



# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

**Policy Number:**

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**Legislation:** Legislation: Independent School Standards Regulations 2010 (Part7, Para 25)

## CONTENTS

Underlying Principles.....	1
Procedure.....	1
Stage One – Informal.....	2
Stage Two – formal.....	2
Stage 3 – Panel Hearing .....	3
Additional important Information .....	3
Audience .....	4

**UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES**

Horizon promotes quality and excellence in the provision of services to children and young people and their families.

The opportunity to make representations whether by way of comments, compliments or complaints, is an important part of ensuring a high quality of service is maintained.

Young people, their families, professionals and others involved in their care can make representations including complaints if they are dissatisfied with the quality of the services provided to them or if they are denied a service they have the right to receive or they are subjected to unfair or wrongful actions.

Comments, compliments and complaints are an important part of the quality assurance mechanism of Horizon and contribute to the continuous review of the effective provision and performance of services. All complaints are taken seriously.

It is important that complaints and representatives are dealt with effectively and include an element of independence.

**PROCEDURE**

Where a complaint is received which may involve other procedures, e.g. Child Protection Procedures, Disciplinary Procedures, criminal investigations, etc. those other procedures take precedence and the investigation of the complaint is temporarily suspended.

When appropriate action under those other procedures has been completed the complainant is then asked if further action is necessary under these Complaints Procedures or if the complainant is satisfied with the outcome under the other procedures.

The investigation of all complaints whether verbal or written will be commenced within one working day of the complaint being received by the Head Teacher or staff member in charge of the school.

The complaint will be dealt with directly with the complainant and efforts made through mediation and conciliation to resolve the complaint internally and informally. This process will be concluded within one working week of the complaint being received.

### **STAGE ONE – INFORMAL**

Many matters can be dealt with as they arise with the staff involved. If the complainant is unhappy with the initial response, it may be necessary to take the matter further.

Details of the complaint will be recorded on an individual complaints form

Informal complaints may be made verbally or in writing and should initially be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher, who will clarify the nature of the complaint, make a preliminary investigation and then seek to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant within 5 days. In many cases the best way to resolve a complaint is directly with those concerned and their immediate line manager, using negotiation, arbitration and mediation.

All complaints including informal complaints must be recorded in the Complaints Book maintained by the Children's Home or school and be available for inspection by Ofsted. The response of the complainant must be recorded.

A report of the complaint and the action taken must be completed by the Head Teacher and copies provided to:

- i. The complainant
- ii. Horizon Care and Education central office – Complaints Officer
- iii. The Social Worker, where appropriate
- iv. The young person's family where appropriate
- v. The Director of Education

If the initial complaint concerns the Head Teacher or the complaints should be directed to Director of Education at Horizon Care Ltd, 12 Venture House, Prospect Park, Longford Road, Cannock, WS11 0LG

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome the Head Teacher/Director of Education should then advise the complainant of their right to enter a formal complaint for investigation under Stage Two of these procedures.

### **STAGE TWO – FORMAL**

Where the complainant is not satisfied with informal resolution, a formal written complaint should be made to the Director of Education.

This will be investigated internally, and findings/ resolution recorded and communicated to the complainant within three weeks of the written complaint being received.

A report of the complainant and the action taken must be recorded in the Complaint's Book at each home/ school, and a copy be provided to:

- i. The complainant
- ii. Horizon Care and Education central office – Complaints Officer
- iii. The Social Worker where appropriate
- iv. The young person's family where appropriate.

### **STAGE 3 – PANEL HEARING**

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome of Horizon Care's investigative process, the complainant can request a review panel hearing.

\*The complainant is entitled to attend any such hearing and will be invited to do so and bring with them a representative of their choice.

This will take place within three working weeks of the request being made and the complainant will be notified of the hearing date by letter.

The review panel will consist of three people one of whom will be independent of the school's management.

The review panel may be attended by the parent/carer and they may be accompanied if they wish.

The review panel will reconsider the complaint and make appropriate recommendations within two weeks of the hearing, providing a copy of findings and recommendations to the Director of Education, Head Teacher, complainant and where relevant the person complained about.

A report of the hearing and the action taken must be recorded in the Complaint's Book at each home/ school, and a copy be provided to:

- i. The complainant
- ii. Horizon Care and Education central office – Complaints Officer
- iii. The Social Worker where appropriate
- iv. The young person's family where appropriate.

A report of the hearing must be available for inspection on the school premises by Ofsted the Proprietor and the Head Teacher

### **ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

1. At all stages of the process staff involved in the complaint will record their actions and these records will be kept confidentially except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 163 of the 2002 Education Act requests them.
2. Where a complaint made about a member of staff in relation to misconduct is upheld and employment terminated, or the person resigns in circumstances that would have led to dismissal a referral will be sent to The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

**Policy**

3. A written record must be kept and available for inspection on the school premises of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.
  
4. Horizon Care and Education ensures that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them.
  
5. If as a parent or guardian, you are not satisfied with the internal complaints policy and/or response you should send your complaint in writing to:

Independent and Boarding Team Department for Education, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington DL3 9BG.

Or go to the Department for Education website.

Please note Ofsted cannot consider complaints about independent schools.

**AUDIENCE**

This policy, having been presented to the whole staff and Operations Manager is distributed for the information of:

- All school staff

A copy of the policy is available from:

- The Head teacher's Office
- School Website This is available for:
- Pupils
- Parents, Carers, Care Home Managers
- School Directors
- LA advisers
- Inspection teams
- Visiting teachers
- Other interested adults (social and psychological services etc.)