

MIAG



COMPLAINTS POLICY

MIAG ORGANISATIONAL POLICY +

Organisation-wide policy
with provision-specific arrangements.



Creating safe, respectful and inclusive
environments where everyone is valued.



SUPPORTING
INDIVIDUALS



CREATING
OPPORTUNITIES



ENRICHING
COMMUNITIES

MIAG Complaints Policy:

MIAG values feedback—positive and negative—as an important part of organisational learning, accountability and continuous improvement. This policy establishes the organisation-wide standard for receiving, responding to, recording and learning from complaints.

As a MIAG Organisational Policy +, the main policy establishes the requirements that apply across MIAG, while the appendices provide a small amount of provision-specific information so that each provision can make the process clear and accessible to its learners, parents/carers and other stakeholders.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that complaints are handled fairly, consistently, promptly and transparently, while recognising the individual circumstances and communication needs of learners and families.

MIAG will seek to resolve concerns at the earliest appropriate point wherever possible. Formal escalation remains available where a concern cannot be resolved informally or where the complainant remains dissatisfied.

Scope:

This policy applies to complaints raised about MIAG provision, services, practice or staff by:

- ❖ parents/carers and others with parental responsibility
- ❖ learners and young people, where appropriate
- ❖ professionals and external stakeholders
- ❖ members of the public where the complaint relates to MIAG provision or services

The statutory minimum requirements under Part 7 of the Independent School Standards apply to complaints from parents of learners. MIAG chooses to operate a wider organisational process so that other legitimate concerns can also be considered appropriately.

Staff employment matters, including grievances and disciplinary matters, are managed under the relevant employment procedures. Complaints relating specifically to data protection rights may also engage the statutory data-subject complaints requirements described in section 10.

MIAG Principles:

- ❖ Accessible – people should be able to raise a concern without unnecessary barriers, including through reasonable adjustments or alternative communication methods
- ❖ Fair and impartial – complaints will be considered objectively and by someone who is not directly involved in the matter where this is appropriate
- ❖ Proportionate – the response will reflect the seriousness and complexity of the issue
- ❖ Timely – MIAG will acknowledge, investigate and respond within clear published timescales
- ❖ Respectful – complaints will be handled professionally and without prejudice

- ❖ Child-centred – where a complaint relates to a child or young person, their safety, welfare, rights and voice remain central
- ❖ Confidential – information will be shared only where there is a legitimate reason to do so
- ❖ Learning-focused – complaints will be used, where appropriate, to identify improvements in practice, policy, communication or systems

Definitions:

Concern ~ An expression of dissatisfaction which may be capable of being resolved promptly through discussion, clarification, explanation or another proportionate action.

Complaint ~ A formal expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of education, service, treatment, decision or action taken by MIAG which requires investigation and a written response.

Safeguarding concern ~ Any concern that a child or young person may be at risk of harm or that safeguarding practice may have failed. A safeguarding concern must not be delayed or managed solely through the complaints process; *it must be reported immediately through the safeguarding arrangements.*

Complaints about staff safeguarding conduct, including low-level concerns or allegations, will be managed through the relevant safeguarding and employment procedures. KCSIE 2026 requires concerns and allegations about staff to be managed through the school's safeguarding procedures, including concerns about supply staff, volunteers and contractors.

Responsibilities:

Role	Core responsibility
MIAG Proprietor/Directors	Provide strategic oversight and ensure the organisation has an effective complaints process that meets statutory and regulatory requirements
Chief Operating Officer	Maintain organisational oversight, monitor compliance and identify themes, risks and learning across provisions
Headteacher/Provision Lead	Ensure the policy is implemented locally, complaints are managed appropriately and local arrangements are clear and accessible
Complaints investigator / manager	Consider the complaint impartially, establish the facts, communicate with relevant parties and provide a reasoned response
Complaints panel	Provide an impartial Stage 3 review in accordance with Part 7 of the Independent School Standards, including an independent panel member

All staff	Respond professionally to concerns, attempt proportionate early resolution where appropriate and escalate matters that require formal action or safeguarding intervention
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Complaints Procedure:

Stage 1 ~ Informal / Local Resolution

Where appropriate, concerns should first be raised with the person best placed to resolve them. MIAG will encourage early, constructive resolution wherever this is safe and reasonable.

- ❖ Concerns should normally be raised as soon as possible and ideally within 10 working days of the matter occurring or becoming known
- ❖ MIAG will seek to clarify the concern, establish what outcome is sought and determine whether an immediate explanation, apology, correction, meeting or other action can resolve the matter
- ❖ A response should normally be provided within 5 working days
- ❖ Informal resolution will not be required where the concern is serious, safeguarding-related, involves a conflict of interest, or where the complainant reasonably wishes to proceed formally

Stage 2 ~ Formal Complaint

Where a concern cannot be resolved at Stage 1, or where a formal investigation is appropriate, the complainant may submit the complaint in writing. The complaint should identify the issue, the relevant facts, the outcome sought and any supporting information available.

