



Student Complaints and Appeals Policy

August 2024

(Next review date: August 2025)

Safeguarding Statement

SupaJam is a post-16 specialist provider, specialising in Music, Maths, English and Life Skills. All staff, volunteers and partners are committed to safeguarding the welfare of every person within SupaJam. Our mission is to help young people to engage and achieve within a safe and inclusive environment.

Complaints Procedure:

SupaJam Education in Music and Media is committed to providing a high quality education for all students, in a safe environment and in line with our ethos. We work with partners and stakeholders and endeavour to ensure these relationships are managed effectively. However, should any problems occur, students and those that we are working with, or who have been impacted by SupaJam, have the right to make a complaint. SupaJam will respond to the complaint with care and concern, looking to resolve the problem as quickly and effectively as possible.

Section A: Student Process for Making a Complaint:

Stage 1 - If you have a problem, please try to discuss this with a member of the teaching staff such as your teacher. Ways to resolve your issue should be suggested within this meeting by the member of staff you are speaking to. The member of staff may also make a note of your complaint.

Stage 2 - If this discussion does not solve the problem, or you do not feel able to discuss it with a member teaching staff, then the complaint should be made to the Base Leader.

If your complaint is against another student or member of staff, the Base Leader may suggest a mediation meeting, if appropriate. The meeting will involve yourself and the person you are making the complaint against, to give you both the chance to air your problem and find a solution together. Should you wish to bring a supporting guardian to the meeting., you will be able to do so. An outcome will agreed at the meeting will be documented.

Stage 3 - Should you feel that your complaint has not been resolved, please make a formal written complaint to the Director of SEN. Complaints can be addressed either to SupaJam, St Mary's Road, Swanley BR8 7TE; SupaJam 8-9 Oaten Hill, Canterbury CT1 3HP; SupaJam, 47 Cromwell Road, Brighton, BN3 3ER or emailed to:

richard.dwyer@supajam-education.org

A fair and confidential investigation will be carried out and you will receive a reply within 10 working days.

Stage 4 - If SupaJam's complaints procedure has been exhausted and you are still dissatisfied, please contact the Department for Education and follow their complaints procedure: <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/complaining-to-the-department-for-education-about-a-school-or-college>. Alternatively if you would like to make a complaint about an SEN placement, please contact your local authority.

Appeals:

Within SupaJam, we practice a robust quality assurance process that ensures a standardised and consistent approach when awarding grades for student work. However, there may occasionally be a time when a student does not feel that their work warrants the grade that they have been given, and they wish to appeal. In this instance, the student should discuss their concerns with their teacher, who will liaise with appropriate persons as identified by the Director of Education.

However, if the student does not feel that the staff of SupaJam have appropriately dealt with their grading concerns, they can go to the awarding body directly. For complaints about external assessments, awarding bodies will have their own appeals process. Within SupaJam, the music diplomas awarded by RSL. Maths and English qualifications are awarded by NCFE.

Relevant policies that you may find useful on the RSL website (rslawards.com)

- 1) Complaints Policy
- 2) Diploma Appeals Policy
- 3) Malpractice Policy
- 4) Conflict of Interest Policy

Relevant policies that you may find useful on the NCFE website (qualhug.co.uk)

- 1) Appeals Policy
- 2) Complaints Procedure
- 3) Conflict of Interest Policy

SECTION B: General Complaints

Stage 1 - If you have a concern or wish to make a complaint, please email the Base Leader of the respective site, carefully detailing the reason for your email. We currently operate three sites:

Swanley Base Leader - Sammi Hastie: sammi.hastie@supajam-education.org

Canterbury Base Leader - Lindsay Greening: lindsay.greening@supajam-education.org

Brighton Base Leader - Rachel Perry: rachel.perry@supajam-education.org

The Base Leader will discuss your complaint with you within 5 working days, either by phone, email or in person, and may wish to investigate it further to ensure that SupaJam has all of the necessary information to be able to take any action needed. They will aim to rectify all concerns in an effective and timely manner, treating the matter with sensitivity and understanding. All outcomes will be confirmed in writing.

Stage 2 - If you feel that your concern or complaint has not been resolved, please escalate your concern to one of the Senior Leadership Team:

Director of Education, Innovation and Operations: becca.walker@supajam-education.org or rachel.streatfeild@supajam-education.org

Director of SEND - Richard Dwyer: richard.dwyer@supajam-education.org

Director of Safeguarding - Hannah Goslett: hannah.goslett@supajam-education.org

The Senior Leader will confirm whether any action has been taken with the Base Leaders, and may investigate further. They will respond to your complaint within 5 working days, detailing whether any further action will be taken or whether they feel the concern or complaint has been appropriately addressed. They may wish to arrange a meeting with you in person to discuss your concern or complaint further.

