



Cornwall
Education
Learning Trust

Compliments and Concerns Policy

Our Mission

At Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT), our mission is clear: to provide every learner with an **exceptional educational experience**. One that enables them to thrive, achieve and succeed in life. We believe in a **100%** mindset, that every learner, in every classroom, in every school, deserves the very best we can offer. For us, 100% means no compromise: no learner left behind, no community overlooked, and no opportunity wasted.

Our strategic goals reflect this ambition. We are committed to empowering and growing our people, building an ambitious all-through entitlement, forging exceptional relationships with our communities, transforming provision through meaningful partnerships, and leading an ethical, effective and innovative organisation. These are not just aspirations; they are promises that shape the way we work and the culture we are building together.



Our Values

Our values are at the heart of everything we do. We believe in the power of **Collaboration**, building strong relationships and working together as one team to achieve our collective goals. We are committed to **Empowerment**, creating a culture where initiative, innovation and trust flourish, and where every individual feels valued, respected and motivated.

As a Trust, we are grounded in promoting **Leadership**, sharing a moral and ethical purpose to improve the lives of others and make a lasting difference for our learners and communities. And we embrace **Transformation**, approaching change positively so that we can all become our best selves and do our best work.

These values guide every decision we make and every action we take. They are the foundation of our Trust and the reason we can offer such exceptional opportunities for our learners and staff. If you choose to join CELT, you will be part of a values-driven organisation where people are supported to grow, contribute, and thrive.



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1. Policy Overview

1.1 Policy Purpose and Aims

At Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT), we value feedback and see it as an opportunity to celebrate success, address concerns and improve our services. This policy sets out how compliments, concerns and complaints are welcomed, received and responded to across all our academies, including nurseries, sixth forms and specialist provisions.

We are committed to addressing concerns and complaints fairly, promptly, respectfully and transparently, while ensuring that compliments are recognised and shared appropriately.

This policy applies to parents, carers, learners, staff and members of the public. The formal procedures outlined within this policy relate primarily to parents and carers in respect of their child. Feedback, concerns and complaints from individuals who are not parents or carers will be considered respectfully and managed using this procedure where appropriate.

We are committed to ensuring this policy is accessible to all. If you need support to share a complement or concern, please contact us at complaints@celtrust.org or telephone 01726 216650. We will discuss any reasonable adjustments that may help you access the process. A complainant does not have to use CELT's template or online form, provided the Trust receives sufficient information to understand the complaint. No person will be disadvantaged because they require an adjustment.

1.2 Policy Approval and Review

Policy Version Number:	1.0
Policy Lead:	Director of Compliance and Governance
Approved By:	Board of Trustees
Approved On (Date):	12.10.2026
Review Period:	Bi-Annually - by end of October 2028, or earlier following legislative, regulatory or organisational change

1.3 Policy Version History

Policy Version	Date Issued	Summary of Changes
1.0		Rewritten version



2. Compliments and Concerns Policy

2.1 Principles

We believe that feedback helps us celebrate success, strengthen relationships and continually improve the experience of learners and families. We will:

- Listen carefully and respond respectfully.
- Encourage concerns to be raised as soon as possible.
- Be open, honest and fair.
- Resolve issues quickly and informally wherever we can.
- Treat everyone with dignity and courtesy.
- Keep to clear and reasonable timescales.
- Learn from feedback and use it to improve.
- Celebrate and share compliments where appropriate.

2.2 Scope

Some matters have their own legal requirements or separate Trust procedures. These are not normally dealt with through this Compliments and Concerns Policy. They include:

- Admissions.
- Suspensions and permanent exclusions.
- Child protection and safeguarding.
- Staff employment matters, including grievances, conduct and disciplinary issues.
- Whistleblowing concerns.
- Data protection and information rights matters.
- Decisions relating to statutory assessment processes or clinical medical advice.
- Complaints about external providers using Trust premises.

A member of staff who is also a parent, carer or user of a CELT service may use this policy in that capacity, provided that the concern does not relate to their employment.

If your concern is not covered by this policy, we will normally let you know within 15 school days and explain which policy, procedure or organisation is responsible for dealing with the matter.

