

Department	Language in Action	Implementation Date	15 th May 2026
Official name of the policy	Student Complaints Policy and Procedure (v2.0)	Last Reviewed/Update Date	15 th May 2026
Policy Owner	Adam Ennis (Head of Juniors)	Approval Date	15 th May 2026
Policy Approver	Emiliano Sallustri (Managing Director ELT – Designated Safeguarding Lead)	Next Review	15 th May 2027

Student Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose and Scope

This document sets out the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure for Language in Action (LIA).

The scope of the procedures is restricted to complaints in respect of the students' experience at LIA, including services and facilities provided.

This policy applies to all students enrolled on Language in Action programmes. Where a student is under 18 years of age, references to the student's rights and participation in this procedure shall also extend to their parent, legal guardian, or accompanying group leader, as appropriate.

2. Principles

2.1. Students may ask for information, advice and help in making a complaint from anyone they wish. At any stage, the student has a right to be accompanied/represented by another person who may speak on the student's behalf if they require it.

2.2. LIA welcomes comments and suggestions from students as to how the School might enhance its effectiveness and/or improve its service. Students are encouraged to give suggestions.

2.3. The School recognises that from time to time students may have complaints about facilities or services they receive from its staff.

2.4. These procedures aim to provide a simple and comprehensible means by which students may raise comments, suggestions and complaints with appropriate staff.

2.5. The School will ensure that the service and care provided to any student making a comment, suggestion or complaint will not suffer in any way as a result of the action taken, but the School expects that students will not engage in frivolous or vexatious complaints.

2.6. The School will maintain the confidentiality of comments, suggestions and complaints as far as possible. However, the service provider should normally be informed that a complaint has been made and that it is being investigated.

2.7. The above paragraph does not in any way prejudice existing procedures for dealing with staff disciplinary matters.

2.8. The School maintains a Complaints Register (the per-centre complaints spreadsheet – Record of Complaints) in which all formal complaints are logged, including the date received, the nature of the complaint, the outcome, and any corrective action taken.

3. Complaints Procedure

3.0. Safeguarding and Welfare Complaints

Where a complaint relates to the safeguarding, welfare, or safety of a student, this procedure does not apply. Such matters must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and handled in accordance with the Group Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and LiA addendum. The DSL is responsible for determining the appropriate course of action, which may include referral to statutory authorities. The timelines set out in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 do not apply to safeguarding concerns.

3.1. Informal Stage

It is hoped that most problems and queries will be resolved quickly and informally through a conversation with the relevant member of staff. If a member of staff is unable to help, they will refer the student to the person responsible. As a first step, students are encouraged to speak directly to the following:

- Lessons, exams, and class levels: Teacher / Director of Studies / Head of Academics
- Activities, excursions, and free time programme: Tour Guide / Tour Coordinator / Centre Manager
- Welfare, accommodation, and meals: Campus Leader / Campus Coordinator / Centre Manager
- Any other general problem or query: Welfare Officer / Centre Manager

If the informal response is unsatisfactory, the student has the right to use the formal complaints procedure. The informal stage should be concluded within 24 hours of the complaint being raised. If no resolution is reached within this period, the student may proceed directly to the formal School Stage. Where the student is under 18, their parent, guardian, or group leader will be informed of any informal complaint raised and kept updated throughout the process.

3.2. School Stage (Formal Complaint)

If the student wishes to make a formal complaint under these procedures, they must raise the complaint with the Centre Manager, who will provide them with a complaint form (see separate Appendix B document).

Written complaints involving the Centre Manager should be sent to the Language in Action Head Office, directly via email or completed on the Language in Action complaints form available in the centre.

The Centre Manager will normally respond in person to the student within 48 hours. If the Centre Manager concludes that the complaint needs further investigation, they will explain to the student (or their parent/guardian, or their agent) how the complaint will be processed. The complaint will be investigated fully and the student will normally receive a response within 3 working days.

If the student is satisfied with the response received and does not wish to take the complaint further, the information gained from the complaint will be used to improve the service provided by the School and will be recorded in the Complaints Register.

3.3. Appeals

If the complaint is not resolved within 3 working days, or the outcome is unsatisfactory to the student, they should refer the complaint to the Language in Action Head Office.

The Head Office will investigate the complaint and the student will normally receive a response within 3 working days.

If the student is not satisfied with the response, the Managing Director ELT will convene a meeting of a Complaints Committee. Prior to the meeting, the student will be informed of their right to be represented at the hearing.

Where the student is under 18, their parent or legal guardian must be informed of the appeal and given the opportunity to participate in the process or to be present at any hearing.

3.3.1. Composition of the Complaints Committee

- One member of the senior management team: the Managing Director ELT, the Head of Juniors, the Senior Operations Manager, the Head of Academics, or the HR Business Partner (as appropriate)
- One Student Representative
- One Teacher
- Where the student is under 18: one parent, guardian, or group leader representative (non-voting, present to support the student)

3.3.2. Terms of Reference for Appeals

- To consider a student's complaints in respect of their experience at the School, including services and facilities provided by Schools or any support departments.
- To report its decisions to the Board of Directors and Student Representatives where appropriate.

3.4. Final Appeals

If the student is not satisfied with the results of the appeals stage, they are encouraged to contact:

- The British Council: British Council Customer Service UK, Bridgewater House, 58 Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6BB

- English UK: complaints may be raised through the English UK student complaints procedure, available at www.englishuk.com

4. Data Protection and Confidentiality

4.1. All personal data collected and processed in connection with a complaint (including the identity of the complainant, details of the complaint, witness statements, and outcomes) shall be handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

4.2. Personal data related to complaints will be retained for a period of three (3) years from the date of resolution, after which it will be securely destroyed. Records relating to safeguarding matters are subject to separate retention requirements.

4.3. Access to complaint records will be restricted to those directly involved in the investigation and resolution of the complaint, and to authorised senior management and accrediting bodies on a need-to-know basis.

4.4. Students (and, where applicable, their parents or guardians) have the right to access their personal data held in connection with a complaint by submitting a Subject Access Request to the School.

Appendix A: Protocol for Meeting of a Complaints Committee

- The Chair shall confirm to the parties the nature of the grievance.
- The Chair will ask the aggrieved student (or representative) to present their case in support of the grievance, and to introduce any witness(es) in support of the grievance.
- The Committee may ask questions, through the Chair, of the student and/or representative and/or their witness(es) at any time.
- The Chair will ask the person against whom the grievance has been raised to respond to the grievance, and to introduce any witness(es) in support of the response.
- The Committee may ask questions, through the Chair, of the person against whom the grievance has been raised and their witness(es) at any time.
- The Chair will ask the student (or representative) bringing the grievance to summarise their case.
- The Chair will ask the person against whom the grievance has been raised to summarise their case.
- The parties will be asked to leave the meeting and the Committee will consider the evidence that has been heard, and may at this stage choose to reconvene the hearing to a later date in order to obtain further evidence or advice from other parties. Should this be the case, all parties will be invited to attend the reconvened meeting.
- The Chair will announce the Committee's decision, either by calling the parties together or in writing. The outcome of the hearing will be confirmed in writing within five working days.

Appendix B: Student Complaint Form

The Student Complaint Form is issued as a separate document (Appendix B). It must be used when submitting a formal complaint under clause 3.2. Copies are available from the Centre Manager and at the Head Office. Please request the current version from your Centre Manager or download it from the LIA website.