

EqualiTeach Complaints Policy

Policy accepted on: 20/09/2021

Policy review due on: 20/09/2024

EqualiTeach is committed to providing a quality service for its clients and working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our clients, customers and stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints and by putting mistakes right.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise our complaints policy so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To ensure everyone at EqualiTeach knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- To ensure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner.
- To ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of EqualiTeach.

Complaints may come from any individual or organisation who has a legitimate interest in EqualiTeach, including the general public if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received by email or in writing. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to EqualiTeach's other policies

on such matters, including the Dignity at Work Policy, the Grievance Procedure and the Whistleblowing Policy.

Responsibilities

It is EqualiTeach's responsibility to:

- Acknowledge formal complaints in writing.
- Respond within a stated period of time.
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.
- Take action where appropriate.

It is the complainant's responsibility to:

- Bring their complaint to EqualiTeach's attention by email or in writing within eight weeks of the issue arising.
- Explain the concern as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.
- Allow EqualiTeach a reasonable amount of time to deal with the matter.
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond EqualiTeach's control.

Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and EqualiTeach maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality, with each complaint judged on its own merit. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Monitoring and Reporting

EqualiTeach's Advisory Board will annually receive an anonymised report of complaints made and their resolution, in order to provide scrutiny of the efficacy of this policy. The complaints policy will be reviewed annually.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and

appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to EqualiTeach's directors within five business days. Complaints should be given via email or in writing. Details of the complaint should be set out, the consequences for the complainant as a result and the remedy being sought.

If the complaint has not already been resolved, a director should delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached. Complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. All complaints should be recorded in EqualiTeach's Complaints Log.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the concern has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Advisory Board. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Advisory Board investigation may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed of the escalation of the complaint and given a further opportunity to respond.

Complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether or not the complaint is upheld, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with a resolution.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to an external organisation or regulator at any stage. More information about how to complain to can be found here:

<https://www.ombudsman-services.org/>

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

EqualiTeach may vary the complaints procedure in order to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, if a complaint about the Advisory Board chair or any members is raised, the chair and/or member in question should not be involved in a Stage Two review.