Appeals:

Should you wish to appeal the outcome of your complaint, please contact the joint CEOs, Nick Stillwell and David Court:

Nick Stillwell - nick.stillwell@supajam-education.org

David Court - david.court@supajam-education.org

They will fully investigate the process and will email you with their decision of the outcome within 5 working days. This decision will be final.

If SupaJam's complaints procedure has been exhausted and you are still dissatisfied, please contact the Department for Education and follow their complaints procedure: <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/complaining-to-the-department-for-education-about-a-school-or-college>. Alternatively if you wish to escalate a complaint made about about a SEND placement, please contact your local authority.

SECTION C: Unreasonably Persistent or Vexatious Complaints

SupaJam does not tolerate bullying, harassment or intimidation, in any form, of any of their employees or parents. This applies to such behaviour from members of the public and College employees/parents/associates alike. A small percentage of people may correspond with, or complain to, the College in a way that could reasonably be described as obsessive, harassing, bullying, intimidating or abusive.

1. Harassment

Under the Protection from Harassment Act 1977 S1(1)

A person must not pursue a course of conduct—

(a) which amounts to harassment of another, and

(b) which they know or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other.

Harassment can be identified as unwanted behaviour directed at an individual with the purpose or intent of humiliating, disrespecting, intimidation, hurting or offending them. Harassment may be, and not exclusive of, physical, written, non-verbal and verbal actions.

2. Bullying

The College defines bullying as a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or humiliating behaviour intended to undermine an individual or group. This might occur gradually, eroding staff confidence and capability. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.

Bullying behaviour may also be designed to provoke and/or to create extreme workload for the College. Such behaviour might also be repetitious and designed to cause extreme distress.

Bullying behaviour from a minority of individuals can take up a disproportionate amount of limited college resources and can affect the College's ability to do its work providing a service to the community. It can result in unacceptable stress for college staff.

3. Intimidation

Intimidation in the workplace is defined as words and/or behaviour intended or likely to block, influence or cause alarm or distress which could lead to distress for an individual or group. Intimidation from the College's parents, college community, or staff is not tolerated and will be acted on by the College.

4. Defining Vexatious or Unreasonably Persistent Complaints

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint as:

- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
- insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value.

The decision to stop responding will never be taken lightly and only when the College:

- has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns
- has given the complainant a clear statement of their position and the complainant's options
- has had repeated contact from the complainant making substantially the same points each time.

The case to stop responding is stronger if one or more of these statements are true:

- Complainant's letters, emails, or telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive.

- Complainants make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff.
- The College has reason to believe the individual is contacting the College with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience.

The College will not stop responding just because an individual is difficult to deal with or asks complex questions.

5. Use of this Policy

In the first instance, the staff member receiving the perceived unreasonably persistent or vexatious complaint will consult with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. With both party's agreement, the complainant will be contacted in writing (also providing a copy of this policy), to explain why the behaviour is a concern and ask them to change their behaviour.

If the behaviours persist and the staff member or Senior Leadership Team identify behaviour they think exhibits these characteristics, and which they believe may be vexatious or unreasonably persistent, they will prepare a brief statement of why it considers the complaint or correspondence to be vexatious, including its effect upon those affected. This may be accompanied by a report from the College showing the workload effects and resource impact, and, if resources allow, information about the related correspondence via email, telephone and letters. This includes information about to whom the correspondence was addressed and copied to, and a brief description of each piece of correspondence.

Sanctions can include:

- Only being allowed to communicate with one nominated member of the College
- Receiving no responses to further enquiries and communications on the same matter if no substantive new issue is raised
- Receiving no responses to enquiries and communications made to the College for 6 months if no substantive new issue is raised

6. Handling correspondence and complaints deemed to be vexatious

The staff member or Senior Leadership Team will write to the correspondent advising them their complaint and/or correspondence has been determined to be vexatious, providing the reason for that decision.

7. Parent guardians at the college

If the complainant is a parent/guardian of a College pupil, the notification letter should state which sanction the college has imposed. They should be advised that the decision will be reviewed in six months from the date of the letter advising them their complaint/correspondence is vexatious. The College and if necessary its community will be informed that a parent/guardian has been designated as an unreasonably persistent or vexatious complainant.

8. Review of Sanctions

That decision should be reviewed at a meeting occurring six months after the correspondent has been advised their complaint and/or correspondence is vexatious. The College should consider whether there has been any improvement in the vexatious behaviour over that time. The staff member or Senior Leadership Team should write to the correspondent advising them of the outcome of the review. If the behaviour has improved, future correspondence can be treated in the normal way. If there has not been a significant improvement, the correspondence will continue to be treated as vexatious and will be reviewed annually.

9. Non-parent/guardians of the college

If the complainant(s) does not have any connection with the College, they will be advised that all future correspondence will be ignored and left unread. There is no route of appeal against the decision that a complaint or correspondence is vexatious.

10. Persistent communication on the same matter from multiple complainants.

If the persistent communication on one matter is from 4 or more complainants, rather than from one complainant, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will draft a standard response to all further communications on that matter.