- ❖ MIAG will acknowledge the formal complaint normally within 3 working days
- ❖ The complaint will be allocated to an appropriate investigator who has no direct involvement in the matter being complained about
- ❖ The investigator will review relevant information, speak to those involved where appropriate and consider the complaint fairly and proportionately
- ❖ A written response will normally be provided within 10 working days of acknowledgement
- ❖ Where a complaint is complex and cannot reasonably be concluded within this timescale, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and provided with a revised timescale

Stage 3 ~ Panel Review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following Stage 2, they may request a Stage 3 panel review. A request should normally be made within 10 working days of the Stage 2 response.

- ❖ The panel will be appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor
- ❖ It will comprise at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters complained about
- ❖ At least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school/provision
- ❖ The complainant will be given the opportunity to attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing if they wish

- ❖ The panel will consider the complaint afresh, taking account of the evidence and the representations made
- ❖ The panel will make findings and, where appropriate, recommendations
- ❖ A written outcome will normally be provided within 10 working days of the panel hearing

These requirements reflect Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the DfE Independent School Standards Guidance revised April 2026.

Escalation, Safeguarding and Other Statutory Routes:

The complaints process must not delay or replace any statutory or safeguarding action.

Safeguarding concerns must be referred immediately through the provision's safeguarding arrangements and to the DSL/deputy DSL, or to the appropriate external agency where required.

Where a complaint raises an allegation about a member of staff, volunteer, contractor or other adult, the relevant safeguarding/HR procedure will be followed. The complaints process may be paused or adapted where necessary to protect the integrity of another investigation.

Where the matter concerns a criminal offence or immediate risk of harm, the police or emergency services will be contacted as appropriate.

Where the issue concerns an external agency, commissioner, awarding organisation or other statutory body, MIAG will signpost or refer the matter as appropriate.

Where the complainant remains dissatisfied after the MIAG process, any available external regulatory or statutory route will be identified in the final response. For independent schools, the DfE does not investigate individual complaints in the same way as it does complaints about maintained schools or academies but may consider reports of serious regulatory failure and may use complaints information for regulatory purposes.

Accessibility and Support:

MIAG recognises that some learners, parents/carers and stakeholders may require additional support to participate fully in the complaints process. MIAG will make reasonable efforts to provide accessible information and appropriate communication support.

Complaints may be made verbally where appropriate and then recorded in writing by MIAG.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disability, SEND, communication or other access needs.

An advocate, family member, friend or other support person may accompany a complainant to meetings, subject to reasonable arrangements.

Interpretation or translation support will be arranged where reasonably required.

MIAG will consider alternative meeting arrangements, including remote participation, where appropriate.

Unreasonable, Persistent or Vexatious Complaints:

MIAG recognises that a person may remain dissatisfied even after a thorough response. A complaint will not be treated as unreasonable merely because it is persistent or challenging.

Where correspondence or behaviour becomes abusive, threatening, discriminatory, excessively repetitive or otherwise prevents the effective operation of the complaints process, MIAG may apply proportionate restrictions to communication or use an agreed alternative process. Any decision to do so will be recorded and communicated in writing.

A complaint must not be closed as 'serial' or 'vexatious' simply because the complainant is dissatisfied with an outcome or has not yet completed the published process. The DfE's complaints guidance emphasises that complainants should normally be given the opportunity to complete the process in full, subject to clearly defined published criteria.

Data Protection and Confidentiality:

Complaints will be handled in accordance with UK data protection law and MIAG information governance arrangements. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required by law, safeguarding duties, inspection or regulatory requirements, or another lawful basis.

The April 2026 Independent School Standards Guidance highlights the new data-subject complaints requirements introduced by section 164A of the Data Protection Act 2018, which came into force on 19 June 2026. Where a complaint is also a data-subject complaint, MIAG must ensure that the process meets those additional requirements, including facilitating complaints, acknowledging them within 30 days, investigating without undue delay and communicating the outcome promptly. Existing complaints procedures may be adapted to meet these requirements.

Record Keeping:

Formal complaints will be recorded securely.

Records will identify the complaint, key dates, stage reached, outcome and any action taken. Where a complaint proceeds to a panel, the panel findings and recommendations will be retained.

Records will be stored in accordance with MIAG retention, data protection and information governance requirements.

Complaint records will be available for inspection or regulatory purposes where legally required.

Part 7 of The Independent School Standards specifically requires a written record of formal complaints, including whether they were resolved through the formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing and the action taken as a result, whether or not the complaint was upheld.

Learning and Quality Improvement:

Complaints are an important source of organisational learning. MIAG will review complaints periodically to identify recurring themes, barriers, training needs, policy weaknesses, communication issues and examples of effective resolution.

