

<b>Title</b>	<b>COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE</b>
<b>Cross References</b>	<p><b>External:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality Act 2010</li> <li>• Education Act 2011 Part 3 Section 13</li> </ul> <p><b>Internal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🍑 Corporate Social Responsibility Policy</li> <li>🍑 Equality Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Date</b>	<b>October 2024</b>

### Principles underpinning the process

Apricot Online is committed to ensuring that all complaints are acted upon fairly. The complaints process will:

- 🍑 be simple to understand
- 🍑 be impartial
- 🍑 be non-adversarial
- 🍑 deal with issues promptly
- 🍑 respect confidentiality
- 🍑 provide an effective response and redress, where appropriate
- 🍑 influence how Apricot operates in future if there are opportunities for improvement

### Reporting A Complaint

- 🍑 Direct to any member of staff
- 🍑 By Phone – 01242 604985
- 🍑 By Email – [jodie@apricotlearningonline.co.uk](mailto:jodie@apricotlearningonline.co.uk) or [amy@apricotlearningonline.co.uk](mailto:amy@apricotlearningonline.co.uk)

### Stage 1: Complaint initially heard by staff member

- 🍑 recommended maximum timescale for response: 10 working days from receipt of complaint
- 🍑 any complaint or concern will be resolved informally whenever possible
- 🍑 staff will always try to resolve a complaint, not make the situation worse
- 🍑 all staff will record any conversation with the complainant and relay this to the Director

### Stage 2: Complaint heard by the Director

Where a situation is not resolved, the complainant should write to or email the Director, outlining their concerns.

- 🍑 the Director will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 24 hours
- 🍑 the Director will then investigate the complaint and make contact with the complainant to pass on the findings of the investigation. This should usually be done within 10 working days
- 🍑 this feedback should be designed to resolve the complaint, regardless of whether the complaint itself is found to be fully justified, partly justified or unfounded

**The response from the Director may include any of the following:**

- o an apology
- o a clear acknowledgement that Apricot Online has been at fault
- o an explanation of the steps that are being taken to avoid such a problem in the future
- o an explanation of any misunderstanding on the part of the complainant about what may have happened
- o a clarification of Apricot Online policy, if necessary
- o any actions that may help in providing the complainant with redress

If this response is given verbally, it should be followed up with a written reply.

**Stage 3: Complaint heard by LA**

If the Director is unable to resolve the complaint, or if the Director is the subject of the complaint, then the complainant should write directly to the commissioning LA. Apricot Online will also make available to the LA all the records of how matters have been handled. The LA will then follow procedures open to them within local government.

**Vexatious complaints**

There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Director, having informed the LA, is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

**Feedback**

Apricot welcomes all feedback good or bad to [info@apricotlearningonline.co.uk](mailto:info@apricotlearningonline.co.uk)

**Authorised by:** Jodie Phillips, Operations Director

**Date:** October 2024

**Review Date:** October 2025