



Fir Vale Academy

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Centre Complaints Policy

April 2026

1. Policy details

Centre name	Fir Vale Academy
Centre number	36568
Date policy first created	21/04/2026
Current policy approved by	Danny Bullock
Current policy reviewed by	Lewis Baxter
Date of review	21/04/2026
Date of next review	02/11/2026

Role	Name / responsibility
Head of centre	Danny Bullock
Senior leader(s)	Lewis Baxter
Exams officer	Jared Oxley
Other staff	Subject leaders, SENCo and invigilation staff where relevant to the complaint

This policy is reviewed and updated annually so that complaints relating to Fir Vale Academy's delivery or administration of qualifications are handled in line with current JCQ requirements and awarding body regulations.

2. Overview and scope

This policy covers complaints from candidates and parents/carers about the academy's delivery or administration of qualifications, including examinations, assessments, access arrangements, entries, results and post-results services. It should be read alongside Fir Vale Academy's internal appeals procedures, malpractice policy, data protection policy, equalities policy and wider academy complaints procedure.

Which route should be used?

Where the issue is about a centre-assessed mark, the Internal Appeals Procedure for Internal Assessment Decisions should normally be used. Where the issue is about a centre decision not to support a review of results, review of moderation or appeal, the Internal Appeals Procedure for Reviews of Results and Appeals should normally be used. This complaints policy covers wider concerns about delivery or administration of qualifications.

3. Grounds for complaint

The following examples are not exhaustive. Candidates and parents/carers may raise a complaint where they believe the academy has failed to deliver or administer a qualification appropriately.

3.1 Teaching, learning, and assessment

- A non-subject specialist teacher was used on a long-term basis without adequate training or subject expertise.
- Incorrect specification content was taught, or core content was not adequately covered.
- Assessment feedback was inadequate or not provided where expected.

- Pre-release, advance information or set-task material issued by an awarding body was not provided on time.
- An assessment contributing to the final grade was not conducted according to JCQ or awarding body instructions.
- A candidate was not informed of a centre-assessed mark, or was not given sufficient time to request a review before submission to the awarding body.
- The academy did not follow its internal appeals procedure.

3.2 Access arrangements and special consideration

- The candidate was not assessed by the centre's appointed assessor where this was required.
- The candidate was not appropriately involved in decisions about access arrangements.
- The candidate was not told that an application would be processed using Access Arrangements Online in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- The candidate was not adequately informed of the arrangements in place or the subjects/components to which arrangements would apply.
- Approved access arrangements, adapted papers, equipment or assistive technology were not put in place or failed during an examination or assessment.
- Appropriate arrangements were not put in place following a temporary injury or impairment.

3.3 Entries

- A decision about early entry was not clearly explained to the candidate or parent/carer.
- A candidate was not entered, was entered late, or was entered for the wrong qualification, component or tier.

3.4 Conducting examinations and assessments

- The candidate was not adequately briefed on examination timetable information or regulations.
- The examination room did not provide appropriate conditions for the assessment.
- Invigilation was inadequate or the examination was not conducted according to regulations.
- An online system failed during an on-screen examination or assessment.
- There was disruption during the examination or assessment.
- An alleged, suspected or actual malpractice incident was not investigated or reported appropriately.
- The candidate was not informed of the outcome of a special consideration application where the awarding body provided an outcome.

3.5 Results and post-results services

- Before examinations, candidates were not made aware of post-results arrangements or the availability of senior staff after publication of results.
- A candidate could not access a senior member of staff after results were issued to discuss a possible review.
- A request for return of work after moderation was not dealt with appropriately.
- The academy applied for the wrong post-results service or script, missed an awarding body deadline, or requested a service without the required candidate consent.
- The academy failed to follow its internal appeals procedure

4. Informal resolution

Fir Vale Academy encourages informal resolution in the first instance. A candidate or parent/carer may contact the exams officer or a member of the senior leadership team in person, by telephone or in writing. The academy will listen to the concern, clarify the relevant process and seek to resolve the matter promptly where possible.

5. Making a formal complaint

If the concern cannot be resolved informally, the candidate or parent/carer may submit a formal complaint in writing to the exams officer. Contact details are available from the school office.

The complaint should state the nature of the complaint, the grounds on which it is based, the qualification or assessment affected, any relevant dates, and the outcome being sought. Formal complaints will be logged and acknowledged within three working days of receipt.

6. Investigation of a formal complaint

A senior member of staff will investigate the complaint. The investigating officer may request a meeting with the complainant, speak to relevant staff, review records and consider awarding body or JCQ requirements where relevant. Written records will be kept of meetings, contact and evidence considered.

The findings and conclusion will normally be provided within ten working days of acknowledgement. Where this is not possible, the complainant will be told the reason for the delay and given a revised response date.

Stage	Timescale / action
Formal complaint received	Logged by the academy.
Acknowledgement	Within three working days.
Investigation	Carried out by an appropriate senior member of staff.
Outcome	Normally communicated within ten working days of acknowledgement, unless a revised date is provided.

7. Appeal following a complaint outcome

If the complainant remains dissatisfied and believes there are clear grounds for appeal, they may submit a written appeal to the head of centre. The appeal should explain why the complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily and should include any supporting evidence.

Stage	Timescale / action
Appeal received	Logged by the academy.
Acknowledgement	Within three working days.
Appeal review	Referred to a senior member of staff who had no prior involvement in the original complaint, appointed by the head of centre.
Final outcome	The head of centre will inform the appellant of the final conclusion. The outcome of the internal appeal is final within the academy.



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If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the conclusion of the academy's internal process, they may contact the relevant awarding body. Awarding body contact details are available from the exams officer.

8. Data protection and records

Complaints and appeals records will be stored securely and processed in line with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, JCQ requirements and the academy's data protection policy. Information will be shared only with staff, awarding bodies or regulators who need it for the proper investigation or administration of qualifications.



Appendix A – Centre Complaints Form

Complainant details

Candidate name	
Parent/carer name, where applicable	
Contact details	
Qualification / subject / component	
Awarding body	
Date(s) of issue	



Complaint details

<p>Nature of complaint <i>Set out clearly what happened, when, who was involved and which JCQ / awarding body or centre procedure you believe was not followed.</i></p>	
<p>Informal resolution attempted <i>Summarise any conversations or actions already taken.</i></p>	
<p>Evidence attached <i>List any correspondence, timetable, assessment record or other evidence.</i></p>	
<p>Outcome sought <i>Explain what you would like the academy to do to resolve this</i></p>	
<p>Signature</p>	
<p>Date</p>	