



Woodland Pathways

Complaints & Grievance Policy

Date created or revised: 0925

Date of next review: 0926

1. Policy Statement

Woodland Pathways is committed to providing a high-quality, safe, and supportive learning environment for all learners.

We value feedback from learners, families, schools, local authorities, and commissioning bodies and view complaints as:

An opportunity to improve practice, strengthen relationships, and enhance outcomes for learners

All concerns and complaints will be handled:

- Promptly
- Fairly
- Transparently
- In line with safeguarding and legal requirements

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy aligns with:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)**
- **Norfolk & Suffolk Safeguarding Procedures**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018**
- **Department for Education (DfE) guidance on Alternative Provision**

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Learners attending Woodland Pathways
- Parents, carers, and families
- Schools and commissioning bodies (including Norfolk & Suffolk LA)
- Staff, practitioners, volunteers, and contractors

4. Principles

Woodland Pathways ensures that:

- Complaints are taken seriously and addressed quickly
- Procedures are accessible, clear, and fair
- Confidentiality is maintained at all times
- No individual is disadvantaged for raising a concern
- Feedback is used to improve provision

We recognise that how complaints are handled directly impacts trust, reputation, and outcomes for children.

5. General Approach

Where possible, concerns will be resolved:

- ✓ Informally
- ✓ At the earliest opportunity
- ✓ Through open and respectful communication

Staff will use effective communication strategies, including:

- Active listening
- Clarifying concerns
- Exploring realistic solutions
- Ensuring shared understanding

A written record will be kept of all formal discussions and outcomes.

6. Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- Concerns should be raised with the relevant staff member or session lead
- An appointment will be offered where appropriate
- A response will usually be provided within 4–5 working days

Aim:

Resolve concerns quickly and collaboratively

Stage 2 – Informal Escalation

If unresolved:

- The complainant may request a meeting with a Director or senior lead
- This will normally take place within 5 working days

Outcome:

- A summary of the discussion and agreed actions will be provided
- Every effort will be made to resolve the issue positively

Stage 3 – Formal Complaint

If the issue remains unresolved:

- A formal complaint must be submitted in writing to the Directors
- The complaint should clearly outline:
 - The issue
 - Actions already taken
 - Desired outcome

Process:

- Acknowledged within 3–5 working days
- Investigated thoroughly and impartially
- A written outcome provided within 10 working days

Stage 4 – Appeal

If the complainant remains dissatisfied:

- An appeal may be submitted within 10 working days
- The complaint will be reviewed by:
 - A Director not previously involved, or
 - An independent third party where appropriate

A final decision will be issued in writing.

7. Complaints from Learners

Learners are encouraged to raise concerns at any time.

They may:

- Speak to any member of staff
- Request to speak to a senior member of staff or Director
- Raise concerns directly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Learners may choose to bypass stages if they feel uncomfortable.

All concerns will be:

- Taken seriously
- Handled sensitively
- Managed in line with safeguarding procedures

8. Safeguarding-Related Complaints

Any complaint involving:

- Abuse or harm
- Safeguarding concerns
- Staff conduct

Will:

- Be treated as a safeguarding issue
- Be reported immediately to the DSL
- Follow KCSIE Part 4 procedures

External agencies (e.g. Social Care, Police, Prevent) may be involved where required.

Safeguarding procedures always take precedence over complaints procedures.

9. Behaviour During Complaints

All parties are expected to:

- Communicate respectfully
- Engage constructively

Woodland Pathways reserves the right to:

- Manage abusive, aggressive, or vexatious complaints through alternative procedures

10. Recording and Monitoring Complaints

Woodland Pathways will:

- Maintain a secure complaints log
- Record:
 - Nature of complaint
 - Investigation
 - Outcome
 - Actions taken

Complaints are reviewed regularly to:

- Identify trends
- Improve provision
- Inform strategic development

11. Communication with Commissioners

Where appropriate:

- Schools and Local Authorities (including Norfolk & Suffolk) will be informed
- Collaboration will be prioritised to resolve issues
- Transparency will be maintained

12. Ofsted

While Woodland Pathways encourages resolution through this procedure:

👉 Individuals have the right to contact **Ofsted directly**

☎ 0300 123 1231

🌐 www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

13. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be handled in line with:

- GDPR and Data Protection Policy
- Confidentiality requirements

Information will only be shared:

- On a need-to-know basis
- Where legally required

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following complaints or incidents
- In response to legislative or Local Authority changes

15. Contact Details

Woodland Pathways

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