The Chief Operating Officer will use complaint themes proportionately within MIAG's quality assurance and improvement arrangements. This supports the MIAG Organisational Excellence Framework, which emphasises evidence, triangulation, organisational learning and continuous improvement rather than compliance activity in isolation.

Where a complaint identifies a wider organisational risk or recurring issue, this may be considered through organisational assurance, provision improvement or governance arrangements.

Publication and Availability:

The complaints procedure will be made available to parents and should be accessible through the relevant provision's website or on request. For independent schools, Part 7 requires the procedure to be in writing, made available to parents and to set out clear timescales.

The provision-specific appendix will identify the local route for raising a complaint and the person/role responsible for receiving it.

Legislative and Guidance Framework:

- ❖ Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Schedule 1, Part 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled
- ❖ Independent School Standards Guidance for Independent Schools, DfE, revised April 2026, particularly Part 7 and the data protection complaints provisions
- ❖ Education and Skills Act 2008, including section 94
- ❖ Education Act 1996, including section 576 in relation to the definition of parent
- ❖ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 – statutory guidance from 1 September 2026, particularly safeguarding concerns and allegations about staff
- ❖ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, where complaints raise safeguarding or multi-agency concerns
- ❖ Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, including section 164A requirements applying from 19 June 2026
- ❖ Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, insofar as relevant to data protection and information governance
- ❖ Equality Act 2010, including duties relating to disability and reasonable adjustments
- ❖ SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, where complaints concern SEND provision
- ❖ Relevant MIAG safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying, attendance, staff grievance, disciplinary, information governance and whistleblowing procedures

MIAG will review this policy when legislation, statutory guidance or regulatory requirements change and will make proportionate amendments where necessary.

Appendices – Provision-Specific Arrangements ~ MIAG Limited (The Beeches)

These appendices are completed and maintained by the Headteacher / Provision Lead. They provide the practical information needed to use the MIAG Organisational + Complaints Policy within the individual provision. They do not replace the organisation-wide complaints stages or escalation requirements set out in the main policy.

Appendix 1 – Local Contacts and Access to the Complaints Process

Provision / school name:

MIAG Limited (The Beeches)

Headteacher / Provision Lead:

Mr Guy Swallow, Head Teacher

Named person responsible for receiving formal complaints:

Mr Guy Swallow, Head Teacher

Alternative contact if the complaint concerns the Headteacher / Provision Lead:

Lisa Savage, Chief Operating Officer

Local postal address for complaints:

MIAG Limited

The Beeches

Broomhill Road

Brislington

Bristol

BS4 5RG

Local complaints email:

Info@miaglimited.org.uk

Telephone number:

0300 220 3429

Website location / link for the published complaints procedure:

www.miag.co.uk

Recording system used for formal complaints:

ARBOR

How learners can raise a concern where they do not wish to speak face-to-face:

- Via email
 - By letter posted to The Beeches address
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How reasonable adjustments / communication support can be requested:

- Support from an advocate/trusted friend
 - Verbal recording of complaint which can be later transcribed
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Appendix 2 – Local Arrangements for Investigation and Panel Review

Stage 1 – person/role normally responsible for local resolution:

Mr Guy Swallow, Head Teacher

Stage 2 – person/role normally responsible for formal investigation:

Mr Guy Swallow, Head Teacher

Who receives a Stage 3 request:

Lisa Savage, Chief Operating Officer or Julian Alsop, Chief Executive Officer & Proprietor

How the complaints panel is convened:

This will vary depending on the nature of the complaint, and who has been involved in Stages 1 & 2

How an independent panel member is identified and confirmed:

Arrangements are in place for two Independent Panel Members to be contacted to act in this capacity

Who maintains the formal complaints record:

Head Teacher/Chief Operating Officer

How panel findings and recommendations are recorded and communicated:

Recorded on ARBOR system; findings and recommendations are set out in writing to the complainant with copies held on file

Local arrangements for complaints involving the Headteacher / Provision Lead:

Complaints will be managed by either the Chief Operating Officer and/or Chief Executive Officer/Proprietor

Local arrangements where a complaint may involve safeguarding, staff conduct or another statutory process:

These will be managed in line with the school's Safeguarding processes and with the support of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Any additional provision-specific arrangements:

The provision must ensure that local arrangements remain consistent with the main policy and the statutory requirements in Part 7 of the Independent School Standards.

Document Control:

Document	MIAG Complaints Policy
Policy Type	MIAG Organisational Policy +
Policy Owner	Lisa Savage, COO/Guy Swallow, Head Teacher
Approved By	Guy Hopson
Approval date	8 th September 2026
Effective From	1 September 2026
Review Date	August 2027
Version	1.0
Applies To	MIAG organisation-wide, with provision-specific arrangements in the appendices

Version History

Version	Date	Summary of Change
1.0	27/08/26	Organisation-wide Complaints Policy + updated to reflect current Independent School Standards, DfE guidance and data protection complaints requirements, with provision-specific appendices.