COMPLAINTS POLICY

EFFECTIVE: SEPTEMBER 2026 | REVIEW: SEPTEMBER 2027

SAFE PEOPLE • POSITIVE PATHWAYS • COMPLIANT PRACTICE | Impact Alternative Learning - commissioned alternative provision.

1 WHO MAY COMPLAIN AND HOW

- Parents, carers, learners, commissioners, visitors and others can raise concerns about Impact service or conduct through accessible verbal or written channels.
- A safeguarding allegation, child-protection risk, whistleblowing issue or data rights request goes to its dedicated statutory/procedural route immediately.

2 INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- Listen carefully, acknowledge promptly and try to resolve operational concerns early with a named manager; informal resolution is optional for serious issues.
- Record issue, response, actions and whether complainant wishes to escalate.

3 STAGE 1 WRITTEN COMPLAINT

- Send the complaint to the Principal (or independent chair where the Principal is implicated). Acknowledge within 3 working days and usually issue a reasoned written response within 15 working days.
- Confirm evidence reviewed, findings, action, appeal route and any reason for delay.

4 STAGE 2 INDEPENDENT REVIEW

- If unresolved, allow request for a review within 10 working days of decision and arrange an impartial reviewer/panel not previously involved.
- Where independent school statutory rules apply after registration, adopt the full ISS Part 7 procedural requirements rather than assuming this AP procedure suffices.

5 REVIEW RESPONSE AND FAIRNESS

- Offer complainant opportunity to present information and allow representations by those affected; preserve impartiality and confidentiality.
- Usually aim for a final written decision within 20 working days of accepting Stage 2, advising promptly if impossible.

6 SAFEGUARDING/COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE PRINCIPAL

- Any potential child harm allegation goes directly to safeguarding governor/chair and LADO where threshold applies.
- Protect learner welfare and staff fairness; do not permit an implicated manager to investigate themselves.

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7 RECORDS AND OVERSIGHT

- Maintain secure complaint log, handling timeline, stage, decision, remedy, learning and closure; limit access and apply retention schedule.
- Governors review anonymised patterns and compliance termly.

8 AVAILABILITY AND ADJUSTMENTS

- Provide this procedure on request and make reasonable adjustments for disability, literacy, communication or language needs.
- No pupil or family is penalised for raising a concern in good faith.

9 TIMESCALES AND INDEPENDENT APPEAL RECORD

- Record receipt, stage, acknowledgement, due date, investigation steps, conflicts, decision, appeal, remedy and complainant notifications in a single secure complaints register.
- Where a statutory or commissioner requirement provides a different timetable or panel, use the applicable requirement and document it.

10 ANONYMOUS, REPEATED AND VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

- Assess concerns on substance, not solely on identity, and continue to safeguard any child even where language is challenging or a complaint is repeated.
- Any restrictions on contact are proportionate, reasoned, time-limited and subject to review; statutory disclosures remain protected.

11 SEPARATE ROUTES FOR LEARNERS AND PROVIDERS

- Give young people a simple accessible complaints route; provide a contact independent of the person complained about.
- Escalate commissioners' quality concerns through contract review but never delay child protection reporting pending a commercial dispute.

12 LINKED STATUTORY AND DFE GUIDANCE

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force 1 September 2026); DfE Independent School Standards guidance (April 2026; applies once registered as appropriate) This policy is a provider operational policy; the primary guidance and any commissioner requirements take precedence where applicable.

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13 POLICY OWNERSHIP AND REVIEW

- Policy owner: Kate Willis, Principal and Proprietor. Effective date: September 2026. Next review: September 2027, or sooner if legislation, safeguarding guidance, commissioning requirements or provision changes.
- The Principal manages implementation and policy review, with governance oversight where appropriate; relevant staff are informed of updates and confirm understanding.