

# Complaints Policy



Stone Lodge School

## Policy written in response to:

- The Protection of Children Act 1999: A Practical Guide to the Act for all Organisations
- Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5: Children's Homes
- Assessing Risk in Child Protection (1998). Cleaver, H., Wattam, C. and Cawson, P. London
- NSPCC. Cm 5730 (2003)
- Safeguarding Children in Education. Department for Education and Skills (2004a). London:
- Working with Children, DfES September 2005
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Promote the welfare of children, HM Government 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2025
- Independent School Standards 2019

## Introduction

At Stone Lodge School we take complaints seriously. We view them as an important way of improving what we do. Our complaints policy and procedures are clear, user friendly and readily accessible to all stakeholders, including those with disabilities. It is important to the organisation that pupils, staff, parents, carers, referring authorities and other agencies are genuinely able to raise concerns and make suggestions for changes and improvements. We are committed to listening when pupils and stakeholders have something to say about the services we offer.

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## Key Statements

- We are committed to delivering the best possible care and education to the pupils in our care. All staff are accountable to the pupils, their parents, carers, placing authorities and the local community in delivering services of the highest standard.
- All complaints will be treated confidentially except where this would put a young person at risk. Every Young Persons safety, welfare and well-being always remains our first concern.
- All complaints concerning Child Abuse or Allegations of Professional Abuse are brought to the attention of the local authority Designated Officer and the Referring Authority IMMEDIATELY.

## What is a complaint?

Our definition of a complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about our actions that needs a response. A complaint may arise, for example, if a person thinks that we have:

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something we should have done
- Acted unfairly or improperly

Types of complaint might include:

- Complaint by a parent/carer/external agency or individual about a member of staff
- Complaint by a parent/carer/ external agency or individual about a young person
- Complaint by a young person about another young person
- Complaint by a young person about a member of staff
- Complaint by a member of staff about a colleague

## Raising concerns and making complaints about the School

Our complaints procedure covers informal and formal complaints about our work and working practice.

## What to do if you want to complain

Complaints should be directed to: Principal, Stone Lodge School, Rothwell Rd, Kettering NN16 8XF

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Telephone: 01536 904277

Email: [ollie.sharp@stonelodgeschool.org](mailto:ollie.sharp@stonelodgeschool.org)

**If the complaint is against the Principal the complainant should speak with the Chair of Governors**

**Ms Jessie Walker [head@maplefields.northants-ecl.gov.uk](mailto:head@maplefields.northants-ecl.gov.uk) 07869 112997**

#### **Complaints from Parents/Carers**

The procedures below will be followed in the event of a complaint being made by parents or carers against the school.

**Concern (informal complaint):** If parents or carers have a concern they may initially wish to contact the school informally either by telephone, by note or personally after making an appointment. The school will investigate the concern and will respond with the outcome within 15 working days. If you feel that the matter has not been sorted out satisfactorily by informal means you may decide to lodge a formal complaint.

**Formal Complaint:** Formal complaints must be made in writing (which includes email). If you make a complaint by phone, we will make a detailed record, but we will not take any formal action until we receive a written complaint. It is important that we have all the information, with all the points you want us to consider, from the start of the process. This will allow us to deal with your complaint more quickly and will reduce the need to ask for more information. You must give the reasons for your complaint clearly, with the main areas of concern set out and supported by examples. You must be clear that you wish to make a formal complaint rather than a concern.

#### **Stage One**

- The Principal will assess your complaint and decide who will be responsible for carrying out the investigation. You will be sent an acknowledgement within five working days of receiving the complaint. We will also confirm what we will do next and who will be responsible for contacting you again.
- We will send a response, which will aim to answer all of your points of concern, within 15 working days. This will include details of how to ask for further internal and independent review.

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- If you are still not satisfied the formal complaints procedure will move to stage two.

### **Stage Two**

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with either the outcome or the progress being made, then an appeal may be made in writing to: **Ms Jessie Walker C/O Maplefields Academy Tower Hill Rd, Corby NN18**

**head@maplefields.northants-ecl.gov.uk**

If the complaint is from a parent / carer then they can attend and be accompanied to the appeal hearing if they wish.

Rockingham Education will convene a Complaints Appeals Panel. This panel will act impartially to ensure that all parties involved in the complaint have the opportunity to present their case. The panel will include a minimum of 3 representatives:

- A representative of the school who is not involved with the original complaint /complainant
- A representative of Rockingham Education
- A person who is independent of the school

The complaints panel hearing will take place within ten working days of Rockingham Education being contacted. Written findings and recommendations, following the panel hearing will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about within 10 working days. A copy of this will be maintained in the complaints log.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The School keeps the volume and nature of complaints received under regular review. Summary information is reported to the governing body on a termly basis. Rockingham Education monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary.

### **Persistent Complaints**

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with

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the school. However, if a complainant displays unreasonable or unreasonably persistent behaviour, we may need to take action to limit contact in the interests of maintaining the effectiveness of this policy and procedure and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our colleagues.

Examples of unreasonable and unreasonably persistent behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- being abusive or making threats of any kind;
- being physically or verbally intimidating or offensive;
- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints' or the operational running of the school in extreme cases – for example persistent making of complaints which on investigation prove not to be founded (in this case the complaints will still be recorded however the response may remain at Stage 1).

#### **Record Keeping**

We maintain a complaints log and register that records all representations or formal complaints (whether resolved or not) the action taken to address them and the outcomes. All correspondence, statements and records of complaints are being kept confidential but will be shown to Ofsted on request when they inspect. Copies will also be made available to the Registration Authority on request.

Records of complaints are held confidentially in the school and are kept apart from young person records. These records and any correspondence or statements relating to a complaint will remain confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, The Education and Inspection Act 2006 and The Childcare Act 2006.

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### **Complaints from Pupils**

The procedures below will be followed in the event of a pupil making a complaint against a member of staff, a fellow pupil or any other person or situation either in school or outside.

Pupils may wish to talk to an adult they trust about a situation relating to school or to a situation outside school. Pupils are reminded that, although they may speak to any member of staff, there may be occasions where information will have to be referred to other agencies such as Social Services.

#### **Within school, pupils may talk to any member of staff.**

A pupil may merely need a trusted adult to talk a situation through with and may not be making a formal complaint. However all actual complaints made by pupils will be recorded by the member of staff in the Complaints Log. \*Where the complaint suggests a Child Protection issue a formal referral will be made to the local Safeguarding board in line with Stone Lodge Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school's response to the complaint will also be recorded. If the complaint is serious the pupil's parents/carers will be informed of both the complaint and the outcome. Some complaints will be referred to other agencies or to the Local Authority. If necessary a meeting will be called to discuss the issues further.

If a complaint is upheld the school undertakes to respond to all recommendations and with appropriate actions. The school will regularly review this policy and undertakes to evaluate and to respond to recommendations in an ongoing attempt to improve practice. .

A pupil may ask to speak to an adult from an outside agency. The school will wherever possible put the pupil in contact with a representative of the appropriate agency. The referral will be noted in the pupil's file.

We will try to resolve the complaint within 2 weeks from the day the pupil made the complaint.

\*See School **Safeguarding Policy** for further guidance.

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