



Complaints Procedure

Approved by: Board of Directors

Policy Owner: Storyy Education

Responsible Senior Lead: Natalie Lee

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Storyy Education is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, stimulating, consistent and accessible service for children, young people and their parents/carers. We always aim to provide high-quality services for everyone; however, we recognise that occasionally concerns or complaints may arise. We welcome feedback as an opportunity to improve our services, learn from experience and strengthen our practice.

Storyy Education is committed to ensuring that all complaints are listened to, taken seriously, investigated fairly, handled confidentially where appropriate and resolved as promptly as possible.

This policy constitutes Storyy Education's Formal Complaints Procedure and will be made available to parents/carers, professionals and visitors upon request. A copy of this policy will always be displayed at the provision.

Where a complaint relates to safeguarding concerns, child protection, allegations against staff or criminal behaviour, the appropriate safeguarding procedures will take precedence over this complaints procedure.

Under normal circumstances, all staff, Provision Managers and the Managing Director are responsible for managing concerns and complaints appropriately.

If a complaint is made against a Provision Manager, the Managing Director or another appropriately independent senior member of staff will investigate the complaint.

If a complaint is made against the Managing Director, the complaint will be investigated by a Director or another suitably independent person to ensure impartiality.

All complaints received by Storyy Education will be recorded appropriately, with a Complaint Record and any associated documentation completed where required. Records will be stored securely in accordance with Storyy Education's Data Protection and Records Retention Policies.

Stage One

If a parent/carer has a concern or complaint about any aspect of the provision, its activities or the conduct of an individual member of staff, it will often be possible to resolve the matter informally through discussion.

Storyy Education is committed to open, honest and respectful communication with parents/carers and welcomes all feedback, whether positive or negative.

In the first instance, parents/carers are encouraged to speak directly with the relevant member of staff where appropriate. Where this is not appropriate, or the concern cannot be resolved, the Provision Manager should be contacted.

The Provision Manager will:

- Listen carefully to the concern.
- Seek to fully understand the issue.
- Discuss possible solutions with those involved.
- Attempt to resolve the concern fairly and as quickly as reasonably practicable.

'We're creating a world where every young person has a brighter future'

Where appropriate, a written record of the concern and any agreed actions will be maintained.

If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached through informal discussions, Stage Two of the complaints procedure will come into operation.

Stage Two

If informal discussions have not produced a satisfactory resolution, parents/carers should submit their complaint in writing to the Managing Director.

Where possible, the complaint should include:

- Relevant names.
- Dates and times.
- Details of the complaint.
- Any supporting evidence.
- The outcome the complainant is seeking.

Storyy Education will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days.

The complaint will normally be fully investigated and a written response provided within 20 working days.

Where additional time is required due to the complexity of the investigation or the availability of those involved, Storyy Education will inform the complainant of the reason for the delay and provide an updated timescale.

The Managing Director (or nominated investigator) will carry out a fair, impartial and proportionate investigation. This may include:

- Reviewing relevant records and documentation.
- Speaking with staff, children and witnesses where appropriate.
- Reviewing CCTV footage or other available evidence where appropriate.
- Consulting with relevant professionals or agencies where necessary.

All parties involved will be given the opportunity to provide their account before any conclusions are reached.

If management has reason to believe that the complaint raises safeguarding concerns, child protection concerns, allegations against staff or concerns regarding criminal behaviour, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed immediately.

The matter will then be managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Allegations Against Staff Procedure or other relevant statutory guidance. Where appropriate, referrals will be made to Children's Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Police or other relevant agencies.

Outcome

Following completion of the investigation, the Managing Director will provide a formal written response to the complainant.

The response will include:

- The findings of the investigation.
- Whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.
- The reasons for the decision.
- Any recommendations or actions arising from the investigation.
- Any improvements to Storyy Education's policies, procedures or practice identified through the investigation where appropriate.

The Managing Director may arrange a meeting with the parent/carer and any other relevant individuals, including members of staff, to discuss the complaint and the outcome of the investigation.

Where appropriate, separate meetings may be arranged if this is considered more suitable or supportive for those involved.

Either party may request that an independent mediator, acceptable to both parties, be involved to help resolve the complaint. The mediator will remain impartial and ensure discussions are conducted respectfully and confidentially.

Escalation

If, following completion of Storyy Education's complaints procedure, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may refer the complaint to the commissioning Local Authority, commissioning school or other relevant regulatory body where appropriate.

Parents/carers may also approach the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Children's Social Care at any stage where they believe safeguarding concerns have not been appropriately addressed.

A formal record of all meetings, correspondence and outcomes will be maintained and made available to those involved where appropriate and in accordance with data protection legislation.

The Managing Director will regularly review complaint records to identify recurring themes, monitor trends and ensure that learning from complaints is embedded into Storyy Education's practice, policies and procedures.