

A S Hornby Educational Trust CIO

Complaints Policy

This policy is informed by, and aligns with, Charity Commission regulations, sector best practice and the Trust's charitable objects

Complaints Policy Lead is Vice-Chair, Board of Trustees

1. Purpose of This Policy

The A S Hornby Educational Trust is committed to providing high-quality services and acting with integrity, transparency and respect. We recognise that sometimes people may feel dissatisfied, and we accept complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve.

This policy explains how anyone can raise concerns and how we will respond.

2. What Is a Complaint?

A complaint is **any expression of dissatisfaction** about our actions, lack of action, or the service provided by the Trust and anyone working with the Trust.

If in doubt, we encourage people to raise concerns. We will treat them as a complaint where appropriate.

3. Who Can Complain?

Anyone who interacts with the Trust may make a complaint, including

- beneficiaries, awardees of scholarships and grants
- participants in programmes and project activities
- volunteers
- partners, contractors and consultants
- members of the public

4. How to Make a Complaint

You can contact us by email at info@hornby-trust.org.uk

Please include:

- what happened
- when and where it occurred
- who was involved (if relevant)
- any evidence or relevant documents
- what outcome you are seeking

We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the process is accessible.

5. Our Complaints Process

Stage 1 – Initial Handling

- We will acknowledge a complaint **within 5 working days**
- We will aim to resolve straightforward issues quickly and informally

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

If the matter requires further consideration

- a Trustee not directly involved will investigate.
- we aim to give a full written response **within 20 working days**
- If more time is needed, we will keep you updated

Stage 3 – Internal Review

If you remain dissatisfied

- you may request an internal review
- a Trustee panel will review the handling and outcome
- this is our final internal stage

6. External Escalation

If, after our internal process, you still believe the issue involves serious wrongdoing, regulatory concerns, risks to beneficiaries or project participants, or governance failings, you may raise concerns with the appropriate external regulator (e.g. The Charity Commission or the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for data-related concerns).

7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

We treat complaints in confidence and only share information where necessary to investigate and respond. Personal data will be handled in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#).

8. Learning and Improvement

All complaints are recorded securely. We review complaints to identify improvements, strengthen our processes, and ensure accountability.

9. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

While we aim to be open and responsive, we may limit or decline engagement where a complaint is repetitive, abusive, or clearly unfounded, while ensuring fairness and transparency.

10. Review of This Policy

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, regulator expectations, or charity practice require it.