



Kick Start Futures

Complaints Policy

Listen • Understand • Respond • Resolve

Policy Date: August 2026

Review Date: August 2027

1. Policy Statement

Kick Start Futures is committed to providing high-quality education and support for young people and to working positively with families, commissioning schools and professionals.

We recognise that sometimes people may have concerns or feel that something has gone wrong.

When this happens, we want people to **tell us**.

Complaints provide an opportunity to listen, understand different perspectives, resolve problems and improve our provision.

Our approach reflects our wider restorative culture. We will seek to resolve concerns **fairly, respectfully and as early as possible**, while ensuring that serious matters are appropriately investigated.

No student will be treated differently because they or their parent/carer has raised a genuine concern or complaint.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- make it easy to raise concerns;
- resolve difficulties as early as possible;
- ensure complaints are handled fairly and consistently;
- provide clear stages for escalation;
- communicate outcomes appropriately;
- identify learning and improvements;
- maintain appropriate records.

3. Who Can Make a Complaint?

Complaints may be raised by:

- students;
- parents or carers;
- commissioning schools;
- professionals;
- visitors;
- members of the public;
- other people affected by KSF's activities.

Where a student wishes to complain, staff will help them access the process in a way appropriate to their age, understanding and communication needs.

Students may ask a trusted adult to support them.

4. What Can Be Complained About?

A complaint may relate to areas such as:

- the education or support provided;
- treatment of a student;
- communication;
- staff conduct;
- relationships or behaviour management;
- SEND support;
- equality or discrimination;
- health and safety;
- KSF procedures;
- decisions made by the provision.

Some concerns require a different procedure.

For example:

- safeguarding concerns will follow safeguarding procedures;
- allegations against adults will follow safeguarding/allegations procedures;
- staff grievances will follow employment procedures;
- whistleblowing concerns will follow the Whistleblowing Policy;
- data protection concerns may require the Data Protection procedure.

KSF will explain where another procedure is more appropriate.

5. Our Approach to Resolving Complaints

Where possible, we want concerns resolved through **early conversation rather than formal processes**.

When a concern is raised, we will:

Listen → Understand → Respond → Resolve

We will:

- listen without becoming defensive;
- seek to understand what has happened;
- hear relevant perspectives;
- acknowledge mistakes where they have occurred;
- explain decisions clearly;
- identify what can reasonably be done to resolve the concern;
- consider whether anything needs to change.

Being restorative does not mean that every complaint will be upheld.

Sometimes KSF may conclude that the action taken was appropriate. Where this happens, we will explain the reasons clearly.

6. Informal Concerns

Many concerns can be resolved quickly through discussion.

Parents/carers and commissioning schools are encouraged to speak initially with the member of staff most closely involved or the **Education & Provision Lead**.

Students may raise a concern with **any trusted member of staff**.

Staff should:

- listen carefully;
- avoid dismissing the concern;
- seek clarification where necessary;
- take reasonable steps to resolve the issue;
- refer significant concerns to the Education & Provision Lead.

Where the matter is resolved informally, no further action may be required.

A person may request that their concern is considered formally where they remain dissatisfied or where the nature of the concern makes informal resolution inappropriate.

7. How to Make a Formal Complaint

Formal complaints should normally be made in writing.

They can be sent by email to:

info@[KSF domain]

or submitted in writing to the **Education & Provision Lead, Kick Start Futures**.

The complaint should, where possible, explain:

- what happened;
- when it happened;
- who was involved;
- what has already been done to try to resolve it;
- what outcome the complainant is seeking.

A complainant will not be disadvantaged because they find written communication difficult.

KSF will provide reasonable support or adjustments where necessary so that people can access the complaints process.

8. Timescales

KSF will aim to:

- acknowledge a formal complaint within **3 working days**;
- provide a Stage 1 response within **10 working days** of acknowledgement.

Where further time is reasonably required, the complainant will be informed and given an expected response date.

For the purposes of this policy, working days normally means KSF operational days and does not include weekends, bank holidays or planned closure periods.

Serious safeguarding or safety concerns will **not wait for the complaints timescale** and will be acted upon immediately.

9. Stage 1 – Formal Complaint

A formal complaint will normally be considered by the **Education & Provision Lead**.

The Education & Provision Lead will:

- establish the nature of the complaint;
- review relevant information;
- speak with relevant people where necessary;
- consider the complainant's desired outcome;
- determine whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld;
- identify any action or learning required.

The investigation will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the complaint.

10. Stage 1 Outcome

The complainant will receive a written response which will normally include:

- a summary of the issues considered;
- the findings;
- whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld;
- any appropriate action being taken;
- how to request Stage 2 if they remain dissatisfied.

There may be information KSF cannot disclose because of:

- student confidentiality;
- safeguarding;
- staff confidentiality;
- data protection;
- employment law.

Where this applies, KSF will explain as much as it reasonably can without breaching another person's rights.

11. Complaints About the Education & Provision Lead

Where a complaint concerns the **Education & Provision Lead personally**, it should not be investigated by that person.

The complaint will instead be referred to an appropriate **Director**, who will arrange for it to be considered fairly.

Where necessary, independent professional advice may be sought.

12. Stage 2 – Director Review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following Stage 1, they may request a Stage 2 review.

The request should normally be made within **10 working days** of receiving the Stage 1 outcome and explain why they remain dissatisfied.

Stage 2 will be considered by a Director who has not been directly involved in the matter wherever reasonably possible.