Safeguarding concerns: Complaints that indicate a child may be at risk of harm will be referred immediately through CELT's safeguarding procedures and will not await completion of this complaints process. Call 999 where a child is in immediate danger. If a child may be at risk but there is no immediate emergency, contact the relevant local authority children's services or the police on 101. Where a complaint also contains matters that can appropriately be considered under this policy, CELT will explain whether and when those matters can proceed without prejudicing a safeguarding, police or other statutory process. Raising a complaint should not delay reporting a safeguarding concern.



Data Protection concerns: The Trust's complaints procedure should not be used to make a data protection rights request, such as a Subject Access Request, a request to rectify personal data, or a complaint about how personal information has been handled. These matters will be dealt with under the Trust's Data Protection Policy and relevant data protection procedures. Information about how to contact the Trust's Data Protection Officer (DPO) can be found on the Trust website.

Data-protection complaints may be made through CELT's data-protection complaints process by contacting the Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@celtrust.org CELT will facilitate complaints by electronic and other reasonable means, acknowledge receipt within 30 days, make appropriate enquiries, keep the complainant informed and communicate the outcome without undue delay. This is separate from, but does not affect, an individual's information rights or right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

Staff employment matters: Employee grievances and internal disciplinary or capability processes are dealt with under CELT's employment procedures and are outside this policy. However, a parent or carer may use this policy to complain about the conduct of a member of staff insofar as it affects their child. CELT may consider employment matters separately and will not disclose confidential employment or disciplinary information. The complainant will nevertheless receive an appropriate response to their complaint and may complete the stages of this procedure.

2.3 Complaints about Early Years provision

Where a complaint relates to the Trust's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements in a CELT nursery or early years setting, we will investigate the matter and provide a written response within 28 calendar days of receiving the complaint.

Where another timescale in this policy would result in a later response, the 28-calendar-day EYFS timescale will apply. We will keep a written record of:

- the complaint
- how it was investigated
- the outcome.

These records will be made available to Ofsted if requested. Parents and carers can contact Ofsted where they believe that an Ofsted-regulated provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Current contact information and the Ofsted complaints procedure are available at: [Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK](#)

Using the EYFS process does not affect your right to progress through the remaining stages of CELT's complaints procedure where appropriate.



2.4 Definitions

Compliment	Positive feedback about a person, school or service.
Concern	A worry, question or issue that someone would like addressed or explained.
Complaint	When someone feels their concern has not been resolved and wants it considered through the formal process.
Community Champion	A volunteer appointed by CELT to provide an independent community perspective. Community Champions are not employees of the Trust, academy governors, Trustees, or members of the Trust Executive Leadership Team. They do not participate in the management or running of Trust academies and may be asked to serve on Independent Review Panels where appropriate.

2.5 Sharing a Compliment

We love hearing about the things we are getting right.

Compliments help us recognise great practice, celebrate our staff and better understand the experiences of our learners and families.

If you would like to share a compliment, please speak to the school directly or email governance@gov.celtrust.org.

We will ensure your feedback is shared with the individuals or teams involved. Where appropriate, compliments will also be shared with our Community Champions, school leaders, Trustees and Trust leaders. Alongside concerns and complaints, this feedback helps us understand what is working well, celebrate success and ensure community voices continue to shape improvement across CELT.

2.6 Resolving Concerns at School Level

We encourage concerns to be raised with the person best placed to help, as this is often the quickest and most effective way to find a solution.

Many concerns can be resolved through discussion with the school and may relate to:

- Learning, teaching or homework
- Behaviour, friendships or wellbeing
- Attendance and punctuality
- Communication from the school
- School trips, activities and clubs
- Pastoral support
- SEND provision and support arrangements
- Medical needs and day-to-day care arrangements
- Other day-to-day school matters



We encourage families and schools to work together openly and constructively to resolve concerns at the earliest opportunity. In most cases, concerns should be raised with the relevant member of staff, class teacher, tutor, Head of Year or school leader before progressing through the formal stages of this procedure.

Further examples can be found in Appendix D.

2.7 Stage 1 - Raising a Concern

We encourage concerns to be raised with the school as soon as possible so that we can work together to find a solution. If, after speaking with the school, you still have concerns, please contact us at complaints@celtrust.org. You may use the template in Appendix A or complete our online form: [Fill out form](#)

We will listen carefully, consider the information you provide and work with you to resolve the matter. We aim to respond to most concerns **within 20 school days**.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome, you can ask for the matter to be considered as a formal complaint (Stage 2). This should be done within 10 school days of receiving our response.

