COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date of policy: 05/10/2026

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months (as a minimum).

Review Date: 05/10/2027

Introduction

AP Education follow strict standards to ensure that all candidates that we supply to our clients are of the highest professional and personal calibre. We take seriously any concerns raised regarding our staff and our candidates.

This policy gives details of what action we will take when concerns are raised with us and should be raised alongside our Safeguarding Policy and our Allegations Policy.

Access to this Policy

This policy is publicly available and free of charge:

- **Online:** Published on the AP Education website at https://www.ap-education.com/safeguarding/our-policies

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to anyone employed by AP Education including but not limited to our directors, our workforce and any work placement or volunteers.

Any member of our workforce who wishes to raise a concern regarding their conditions at work (or similar) should do so through the Disciplinary, Dismissal and Grievance procedure and refer to the Whistleblowing Policy.

Any organisation or service wishing to complain about our services, or the suitability/capacity of any candidate placed with them should do so under this procedure.

Concerns about an adult harming, posing a risk to, or being unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable individuals.

A concern will be raised against an adult which suggests that they may be a risk to a child or vulnerable person.

This includes people who:

- have engaged in conduct that resulted or could have resulted in harm to a child or vulnerable person
- have committed an offence involving a child or vulnerable person
- has demonstrated behaviour towards a child, children, or a vulnerable person that would indicate a potential risk of harm

- has displayed conduct suggesting they might not be suitable for working with children or vulnerable persons.

If a concern meets any of the above criteria, then the process outlined in the Allegations Policy should be followed, our Safeguarding Policy can also be referenced, and both are available on our website.

Complaints

Details of any complaint involving a tutor, support staff member, client, AP Education, or other staff member are documented in our central register and recorded in the respective electronic file within our system.

When we receive a complaint, we refer to this policy, explain our procedures for handling complaints and ask the complainant in question if they would like for us to commence our process accordingly.

1. **Complaints against Tutor(s) or Support Staff**

Complaints concerning our workforce will be brought to the attention of the candidate by their Education Delivery Co-Ordinator, dependent upon the severity of the complaint. Together they will discuss the complaint, and the Education Delivery Co-Ordinator, will give advice or warnings where necessary. The details of the discussion and any warnings will be documented on the staff member's record. Our workforce will be advised that any repeat behaviour or further complaints will result in further warnings in line with this policy and ultimately could lead to their removal from AP Education.

If the complaint is regarding a member of our workforce where it's affecting the Service User, I.E. affecting the learner's provision, this will be escalated to a Senior member of Management internally and to the relevant organisations involved with the tuition.

Examples of complaints include the following:

- Failure to follow instructions
- Lateness
- Unsuitable attire

2. **Complaints against Clients**

Education Delivery Co-Ordinators encourage our workforce to speak openly about their experience in their role. All comments will be treated in confidence unless it is agreed with the staff member to raise the issue to other organisations involved with the Tuition. The Education Delivery Co-Ordinator will act on behalf of the member of staff to help resolve any issues causing difficult, where possible.

Complaints that are of a serious nature will be escalated to an internal member of Senior Management to investigate and communicate further with the client. Where necessary these will be escalated to the relevant governing body.

Internal Investigation Procedures

Where appropriate, AP Education will undertake an investigation into the complaint raised.

Stage 1

The complaint has been received by phone, in writing or by email explaining the nature of the complaint and how it has arisen.

If the complainant is a client, the client will be asked the following questions:

- *Do you wish to terminate the engagement with the tutor/support staff?*
- *Do you want to terminate immediately or wait until an investigation has been carried out?*
- *Would you like a replacement tutor/support staff*?

If the complainant is a tutor or support staff, they will be asked the following questions:

- *Do you wish to terminate the engagement?*
- *Do you want to terminate immediately or wait until an investigation has been carried out?*

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Sabrina Laverty, must be informed immediately of all serious allegations made against tutor/support staff or clients.

Stage 2

AP Education will inform the complainant that we will investigate whilst explaining the process and next steps. A written statement will be requested from the complainant, together with any supporting documentation of the incident(s).

If the complaint is regarding a member of our workforce, the investigator will gather further evidence on that candidate's competency based upon original clearance checks.

Stage 3

The individual against whom the complaint is made is informed of the complaint and requested to provide their account of the events. Confidentiality is observed as appropriate based on necessity.

During the complaint, if it becomes apparent that the complaint is more serious and meets the criteria for an allegation then you should revert to the Allegations Policy to continue the investigation process.

Stage 4

AP Education informs the complainant of the steps that have been taken and of the outcome of the investigation. The investigator will work with all parties to reach a satisfactory resolution, if this is not achieved AP Education will revert to each stage above until resolved.

If the issue needs to be resolved through any authority involvement, AP Education will be guided by the authority's decision when considering working with the complainant subsequently.

Stage 5

If a tutor or support staff member with a clean record makes an honest professional mistake, AP Education will review the Code of Conduct with them and require re-signing. Additional training will be provided as needed. For repeated minor offenses or ongoing complaints, we could remove the individual from working with AP Education.

All tutor and support staff who return to work for AP Education following an investigation are subject to monitoring upon their return. If there are ongoing concerns regarding a tutor or support staff member's suitability to resume duties, the issue is referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for further review.

Stage 6

If an investigation determines that a tutor or support staff member has demonstrated professional incompetence or serious misconduct, they will be immediately removed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. In such cases, affected clients and the relevant authorities, such as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), will be notified.

Complaints Regarding AP Education

AP Education values feedback from employees, tutor/support staff, and clients, and is committed to improving service quality based on suggestions or complaints. All complaints are addressed fairly and proactively.

