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| <b>Title</b>            | <b>Complaints Policy and Procedure</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Cross References</b> | <b>External:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality Act 2010</li> <li>• Children Act 1989 &amp; 2004</li> </ul> <b>Internal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🍷 Equality Policy</li> <li>🍷 AI Policy</li> <li>🍷 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>🍷 Data Protection Policy</li> </ul> |
| <b>Date</b>             | <b>October 2026</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

### Principles underpinning the process

Apricot Online is committed to ensuring that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and promptly.

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
- 🍷 inform future improvements to Apricot Learning Online's Services

### How to make a complaint

- 🍷 Direct to any member of staff
- 🍷 Complaints can be made verbally or in writing.
- 🍷 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: Informal Resolution

- 🍷 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 appropriate 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
- 🍑 Where additional time is required due to the complexity of the complaint, the complainant will be kept informed of progress and provided with a revised timescale.

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

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

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

## **Stage 3: Complaint heard by LA**

Where the provision has been commissioned by a Local Authority, unresolved complaints may be referred to the commissioning Local Authority. Where the provision has been commissioned by another organisation or directly by parents/carers, Apricot Learning Online will advise the complainant of any alternative escalation process available.

### **Unreasonable or Persistent 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 Learning Online welcomes all feedback, whether positive or constructive, as it helps us continually improve our services. [info@apricotlearningonline.co.uk](mailto:info@apricotlearningonline.co.uk)**

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

**Date:** October 2026

**Review Date:** October 2027