2.8 Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If you remain unhappy after Stage 1, you can ask for your concern to be considered as a formal complaint. Please contact complaints@celtrust.org within 10 school days of receiving the Stage 1 outcome. You may use the template in Appendix B or complete our online form: [Fill out form](#)

We will listen carefully to your concerns, review the information available and carry out any further enquiries needed. We will make sure your complaint is considered fairly and independently.

We aim to provide a written outcome **within 20 school days**. If we need more time, we will keep you informed and explain why.

We hope that this stage will help bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion. However, if you remain unhappy with the outcome, you can request an Independent Review Panel (Stage 3) within 10 school days of receiving our response.

2.9 Stage 3 – Complaints Review Panel

At Stage 3, the Complaints Review Panel will consider the complaint, the Stage 2 investigation and outcome, and the way in which the complaint has been handled. The panel may consider relevant evidence and representations from the complainant and CELT and will decide whether to uphold all or part of the complaint, not uphold it, or make recommendations for improvement.

If you would like to request a Complaints Review Panel, please contact complaints@celtrust.org within 10 school days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome. You may use the template in Appendix C or complete our online form: [Fill out form](#)



The Complaints Review Panel will be appointed by or on behalf of the Trust Board and will consist of at least three people. No panel member will have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint or have had prior involvement that could reasonably call their impartiality into question.

At least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the relevant academy. The independent member will not be a CELT employee or Trustee and will have no connection with the complaint, academy or Trust that could reasonably call their independence into question. CELT will apply the current Department for Education guidance when determining whether a panel member is independent.

Panel membership will be determined according to the nature of the complaint and may include Trustees, eligible senior leaders from another part of CELT and an appropriately independent community representative, including a Community Champion where the independence requirements are met. All panel members will declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest before appointment.

The hearing will normally be arranged **within 20 school days** of receiving the request for a panel review. Hearings may take place in person, online or through another suitable arrangement. Reasonable adjustments will be made where required to support participation.

You are welcome to attend the hearing and may bring a companion for support. Attendance is not required for the panel to consider a complaint, and the panel may consider written representations where a complainant is unable or chooses not to attend.

Before the hearing, the Trust will provide information about the process, including any deadlines for submitting additional information. A Governance Professional or other suitably independent officer may support the administration of the panel. After reviewing the complaint, the panel may:

- Decide that the complaint should not be upheld.
- Uphold all or part of the complaint.
- Recommend improvements to the Trust's practice, procedures or policies.

Following the hearing, the Complaints Review Panel will provide a written decision setting out its findings, conclusions and any recommendations.

A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. The findings and recommendations will also be available for inspection on the relevant academy's premises by CELT, as proprietor, and the Headteacher. Complaint records will be retained securely in accordance with CELT's Records Retention Schedule.

2.10 External referral after CELT'S procedure

We hope that concerns and complaints can be resolved through this procedure. Once all stages of the Trust's complaints process have been completed, the outcome is final.

After completing that procedure, a complainant may ask the Department for Education to consider whether CELT has handled the complaint in accordance with the applicable



requirements and its published procedure. The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of the complaint or overturn the panel's decision. It may consider concerns that the Trust does not have a compliant procedure, has not followed its procedure, or has prevented the complainant from completing it.

Information about raising a complaint with the DfE can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-an-academy>

2.11 Records and Monitoring

CELT will keep a written record of all complaints considered under the formal stages of this procedure. The record will include:

- Whether the complaint was resolved during the formal procedure or proceeded to a Complaints Review Panel.
- The outcome of the complaint.
- Any actions taken by the academy or Trust as a result of the complaint, whether or not the complaint was upheld.

Complaint records will be retained and managed in accordance with the Trust's Records Retention Schedule, Data Protection Policy and legal obligations.

To support continuous improvement, the Trust will review complaint themes, trends and learning points. An anonymised summary of complaints activity, outcomes and improvements made will be reported to the appropriate executive and trustee body at least annually. Individual complainants, pupils, staff and other parties will not be identified in these reports.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be treated confidentially. Information will only be shared where this is required or permitted by law, including where requested by the Secretary of State, Ofsted or another body exercising statutory inspection or regulatory functions.