We believe that our customer service is what differentiates us from our competitors, and we are committed to providing a high level of service. If our service does not meet your expectations, please inform us. This will help us to improve our standards.

If a complaint is made against AP Education by a staff member or client, the issue will be referred to the Operations and Compliance Manager, Sabrina Laverty, who will determine the appropriate course of action. The complainant will receive updates throughout the process via verbal or written reports.

Support is given to both parties until a satisfactory conclusion is reached.

In the first instance if you have a complaint, please contact your Education Delivery Co-Ordinator by phone or email so that we can try to resolve your complaint informally.

Should you wish to raise the matter with a member of the Senior Management Team please contact our mainline, **0800 488 0424**, and request to speak with Sabrina Laverty. Alternatively, you can email us directly at customercare@ap-education.com

Timeline

AP Education will acknowledge receipt of your complaint via email and request confirmation or clarification regarding the details provided. We will also supply you with the name, job title, and contact information of the individual responsible for handling your case. You can expect to receive this correspondence within two working days of our receipt of your complaint.

We will record your complaint in our central register within one working day upon receipt.

We will then start to investigate your complaint. This will normally involve the following steps:

Depending on the nature of your complaint we will ask the member of staff who you originally raised your complaint with to reply to your complaint within five working days of our request.

The Operations and Compliance Manager will then review the complaint examining the member of staff's reply and the information you have provided for us. If necessary, you will be contacted by the Operations and Compliance Manager. This will take up to four working days.

We will then invite you to meet/speak with the Education Delivery Coordinator you believe to be at fault to discuss and hopefully resolve your complaint. This will hopefully take place within five working days dependent on the complainant's availability.

Within two working days of the meeting, we will write to confirm what took place and any solutions that have been agreed with you.

If you do not wish to have a meeting or it is not possible, we will send you a detailed reply to your complaint. This will include the Operations and Compliance Managers signature with suggestions for resolving the matter. This will be actioned within five working days of completing the investigation.

AP Education endeavour to resolve an issue within ten working days however this is dependent on the complaint raised.

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with any aspect of the handling of their complaint or the outcome they should contact Raymond Jarvis, Director & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, by outlining the details in full, to:

Raymond Jarvis
AP Education
Astra Centre,
Edinburgh Way
Harlow Essex
CM20 2BN

The Director will review the complaint and propose a suggested course of action and will remain involved until the complaint is successfully resolved. The Director will

continue to review the outcome of the complaint at agreed times for a minimum period of 3 months.

NOTE:

In any event, we will comply with any statutory procedures that would relate to your complaint.

This policy is a general complaints policy, for Allegations or Safeguarding Concerns please reference our Allegations Policy and Safeguarding Policies available on our website and in hard copy if requested.

Whistleblowing Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with AP Education's Whistleblowing Policy. AP Education is committed to fostering a transparent and open environment in all interactions among its management, employees, and stakeholders. The organisation acknowledges that effective communication is vital to address concerns regarding potential breaches or shortcomings, and to safeguard the continued success of the company. This policy aims to guide individuals working with or within the company who could, at times, need to confidentially raise issues pertaining to the organisation.

For further details, see AP Education's Whistleblowing Policy.

Managing Vexatious, Unreasonable or Complaint Campaign Behaviour

AP Education is committed to responding to all complaints in a fair, transparent and timely manner. We recognise the right of individuals to raise concerns; however, there may be occasions where the manner or frequency of complaints becomes unreasonable or places undue strain on staff and resources.

A complaint (or behaviour associated with a complaint) may be considered vexatious, unreasonable, or part of a complaint campaign where it is judged to:

- Persistently pursue a complaint without presenting new or relevant evidence
- Seek to re-open issues that have already been fully investigated and responded to
- Involve excessive, repetitive, or overlapping correspondence
- Place unrealistic or disproportionate demands on staff time and resources
- Be intended to cause disruption, distress, or undue pressure on staff or the organisation
- Involve multiple individuals submitting similar complaints in a coordinated manner (complaint campaign)
- Include inappropriate, abusive, or threatening language towards staff

AP Education Approach

Where concerns are identified as vexatious or part of a complaint campaign, AP Education will:

- Continue to act professionally, calmly, and consistently
- Ensure that any underlying safeguarding or welfare concerns are still fully considered and escalated appropriately
- Review whether the complaint has already been addressed in line with this policy
- Provide clear communication outlining the organisation's position and any decisions made

Managing Unreasonable Behaviour

In order to protect staff wellbeing and ensure effective use of resources, AP Education reserves the right to:

- Limit the frequency or method of communication (e.g. requiring contact through a single point of contact or via written correspondence only)
- Decline to respond to repeated complaints where no new information is provided
- Close a complaint where it has been fully investigated and concluded
- Implement reasonable adjustments to how communication is managed

Any such action will be:

- Proportionate and evidence-based
- Clearly communicated to the individual(s) involved
- Reviewed periodically to ensure fairness

Safeguarding Considerations

Where complaints relate to, or include, potential safeguarding concerns, these will always be prioritised and managed in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, regardless of the nature of the complainant's behaviour.

Right to Escalate

Complainants retain the right to escalate their concerns to relevant external bodies where appropriate. AP Education will provide details of these routes upon request.

Expectation of Conduct

AP Education expects all individuals engaging with the organisation to:

- Communicate respectfully
- Provide accurate and relevant information
- Allow reasonable time for responses

Unacceptable behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated and may result in restrictions being applied as outlined above.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed regularly and will be altered from time to time in light of legislative changes or other prevailing circumstances.