



# Serenity School

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## Complaints Procedure Policy

<b>Author:</b>	COO
<b>Approved by:</b>	Governing Body
<b>Policy Holder:</b>	Headteacher
<b>Date Approved</b>	01.11.2025
<b>Next review due:</b>	01.09.2026

# 1. Policy Statement

Serenity Education Group (SED) is committed to maintaining high standards of education, care and support. This policy sets out a clear, fair and transparent procedure for addressing concerns and complaints in all Serenity Schools. It meets the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 7.

## 2. Principles

This procedure is underpinned by the following principles:

- Concerns should be resolved quickly and at the earliest opportunity.
- Complainants will be treated with respect and will not be disadvantaged for raising a concern.
- Complaints will be investigated fairly, objectively and without prejudice.
- Each stage of the procedure will be handled by individuals not involved in previous stages.
- Safeguarding concerns will always be addressed in accordance with statutory guidance.
- Clear written outcomes will be provided within stated timescales.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to complaints raised by:

- Parents and carers of current pupils
- Local authorities
- Members of the public
- External stakeholders with a legitimate interest

Concerns relating to safeguarding are managed under the school's safeguarding policy and statutory guidance.

## 4. Safeguarding

Any complaint containing safeguarding information will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Safeguarding matters will be addressed in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. Any remaining elements of the complaint may proceed through this procedure once safeguarding concerns have been resolved.

## 5. Timeframes for Handling Complaints

Serenity Education Group aims to resolve all complaints as promptly as possible and within the timescales set out in this policy. Please note that any complaint received within two weeks of the end of term may take longer to resolve due to school holidays and the unavailability of personnel required to complete the investigation. However, an overall timeframe of three months for resolution will be enforced.

## **6. Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage 1: Informal Resolution**

Most concerns can be resolved quickly through conversation with an appropriate member of staff. Parents or stakeholders should raise concerns directly with the relevant staff member in the first instance.

A response will be provided within five working days.

If the matter is not resolved, the complainant may proceed to Stage 2.

#### **Complaints Against the Headteacher**

If a complaint is made about the Headteacher, the complainant should submit the complaint in writing directly to the Managing Director of Serenity Education Group. The Managing Director will acknowledge receipt within five working days and will nominate an appropriate senior leader or Director, who has had no previous involvement in the matter, to carry out the Stage 2 investigation.

The process and timescales for Stage 2 will apply.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the investigation, the complaint may be escalated to Stage 3. The complaint will then be reviewed by the relevant SED Director, in line with the escalation routes outlined in this policy. The Final Stage (Independent Complaints Panel) remains available if dissatisfaction continues following Stage 3.

### **Stage 2: Formal Resolution (Headteacher Investigation)**

A formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher.

#### **The Headteacher will:**

1. Acknowledge the complaint within five working days.
2. Conduct an investigation, which may include meeting with staff, reviewing relevant records and gathering appropriate evidence.
3. Provide a written outcome within ten working days of acknowledging the complaint.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may escalate the matter to Stage 3.

### **Stage 3: Director Review**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after Stage 2, they may request escalation to Stage 3.

The complaint will be reviewed by the most appropriate SED Director:

- Director of SEND for issues relating to SEND provision, EHCP delivery or therapy services
- Director of Education for issues relating to curriculum, teaching, learning or assessment

- Director of Operations for issues relating to premises, staffing, site management, health and safety or operations

**The Director will:**

- Review the Stage 2 investigation and outcome
- Determine whether procedures were followed correctly
- Consider whether the decision reached was reasonable and supported by evidence
- Consider any new information relevant to the complaint

A written response will be provided within ten working days of the request for Stage 3.

If dissatisfaction remains, the complainant may request escalation to the Final Stage.

**Final Stage: Independent Complaints Panel**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after Stage 3, they may request that the complaint be considered by an Independent Complaints Panel. This is the final stage of the procedure and meets the requirements of Part 7 of the Independent School Standards.

## **Panel Composition**

**The panel will consist of:**

- One individual who is independent of the management and running of the school
- One individual with relevant experience (educational, safeguarding or operational)
- One governor or senior leader not previously involved in the complaint

## **Panel Process**

- A hearing will be arranged within fifteen working days of the request for this stage.
- The complainant may attend and may be accompanied by a representative.
- The panel will consider all evidence from earlier stages and may request additional information.

## **Outcome**

A written decision will be issued within ten working days of the hearing. This will include:

- The panel's findings
- The reasons for the decision
- Any actions that the school must implement

**This decision is final and concludes the school's internal complaints procedure.**

## **7. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints**

The school may implement an Unreasonable Complainant Procedure where a complainant's behaviour becomes persistent, abusive or obstructive. Written notice will be issued if such measures are applied.

## **8. Record Keeping**

The school will maintain a written record of all formal complaints, including:

- The nature of the complaint
- The stage at which it was considered
- The outcome and actions taken

Records will be available to inspectors upon request. Safeguarding-related complaints will be recorded separately and securely.

## **9. Confidentiality**

All complaints will be treated confidentially in accordance with data protection legislation. Information will only be shared with staff where necessary to conduct an investigation or implement recommendations.

## **10. Availability of the Policy**

This policy is available on the school website and can be provided in hard copy upon request.

## **11. Review of the Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body and updated to reflect statutory changes and organisational developments.



What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details:	
Signature:	
Date:	
<b><i>School use only</i></b>	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
Who sent acknowledgement:	
Signature:	
Please complete the following, acknowledge the stages of the complaints procedure that have been followed and make any comments as necessary.	
Stage 1: Informal Resolution (complaint heard by appropriate member of staff)	Date:  Signature:
Stage 2: Formal Resolution (Complaint investigated by the Headteacher, or senior leader appointed by the Managing Director if the complaint concerns the Headteacher)	Date:  Signature:

<p>Stage 3</p> <p>(Complaint reviewed by relevant SED Director)</p>	<p>Date:</p> <p>Signature;</p>
<p>Final Stage Independent Complaints Panel</p> <p>(Panel convened in accordance with the Independent School Standards)</p>	<p>Date:</p> <p>Signature;</p>