2.12 Respectful Communication

We are committed to treating everyone with courtesy, dignity and respect. We ask that anyone raising a concern or complaint does the same when communicating with school and Trust staff.

We understand that people may be upset or frustrated when raising a concern. However, abusive, offensive, threatening, discriminatory or harassing behaviour towards staff, volunteers, trustees, learners or other members of our community will not be accepted.

Where a person's behaviour makes it difficult to manage communications safely, fairly or effectively, the Trust may introduce reasonable and proportionate communication arrangements. These may include:

- Asking that communication is directed through a single point of contact.
- Requiring communication through a specific method.
- Setting reasonable expectations about the frequency or timing of responses.



Any communication arrangements will:

- Be confirmed in writing.
- Explain the reasons for the decision.
- State how long the arrangements will apply.
- Explain how and when the arrangements will be reviewed.
- Take account of any disability, health condition, language, literacy or communication needs, including any reasonable adjustments required.

Communication arrangements will be proportionate to the circumstances and will not prevent a person from accessing or completing this complaints procedure.

Where a complaint has been fully considered and all stages of the procedure have been exhausted, the Trust may decide not to respond to further correspondence that raises no significant new information, evidence or issues. Any such decision will be explained in writing.

2.13 Multiple Concerns or Complaints About the Same Issue

Where CELT receives a number of complaints about the same or substantially similar issue, it may provide common factual information or coordinate aspects of its response. Each complainant who is entitled to use this procedure will nevertheless receive an individual acknowledgement, an outcome appropriate to their complaint, and the opportunity to complete the applicable stages. CELT will not publish information that identifies an individual or discloses personal information unless there is a lawful basis to do so.

2.14 Anonymous Complaints

We will normally only consider anonymous concerns or complaints where there is enough information to enable a fair assessment of the issues raised.

When deciding whether to investigate an anonymous complaint, we will consider factors such as the seriousness of the allegation, the credibility of the information provided and whether there is sufficient evidence to support further enquiries.

Where an anonymous complaint raises concerns about safeguarding, fraud, whistleblowing, criminal activity or other serious misconduct, the Trust may refer the matter through the appropriate safeguarding, disciplinary, whistleblowing or other relevant procedures, even if the complaint is not investigated under this policy.

2.15 Concerns about Senior Leaders, Trustees or the Trust

Most concerns and complaints should be raised with the school in the first instance. However, where a complaint relates to a senior leader, Trustee or the Trust itself, alternative arrangements may be required to ensure the matter is considered fairly and impartially.

- Complaints about a member of staff will normally be considered by the Headteacher or their nominee.



- Complaints about a Headteacher will normally be considered by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or their nominee.
- Complaints about the CEO will normally be considered by the Chair of Trustees.
- Complaints about an individual Trustee will normally be considered by the Chair of Trustees, or by the Vice Chair where the Chair is involved in the complaint.
- Complaints about the Chair of Trustees will normally be considered by the Vice Chair of Trustees or another Trustee with no prior involvement in the matter.
- Complaints about the Board of Trustees as a whole will be referred to the Governance Professional, who will arrange for an appropriately independent person to conduct the formal investigation under authority delegated by or on behalf of the Trust Board.
- Complaints about CELT as a corporate body will be handled under arrangements authorised by or on behalf of the Trust Board. CELT will appoint an appropriately independent investigator and, where required, a compliant review panel. No Trustee, employee or other individual involved in the matters complained about will participate in the investigation, appointment or decision.

CELT may make limited and proportionate adjustments to administrative arrangements where necessary to secure a fair and impartial process. Any adjustment, the reason for it and its effect will be recorded and explained to the complainant. No adjustment will remove or restrict any entitlement required by paragraph 33 of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including access to a formal written stage and a compliant panel hearing.

2.16 Timescales

For the purposes of this policy, a **school day** means a day during term time when the relevant academy is open to learners. School holidays, INSET days and bank holidays are not counted as school days unless stated otherwise.

Concerns or complaints should normally be raised within three months of the incident or, where a series of related incidents has occurred, within three months of the most recent incident. CELT may accept a later complaint where there are exceptional circumstances, the complainant could not reasonably have raised it earlier, or the matter raises safeguarding, equality, serious misconduct or other significant concerns.

We will acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint within 5 school days. Where a complaint is received during a school holiday, the complaint will normally be considered received on the first school day of the following term.

