

# SMK GATEWAY

## Complaints Policy

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Due for review in July 2024*

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**SIEVEMK GATEWAY**

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# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES AND POLICY

## Policy Statement

SMK Gateway places a significant emphasis on customer feedback and views the complaints process as a valuable tool to drive improvements in the quality of our services. The policy of SMK Gateway is to respond to all suggestions, whether positive or negative, in a prompt and courteous manner. All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

## Minimum Expectations

All complaints will be acknowledged within one working day of receipt.

We will try to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of all parties within ten working days of receipt.

## Protocol for Responding to Complaints

Formal acknowledgement of the complaint, with, where relevant, a copy of the Complaints Policy and Procedures, will be confirmed within one working day of receiving the complaint. This communication will inform the complainant that they will receive a full response within ten working days.

All complaints will be treated as confidential and will be handled with sensitivity by a member of the Senior Management Team.

Every communication, either from the complainant or from the Centre, will be:

1. Copied to the CEO in electronic format, where possible.
2. Notes will be kept of meetings and telephone calls
3. Original complaint to be filed securely

A member of the Senior Management Team will ensure that a full response to the complaint is provided within ten working days, wherever possible. When this is not possible, explanation will be given to the complainant within ten working days, this will include a proposed schedule for response.

The final response should include an explanation to the complainant of how to take their complaint further, if necessary.

On receipt of a complaint made directly to the Board of Trustees, the Chair will inform the CEO and ensure that a full investigation of the complaint takes place, including how it has been handled. An acknowledgement will be confirmed within one working day and a full response will be given within ten working days where possible.

## Responsibilities

The Senior Management Team or manager responsible for the area about which a complaint has been made is responsible for investigating and responding to the complainant.

The Senior Management Team or manager who receives the complaint is responsible for copying information on the response to the complainant.

The CEO will be responsible for monitoring the timely and effective implementation of the complaints policy and procedure; responsibility for overseeing the complaints process may be delegated.

## Protocol for Complainants

Learners, employers, members of the public and members of staff are able to complain through a number of avenues, including: the use of a compliment slip, which are available at reception; via e-mail; a telephone call direct to a member of staff; using social media, such as the Centre's Facebook page; or by contacting the CEO directly.

If the complainant needs help in making a complaint, this can be obtained by contacting the CEO.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the response from the Centre, they can take it further by contacting the CEO in the first instance. Complainants can be escalated further to the Chair of Trustees if they remain dissatisfied.

If the complainant has exhausted the Centre's complaints procedure and still not satisfied, they may wish to write to the relevant Educational Regulator, Awarding Body or Funding Agency, as appropriate, about the Centre's handling of the complaint. Details of each relevant body will be provided on request.

## Receipt of Complaints

If a complaint is received by post or given to reception it will be forwarded on the same day that it is received to the Senior Management Team.

## Arrangements for Record Keeping

A written record is kept of all complaints and their outcome. This record will detail the action taken by SMK as a result of the complaint/s (regardless of whether or not they are upheld). A written record of complaints and their outcome is kept for regular review by the Head and the Chair of Trustees. Retention of records is in accordance with DfE guidance.

### Recording Complaints and use of personal data

SMK processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice. When dealing with complaints the Centre may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name and contact details of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Notes/minutes of the hearing, and
- The final written decision

This may potentially include, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

The Centre will keep records of formal complaints as required by regulation.

It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy.

### Confidentiality

Correspondence, statements, and records relating to complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 Act requests access to them or where any other legal obligation prevails. Any complaint may be made available to Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate on request.