



# Complements, Comments and Complaints



**THE LADDER  
SCHOOL**

Redefining alternative provision



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Member of staff responsible for the policy	Chris Bury
Date adopted by the Local Governing Body	May 2023
Signed by Principal	
Signed by Chair of Governing Body	



## Version Control

Version	Author	Date	Changes Made
1.0	CB	Nov 2018	First Edition
1.1	CB	Dec 2018	Second Edition
1.2	RW	April 2020	Changes to present tense
1.3	CB	March 2021	Change of formatting
1.4	CB	April 2023	Amendment to e-mail address

## Mission Statement

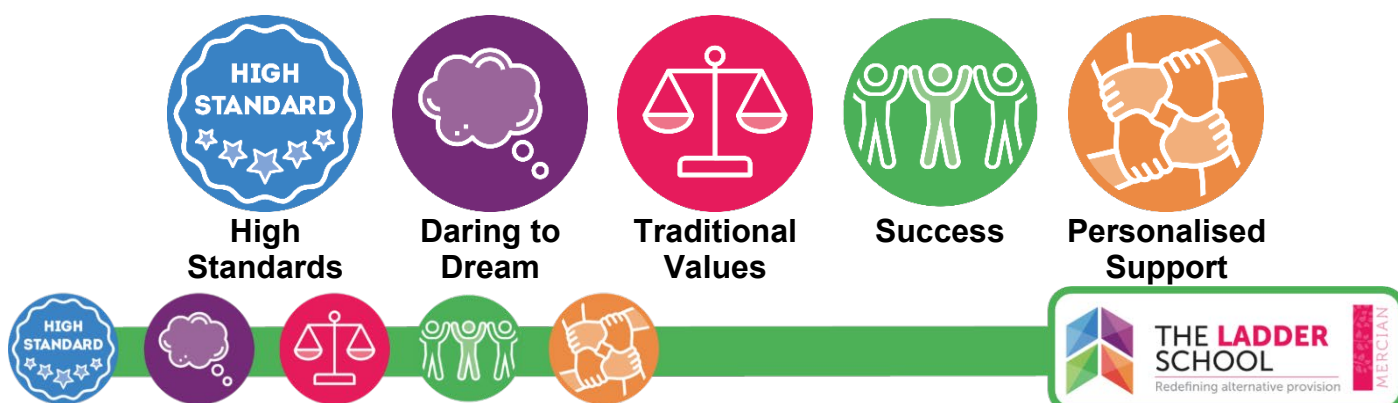
The Ladder School is a safe, well ordered and caring environment for learning. It delivers high quality education to all its students and supports them to develop their individual potential for growth, self-worth and self-control.

High quality outstanding teaching, and clear and consistent guidance and support, facilitates students in succeeding in education. Our broad and balanced academic and vocational curriculum will provide students with access to a broad range of accredited qualifications as well as educational and social experiences, which will address their learning and emotional needs (including SEND and Mental Health support). Our purpose is to support every student to develop their true potential, make positive contributions to their families and find fulfilment in employment.

## Values

1. Alternative Provision doesn't mean a dumping ground...it's mainstream with the reasonable adjustments to succeed
2. High standards and high expectations are incredibly important and are the corner stones to a successful school
3. The Ladder School should become the go-to place for educators from across the country to see best practice
4. Good simply isn't good enough
5. Learning is about a journey and there is more than one way to get to the destination
6. Qualifications, manners, respect and opportunity should be the foundations for students that need a second chance.

## School Ethos



High standards – students are pushed to achieve beyond their potential, and staff work to ensure everything that we do is better than people expect.

Daring to Dream – students at The Ladder School may have been in an educational setting where they lacked aspiration to be successful, at The Ladder School we challenge students to reach their potential and go on to further education and employment.

Traditional Values – some things often get forgotten in education, at The Ladder School we pride ourselves on mutual respect, good manners, making a positive contribution, supporting one another and an orderly, litter free environment.

Success – can come in many virtues, at The Ladder School we celebrate the small steps every day and tell students when they are doing well. We ensure that students can have a successful future.

Personalised Support - all students at The Ladder School have a Learning Coach who guides them, sets them bespoke targets and supports them in making social and academic progress.

## Statement of Purpose

This policy is to provide parents, carers and partner agencies with advice on how to raise an issue with school whether it be positive or negative.

The Ladder School prides itself on working in partnership with others and ensuring we provide a high-quality service to everyone we work with.

We would like to hear from you if;

- You are happy with the service we provide, and you would like to give a special mention to a member of staff, a student or an event.
- You have a suggestion on something we can do to improve further.
- You have a complaint or a concern. We take all complaints very seriously and they are given our full consideration. When something has gone wrong our aim is to resolve it, without the need to making it a formal complaint.

In the first instance we ask that you speak with the member of staff that is best placed to help you. For example, if there is an issue with a student, your child's Learning Coach would be the first port of call. This way we can take swift action to resolve any issues.

## Compliments

If you have something you want to share with us as a school, we are more than happy for you to contact the member of staff directly if your compliment is for them. Equally we would love to hear from you in writing. You can do this by completing a card in reception or alternatively sending an e-mail to [info@tls.merciantrust.org](mailto:info@tls.merciantrust.org), we aim to acknowledge your feedback within 48 hours and let you know how this has been shared.