The purpose is to consider whether:

- the complaint was investigated fairly;
- relevant information was considered;
- the conclusions were reasonable;
- appropriate action was taken;
- further investigation is required.

The Director may review documents, speak to relevant people or seek additional information where necessary.

13. Stage 2 Outcome

KSF will aim to provide the Stage 2 outcome within **15 working days**.

The complainant will receive a written response explaining the outcome and any further action considered appropriate.

Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed.

14. Stage 3 – Final Review

Where the complainant believes that significant issues remain unresolved following Stage 2, they may request a final review.

The request should normally be made within **10 working days** of the Stage 2 response and clearly explain:

- why the previous response is considered inadequate;
- what significant issue remains unresolved.

The final review will be undertaken by an appropriate Director or other suitably independent person who has not previously investigated the complaint, wherever reasonably practicable.

The purpose of Stage 3 is **not automatically to reinvestigate the entire complaint**.

It is to determine whether:

- the complaints procedure was followed properly;
- the complaint was considered fairly;
- significant evidence was overlooked;
- the outcome was reasonable;
- further action is necessary.

The outcome of Stage 3 represents the end of KSF's internal complaints procedure.

15. Complaints Involving Salisbury FC

KSF operates from Salisbury FC premises, and some concerns may relate to the football club rather than KSF.

Where a complaint concerns:

- stadium facilities;
- Salisbury FC personnel;
- club operations;
- another activity outside KSF's control,

KSF will help identify the appropriate route and, where appropriate, pass the concern to Salisbury FC.

Where a complaint involves **both organisations**, KSF will seek to work collaboratively with Salisbury FC while ensuring that its own responsibilities are addressed.

A safeguarding concern involving anyone at the stadium will always be managed through appropriate safeguarding procedures regardless of which organisation employs the individual.

16. Complaints from Commissioning Schools

Commissioning schools are encouraged to raise concerns promptly with the Education & Provision Lead.

Where concerns relate to an individual student's placement, KSF may seek to resolve them through the normal placement review and professional communication process where appropriate.

A commissioning school retains the right to use the formal complaints procedure where the matter cannot be resolved in this way.

17. Complaints from Students

Students should be able to raise concerns without fear of getting into trouble for doing so.

A student may:

- speak to any trusted member of staff;
- ask another adult to support them;
- raise something during a review or check-in;
- make a formal complaint.

KSF will make reasonable adjustments to the process where SEND, communication or literacy needs make the standard process difficult to access.

Student complaints will be taken as seriously as adult complaints.

18. Safeguarding Concerns

Where information provided through a complaint indicates that a child may be at risk of harm, the matter will be referred immediately to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.

The safeguarding process may need to take priority over the complaints process.

KSF will not delay safeguarding action while waiting for a complaint to be investigated.

19. Recording Complaints

KSF will maintain an appropriate record of formal complaints.

Records will normally include:

- the nature of the complaint;
- the stage reached;
- relevant investigation information;
- the outcome;
- actions or recommendations;
- correspondence with the complainant.

Records will be stored securely and handled in accordance with data protection requirements.

20. Learning from Complaints

Complaints should help us improve.

The Education & Provision Lead and Directors will consider whether complaints identify:

- repeated concerns;
- communication difficulties;
- training needs;
- weaknesses in procedures;
- safeguarding issues;
- areas where practice could be improved.

Where appropriate, changes will be made.

We will not simply ask:

"Was the complaint upheld?"

We will also ask:

"Is there anything we can learn from this?"

21. Unreasonable or Persistent Complaint Behaviour

KSF will always seek to engage respectfully with genuine concerns.

Occasionally, behaviour associated with a complaint may become unreasonable, for example:

- repeated contact about matters already fully considered;
- abusive, threatening or discriminatory communication;
- excessive demands that significantly interfere with KSF's work;
- refusing to accept the conclusion of the process while presenting no significant new information.

KSF will not label someone unreasonable simply because they are persistent or strongly disagree with an outcome.

Where behaviour becomes genuinely unreasonable, KSF may establish proportionate communication arrangements while ensuring that any **new safeguarding or significant concerns continue to be considered**.

22. Confidentiality

Complaints will be handled sensitively.

Information will only be shared with those who need it to investigate, respond to or oversee the complaint.

Staff, students and families should respect the confidentiality of others involved.

Confidentiality will not prevent information being shared where there is a safeguarding or legal requirement to do so.

23. External Escalation

Once KSF's internal procedure has been completed, the complainant may have a right to raise particular matters with an external organisation depending on the nature of the complaint and KSF's regulatory or commissioning arrangements.

This could include the relevant commissioning school, Local Authority, safeguarding authority, Information Commissioner's Office or another appropriate body.

KSF will provide information about the appropriate external route where one applies.

24. Monitoring and Review

The Directors will maintain oversight of significant complaints and themes arising from them.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where:

- legislation or relevant guidance changes;
- commissioning requirements change;
- experience identifies improvements to the procedure.

25. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Relationships Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Low-Level Concerns Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Health & Safety Policy.

26. Our Commitment

At Kick Start Futures, we do not expect to get everything right all of the time.

What matters is how we respond when somebody tells us something has gone wrong.

We will:

Listen without becoming defensive.

Take concerns seriously.

Investigate fairly.

Explain our decisions.

Put things right where we can.

Learn when something needs to change.

Raising a complaint should never damage a young person's relationship with KSF.

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