024
Current policy approved by	Andy Simms
Current policy reviewed by	Governor Hub
Date of review	21/10/2024
Date of next review	October 2025

Key staff involved in the policy

Head of centre	Andy Simms
Senior leader(s)	James Summerfield Elizabeth Murphy- Sheridan
Exams officer	James Summerfield

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that any complaints at Hazel Oak School are managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm the arrangements for complaints at Hazel Oak School and confirms 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) at Hazel Oak School may make a complaint on the grounds below (This is not an exhaustive list).

Teaching and Learning

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 examination 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 mark prior to marks being submitted to the awarding body
- Candidate not informed of their centre assessed mark 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 the centre assessed mark
- Candidate unhappy with internal assessment decision (complainant to refer to the centre's internal appeals procedure)
- Centre fails to adhere to its internal appeals procedure
- Additional grounds for complaint relating to teaching and learning:

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 not informed/adequately informed of the arrangement(s) in place and the subjects or components of subjects where the arrangement(s) would not apply
- Examination information not appropriately adapted for a disabled candidate to access it
- Adapted equipment/assistive technology put in place failed during examination/assessment
- Approved access arrangement(s) not put in place at the time of an examination/assessment
- Appropriate arrangement(s) not put in place at the time of an examination/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 to the centre's internal appeals procedure)
- Centre fails to adhere to its internal appeals procedure
- Additional grounds for complaint relating to access arrangements:

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 examination/assessment
- Candidate entered for a wrong examination/assessment
- Candidate entered for a wrong tier of entry
- Additional grounds for complaint relating to examination entries:

Conducting examinations

- Failure to adequately brief candidate on examination timetable/regulations prior to examination/assessment taking place
- Room in which assessment held did not provide candidate with appropriate conditions for taking the examination
- Inadequate invigilation in examination room
- Failure to conduct the examination according to the regulations
- Online system failed during (on-screen) examination/assessment
- Disruption during the examination/assessment

- Alleged, suspected or actual malpractice incident not investigated/reported
- Failure to inform/update candidate on the accepted/rejected outcome of a special consideration application if provided by awarding body
- Additional grounds for complaint relating to the conducting of examinations:

Results and Post-Results

- Before examinations, candidate not made aware of the arrangements for post-results services and the availability 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 a decision on the submission of a results 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 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 a candidate without gaining required candidate consent/permission
- Additional grounds for complaint relating to results and post-results:

Raising a concern/complaint

- If a candidate (or parent/carer) has a general concern or complaint about the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification, Hazel Oak School encourages an informal resolution in the first instance.
- If a concern or complaint fails to be resolved informally, the candidate (or parent/carer) is then at liberty to make a formal complaint.
- How to make a formal complaint
- All documentation relating to the submission of a formal complaint is available from, and should be returned to:

The Hazel Oak website: <https://www.hazel-oak.co.uk/page/?title=Policies&pid=20>

The School Office email FAO The Exams Officer.

Formal complaints will be logged and acknowledged within:

- 48 hours

To make a formal complaint, candidates (or parents/carers) must:

- Follow the process outlined in the Complaints Policy located on Hazel Oak's website

How a formal complaint is investigated

Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone. Within this response, the Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Headteacher can

consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this. *Note: The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.*

During the investigation, the Headteacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response within 10 school working days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Hazel Oak School will take to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about the Headteacher or member of the governing body must be sent to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with members of the governing body's complaints committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, governors available. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within 10 school working days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school working days.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school working days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties. The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from Hazel Oak School available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 10 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school working days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Hazel Oak School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Hazel Oak School.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or

- the majority of the governing body

Stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent, co-opted governors.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Hazel Oak School will take to resolve the complaint. The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

Next Steps

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to: Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

For further information and advice regarding this Model School's Complaints Policy please contact Solihull MBC on 0121 704 8536.

Complaint Form

At stage 1 of the Complaints please complete and return to Andy Simms, Headteacher, or at Stage 2 of the Complaints procedures please return the form to Claire Hawkes, Clerk to Governors, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken. This is available at the end of this policy. The findings and conclusion of any investigation will be provided to the complainant within: The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school working days.

Internal appeals procedure

Following the outcome, if the complainant remains dissatisfied and believes there are clear grounds, an appeal can be submitted.

To submit an appeal, candidates (or parents/carers) must:

- See Internal Appeals Policy

Appeals will be logged and acknowledged within:

- See Internal Appeals Policy

The appeal will be referred to:

- Andy Simms

It will be the responsibility of

- James Summerfield to inform the appellant of the final conclusion in accordance with the internal appeals procedure.

Additional details on the internal appeals process:

NACChanges 2024/2025 (Changed) Under heading Purpose of the policy: (From) The purpose of this policy is to confirm the arrangements for complaints at Hazel Oak School and confirms compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (sections 5.3, 5.8) in drawing to the attention of candidates and their parents/carers its written complaints policy which covers general complaints regarding the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification. (To) The purpose of this policy is to confirm the arrangements for complaints at Hazel Oak School and confirms 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. Centre-specific changes