

## Devon School

# Managing Parental Complaints in School/College Procedure

### Introduction

This process should be read and applied alongside the Group Policy – Complaints and Compliments. This process is specific to all schools/colleges within the CareTech Group. It is written in line with the following legislation and government guidance which can be accessed via the links below:

#### England

- [Education and Skills Act 2008](#)
- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Independent School Standards - Guidance for independent schools](#)
- [Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards 2022](#)
- [Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020 - GOV.UK](#)

#### Scotland

- [Guidance on the Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act 2006 - gov.scot](#)
- [National Care Standards: School Care Accommodation Services 2011 - gov.scot](#)

#### Wales

- [School Complaints Procedures: Guidance 2023](#)
- [The Special School Residential Services \(Service Providers and Responsible Individuals\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2024](#)

The Headteacher must ensure that this procedure is made available to parents / carers of pupils and learners.



## Complaints process for parents

If you do wish to complain about anything that you are unhappy about the steps below will outline the process clearly for you:

1. Tell a member of staff that you wish to complain or, write your complaint either on a complaint form available from *reception* or in writing to the Head Teacher who is *Abbi Walters at Devon School*.
2. If your complaint is about the Principal/Headteacher, you should put your complaint in writing to the appropriate line manager to ask for your complaint to be investigated.
3. We will endeavour in the first instance to try to resolve your complaint informally. If possible, we will put right any mistakes we have made, and we will apologise. We will confirm in writing any outcome or further steps that will be taken to resolve your complaint within 10 days.
4. This letter will inform you of how the complaint is to be handled and who will carry out the investigation into the matter/s you have raised.
5. Your complaint will be investigated and we will endeavour to report back to you within 14 days from your receipt of the initial letter. If it is not possible to reach an outcome within 14 days we may extend this time period, and you will be kept informed of the progress and the likely completion date.
6. If an outcome has been reached we will write to you to confirm the outcome and any proposed actions following the findings.
7. You will have 7 days to appeal the outcome if you disagree with any resolution or decision.
8. Your appeal which is classed as a stage 2 complaint and will be passed to another manager of suitable seniority. This will be someone who has no previous involvement with your complaint.
9. We will endeavour to ensure the appeal is concluded within 28 days of it being passed to stage 2, and in the event, we cannot conclude within this timeframe, the investigating manager will write to you to provide an update on the matter and the likely completion date.
10. If an outcome has been reached we will write to you to confirm the outcome and any proposed actions following the findings.
11. You will have 7 days to respond to the outcome of your appeal if you disagree with any resolution or decision.
12. Where a resolution has still not been reached, your complaint will be passed to an appropriate independent internal panel. The panel will consist of up to 3 people. This will include an independent lead reviewer who has no previous involvement with your complaint and who is independent to the management and running of the school. The independent lead reviewer will source an additional independent person and the third member of the panel will include a senior member of CareTech at Director level not previously involved in the complaint.
13. Normally the parent will be contacted by the lead reviewer and independent person. Should a parent wish however to speak to the collective panel, they must inform the panel when they receive written receipt of the appeal.



14. The parent/carer is welcome to take someone with them for support, however, they must inform the panel of anyone who will be accompanying them and must speak on their own behalf unless they require special assistance.
15. The panel members will endeavour to ensure they provide you with a written outcome within ten working days of receiving the appeal. In the event the timeframe is not met, the independent lead reviewer will write to you to provide an update and the likely completion date.
16. The decision of the appeal panel is final. However, you may also take your complaint to the local authority with whom your child/young person is registered or appropriate regulatory body.
17. The panel will ensure that a written copy of their findings is made available to:
  - a. the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
  - b. available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
18. All formal complaints will be recorded and kept in line with section 10 of the Complaints and Compliments Policy. Information regarding these complaints will be made available to inspectors or secretary of state if requested under section 109 of the 2008 Act.
19. You or your children will not suffer by way of repercussion or discrimination as a result of making a complaint
20. As far as possible, your concern or complaint will be dealt with on a confidential basis. However, there could be occasions when the person dealing with your concern or complaint will need to consider whether anyone else within or outside the school needs to know about your concern or complaint, so as to address it appropriately.
21. If you are disabled or your first language is not English, you have access to translation, interpretation and communication support that you need to help you make your representation or complaint.

## Review History

**This Policy was written on 27 February 2024.**

**A review will be undertaken annually as a minimum. However, subject to a significant concern this policy and all other attached policies will be reviewed and monitored as part of a lessons learned review.**

## This policy was reviewed in February 2024 by:

- Patrick Sullivan - Head of Compliance, Children Services & Deputy Director Compliance & Quality
- Shilleen Freeth - Group Head of Human Resources
- Sheri-Ann Fudge - Senior HR Business Partner
- Tom Burford - Group Director of Performance Improvement
- Amanda Sherlock - Compliance & Regulation Director

Further Review - November 2024 by Laura Dickie, Head of Policy

Date of Next Review – November 2025

**This policy has been signed and agreed by the proprietor:**



Jeremy Wiles  
**Group Executive Director-  
Children's Services**  
Date: January 2024



Andrew Sutherland  
**Acting on behalf of the  
Proprietor, Operations Director -  
Education**  
Date: January 2024



Graham Norris  
**Acting on behalf of the  
Proprietor, Operations Director –  
Care (SEN)**  
Date: January 2024



This policy sits alongside:

- Group Complaints and Compliments Policy
- Group Whistleblowing Policy 2.0.