We aim to respond within the timescales set out in this policy. However, some complaints may be more complex and require additional time to investigate. Where this happens, we will let you know:

- why additional time is needed
- the steps being taken to progress the matter
- the revised date by which you can expect a response



2.18 Process Summary

Share a Compliment

Something has gone well? ✉ Email us: governance@gov.celtrust.org

We will ensure your feedback is shared with the individuals involved and, where appropriate, used to celebrate success and inform the work of Community Champions, school leaders, Trustees and Trust leaders.

Start with the School

Most concerns can be resolved quickly by speaking to the person best placed to help at the school. We encourage concerns to be raised early so that we can work together to find a solution.

Stage 1: Raising a Concern

Still concerned after speaking with the school?

✉ Email us: complaints@celtrust.org

*We will listen carefully
Work with you to find a solution
Aim to respond within 20 school days*

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

Request a formal review of your concern.

✉ Email us: complaints@celtrust.org

*Fair and impartial consideration
Further enquiries where needed
Written outcome within 20 school days*

Stage 3: Complaints Review Panel

The purpose of Stage 3 is not to start the process again. Instead, a panel will consider:

*Was the complaint handled fairly?
Was all relevant information considered?
Was the outcome reasonable?*

✉ Email us: complaints@celtrust.org



Appendix A: Stage 1 Complaint

Please complete this form and email it to complaints@celtrust.org

Name:	Learner Name:
Relationship to Learner:	Preferred Contact (Tel/Email):
School:	Class / Form:

I wish to meet:

Brief detail of the topic to be discussed, and why you are dissatisfied with any previous resolution attempts:
--

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?



Appendix B: Stage 2 Complaint

Please complete this form and email it to: complaints@celtrust.org

Name:	Learner Name:
Relationship to Learner:	Preferred Contact (Tel/Email):
School:	Class / Form:

Please detail the aspects of the Stage 1 procedure or outcome you are dissatisfied with:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?



Appendix C: Stage 3 Complaint

Please complete this form and email it to: complaints@celtrust.org

Name:	Learner Name:
Relationship to Learner:	Preferred Contact (Tel/Email):
School:	Class / Form:

Please detail the aspects of the Stage 2 procedure or outcome you are dissatisfied with:

Please identify the parts of the complaint or Stage 2 outcome you would like the panel to review.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?



2.17 Appendix D: Concerns that should normally be raised at school level first

We encourage concerns to be raised with the member of staff best placed to resolve them. Most issues can be addressed quickly and informally through discussion with school staff, avoiding the need for a formal complaint. The examples below are intended as guidance and are not exhaustive. In some cases, a different member of staff may be more appropriate depending on the nature of the concern.

Primary School

Example concern	Appropriate first point of contact
A misunderstanding about something that happened in class	Class Teacher
Questions about homework, reading records or learning activities	Class Teacher
Concerns about a child's progress or attainment	Class Teacher
Friendship issues or minor playground incidents	Class Teacher
Concerns about bullying	Class Teacher or DSL
Behaviour incidents, sanctions or support strategies	Class Teacher
Attendance, punctuality or absence procedures	Attendance Officer or Headteacher
SEND provision, interventions or reasonable adjustments	SENDCO
Medical needs or arrangements during the school day	SENDCO or Headteacher
School trips, clubs or enrichment activities	Trip Leader or School Office
School communications, newsletters or administrative matters	School Office

Secondary School

Example concern	Appropriate first point of contact
A concern about a specific lesson, homework or classroom issue	Subject Teacher
Questions about progress, assessment, coursework or feedback	Subject Teacher
Concerns about curriculum content or subject delivery	Head of Department / Curriculum Leader
Friendship issues, peer conflict or pastoral concerns	Tutor or Head of Year
Concerns about bullying	Head of Year or DSL
Behaviour incidents, sanctions or detentions	Head of Year or relevant Senior Leader
Attendance, punctuality or absence procedures	Attendance Team or Attendance Lead
SEND provision, interventions or reasonable adjustments	SENDCO
Medical needs or support arrangements	SENDCO or Attendance/Inclusion Lead
School trips, visits, clubs or extracurricular activities	Visit Leader or relevant member of staff
Communication concerns or administrative matters	School Office or relevant leader