## Comment

If you have something that you think we can work on to improve further, please contact reception and ask to speak to a Senior Member of Staff. If you specify to reception that you have a comment or a suggestion that you would like to share, they will inform the relevant member of staff who will contact you back within 48 hours. Equally if you prefer to put this in writing you can do so via e-mail to [info@tls.merciantrust.org.uk](mailto:info@tls.merciantrust.org.uk), we aim to acknowledge your feedback within 48 hours and let you know what we intend to do as a result.

## Complaints

We aim to deal with all complaints informally in the first instance. If you cannot do this with the relevant member of staff or you feel you need further support, we advise you to contact the school reception with the nature of your complaint and it will be referred to an appropriate Senior Member of Staff, who will either telephone you on the number provided or invite you in to meet with them.

Formal procedures will only be invoked when informal attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further. A formal complaint may be initiated by writing to the school.

Please note that if you do wish to make a complaint we aim to ensure the following;

- All complaints are investigated fully.
- We will hold internal records.
- We will be fair and impartial when making judgements.
- We will respond in a timely manner.
- We aim to come to a resolution.

Some complaints will fall under policies within school for example the Safeguarding Policy or the Staff Disciplinary Policy. Complaints that fall in this remit will be handled differently in relation to those policies. Due to confidentiality, we cannot share outcomes of a complaint if it falls within these areas.

## Formal Complaints Procedure

Please note all formal complaints should be written as a formal letter addressed to school. Formal complaints will not be accepted by any other method of communication. If parents are invited to a meeting to discuss their complaint they may wish to bring someone to accompany them.



Stage 1	<b>Senior Member of Staff</b> The Senior Member of Staff will investigate the complaint to see if it has been resolved informally. If the complaint has not been raised previously, they will investigate the nature of the complaint and they will respond to the person(s) raising the complaint within 10 working days, with a suitable resolution.
Stage 2	<b>Principal</b> If a complaint is escalated in writing the Principal will review the complaint and the investigation. The Principal will look at the judgements regarding a resolution and assess if this is a fair and suitable resolution to the complaint. The Principal will respond in writing within 10 working days of the escalation of the complaint.
Stage 3	<b>The Local Governing Body</b> If the person(s) raising the complaint are still not satisfied they have the right to appeal the Principal's decision. They must do so in writing to the Chair of Governors. A panel of three governors will be formed to look at the complaint. None of the panel will be involved in the original complaint and at least one member of the panel will be completely independent to the management of the school. The governing body will respond within 15 working days of receiving the letter regarding the complaint.
Stage 4	<b>The Mercian Trust</b> If the person(s) raising the complaint is still not satisfied they can put their thoughts in writing to the Chief Executive Officer for the Mercian Trust. Whilst the CEO will respond within 15 working days on receipt of the letter, the CEO cannot overturn the decision of a Local Governing Body. Therefore, any letter sent to the CEO can only be done so to inform the Mercian Trust that you are dissatisfied.
Stage 5	<b>The Secretary of State</b> If you think the Mercian Trust have not handled your complaint reasonably, you can refer the matter to the Secretary of State. However, it is important to remember at this stage there is no general right to appeal a Local Governing Body's decision. The Secretary of State will not be able to reverse the decision by the Local Governing Body.

If you wish to raise the matter with the Secretary of State, please write to:

The Secretary of State  
 Department of Education and Skills  
 Sanctuary Buildings  
 Great Smith Street  
 London SW1 3BT

In your letter please explain:

1. what your complaint to the governors was;
2. what response they have made to it;
3. why you think that the governors have not followed a proper procedure in considering your complaint, and/or;
4. why you think that their consideration of it was unreasonable.



From any complaint raised the findings and the recommendations will be recorded and copies will be sent to;

- The complainant
- The person being complained about
- A copy to be retain in the school office.

The Ladder School will keep a written record of the complaints and the outcomes of the complaints. The Ladder School will identify which complaints were resolved informally and which were resolved at a formal hearing.

All complaints will be treated a confidential and they will not be shared with anyone, unless they are asked for by;

- The Secretary of State
- Ofsted
- Another inspecting body.

**Appendix A** – Governing Body Procedure for dealing with a complaint

**Appendix B** – Compliment Card





## Appendix A - Governing Body Procedure for dealing with a complaint

When a complaint is referred to the panel it will meet within 15 working days of the complaint. Therefore, the Clerk will:

- Set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- Collate any written materials and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing
- Meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing.
- Record the proceedings
- Notify all parties of the panel's decision within 5 working days of the meeting.

The Chair of the panel will ensure that:

- The remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption
- The issues are addressed
- Key findings of fact are made
- Parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease
- The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- The panel is open minded and acting independently
- No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- Each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions
- Written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

The meeting will follow the set procedure:

- The hearing is as informal as possible
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- The Principal may question both the complaint and the witnesses after each has spoken
- The Principal is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witness
- The complainant may question both the Principal and the witnesses after each has spoken
- The panel may ask questions at any point
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint
- The Principal is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.
- The notification will normally be in writing not less than 5 working days after the hearing

The Panel or Committee can only:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part



- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.





Appendix B – Compliment Card

# Compliments Card

Please write down the details of your compliments below:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

