



*Inspiring Educational Excellence for Everyone*  
**ARDEN** *forest*  
C of E Multi Academy Trust

# **MAT Complaints Policy**

**Adopted: July 2024**

**Review date: July 2027**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Complainants must go through the complaint procedure of the individual school within the Arden Forest C of E MAT (the MAT) and this process must be completed.

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF THE MAT COMPLAINTS POLICY

2.1 The MAT will investigate a complaint regarding one of its schools for one of two reasons:

**1) A School within the MAT has not followed its own procedures when handling a complaint, OR the procedures do not comply with statutory requirements.**

- The MAT cannot review or overturn a decision made by a School's Complaints Appeal Panel (CAP) but will investigate and will direct the School to either reconsider the complaint and/or review its procedures to ensure statutory compliance.

**2) A School within the MAT has failed to meet the requirements of its funding agreement with The Secretary of State for Education.**

- Where a School is not meeting its requirements, the MAT will work with the School to ensure future compliance.

2.2 The MAT will not conduct investigations more than one calendar month from the completion of the School's complaints procedure.

2.3 The MAT reserves the right not to investigate complaints considered to be vexatious or malicious or where the complaint is a duplication of a previous investigation.

## 3. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH A COMPLAINT TO THE MAT

3.1 Complaints to the MAT should be made in writing stating clearly which of the two reasons stated above form the basis of the complaint with appropriate evidence to support the complaint. Complaints should be sent to [info@ardenforestmat.org](mailto:info@ardenforestmat.org)

3.2 Written complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 5 school days. The complainant will be given the name of the Investigating Officer at the Multi Academy Trust.

3.3 The complainant may be asked to submit a written summary of the complaint.

3.4 The academy will be asked to provide:

- a copy of its complaints procedures and details of any other relevant policies or procedures;
- an explanation of how each stage of its complaints procedures has been followed;

- a response to the summary of the complaint, together with relevant documents and copies of correspondence with the complainant.

3.5 The academy will be asked to respond to the Investigating Officer within 15 school days from receipt of the written complaint. The Investigating Officer will be notified of any confidential information which cannot be shared. For example, data not belonging to the complainant.

3.6 The Investigating Officer will endeavour to respond in writing to the complainant within 20 school days. Where a longer, detailed investigation is required, the timescale may need to be extended and the complainant notified.

#### **4. COMPLAINING TO THE EDUCATION SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY (ESFA)**

4.1 If the complainant remains unsatisfied following an investigation, complaints regarding Academies are handled by the ESFA.

4.2 The ESFA will only consider your complaint if you can provide evidence that the academy:

- does not have a complaints procedure
- did not provide a copy of its complaints procedure when requested
- does not have a procedure that complies with statutory regulations
- has not followed its published complaints procedure
- has not allowed its complaints procedure to be completed

4.3 The ESFA are not able to:

- overturn the governing body's decision
- re-investigate your original complaint
- review the accuracy of minutes taken or documents provided
- order the academy to pay you compensation
- direct the academy to discipline / exclude pupils
- force the academy to discipline / dismiss staff
- instruct the academy to apologise to you

4.4 For more information on how to complain to the ESFA, please click [here](#).