



Compliments and Complaints Policy

Contents

1. Policy statement
2. Concerns
3. Definition of a Complaint
4. Compliments and Complaints procedure
5. Anonymous Compliments and Complaints
6. Data Protection
7. Monitoring
8. External Organisations
9. References and useful Guidance Documents
10. Appendix 1 – Complaint Flowchart

1. Policy statement

The Aurora Group aims to provide a high-quality, responsive, and safe service. In order to ensure this, we need to take account of the views and wishes of those we are here to support. We welcome every opportunity to monitor and improve our service and having a 'compliments and complaints' policy and a clear procedure for resolving complaints is one way of doing this.

People can be confident their complaint will not result in any retribution, that it will be treated in an open, non-discriminatory manner and in a way that seeks effective resolution and wherever possible is treated in confidence.

We will ensure that people will be supported to make a complaint in a manner that meets their individual needs.

The objectives of the Compliments and Complaints Policy are to:

- Ensure everyone knows how to provide feedback and how a complaint will be handled
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear and acceptable timeframes
- Ensure that compliments and complaints are monitored and used to continually improve the quality of our services.



- Identify and shortfalls or failings in personal or professional conduct.
- Separate complaints from disciplinary/grievance procedures, where appropriate

We will ensure that we:

- Listen carefully to complaints and treat complaints as confidential, where possible
- Record, process, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, including any action taken, regardless of whether the complaint was upheld.
- Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated timeframe
- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal
- Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented as a result of the complaint, where appropriate regardless of whether the complaint was upheld
- Report, on a quarterly basis, the number of compliments and complaints received; the outcomes of investigations and any actions taken

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual, whether justified or not.

An individual may make a complaint if they feel we have:

- Failed to provide a service or an acceptable standard of service
- Delayed in providing a service
- Made a mistake in the way we have provided a service
- Failed to act in a proper way
- Provided an unfair service.

This policy and procedure relates only to complaints received about The Aurora Group and its services. Individuals who make complaints about partner organisations will be notified in writing within one working day of receipt of the complaint that they need to complain to the organisation they have the complaint with, and will be provided with contact details, where possible.



3. Compliments and Complaints Procedure

Compliments

Any verbal or written compliments will be recorded by the member of staff receiving the compliment and be passed to the appropriate manager for recording on the service/school Compliments Register. Any member of staff identified as being the subject or contributing to any matter giving rise to the compliment will be notified within three working days. Feedback on compliments will be shared with employees in a timely manner.

Complaints

There are 3 stages to the complaints procedure:

- Stage One – Informal Stage
- Stage Two – Formal Written Stage
- Stage Three – Panel Hearing

Stage one

We aim to settle all complaints at the lowest possible level (informal basis), quickly and satisfactorily by the member of staff or the relevant manager who provides the service within five working days. It may be resolved quickly by way of an apology, by providing the service required or by providing an acceptable explanation to the individual.

Individuals not satisfied with stage one outcomes, can make a formal written complaint either by letter or via email to the person who provided the service, their manager or to the Aurora Group at:

Telephone - 0203 6 170170
Email - feedback@the-aurora-group.com
or writing - The Aurora Group, Manor Farm Offices, Corsley, Warminster,
Wiltshire, BA12 7QE

If the employee to whom the complaint is made is unable to resolve the problem immediately, or feels unable to give the assurances that the complainant is looking for, then it will be passed to a complaints investigator to resolve. This could be a Principal/ Head Teacher or Registered Manager.



On receipt of a written complaint it will be allocated a unique reference number and logged on the service/school Complaints Register. Details of the complaint will be emailed immediately to the Complaints Investigator.

Complaints will be acknowledged within one working day of receipt. The complaint will be fully investigated and a written response, either hard copy or email, provided to the complainant by the investigator within 20 working days of receipt. In exceptional circumstances where this deadline is not able to be met, the complainant will be advised of the reasons for this and notified of a revised date for response.

The Complaints Register will be updated by the Complaints Investigator and any pending complaints flagged so they are followed up by the relevant manager.

Individuals will be advised that if they are not satisfied with the response to their complaint, they may appeal to the relevant Director within 14 working days and progress to Stage Two.

Stage Two

The departmental Director will appoint a manager to investigate the matter independently if appropriate or investigate personally. This person may need to contact the complainant to clarify the issues, conduct the investigation and explore resolution. The complainant will receive written confirmation of the outcome of any investigation within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal together with any recommendations/ remedies made, such as, staff development and training, reviewing of policies or appropriate improvement to our services. The outcome should not refer to any individual employees or groups of employees.

Occasionally, investigations may take longer, particularly if the complaint is complex. Should this be the case a holding letter will be sent after 20 working days and a final date given for a conclusion to be reached.

If an individual remains dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage Two they can request an Independent Review within 14 working days of the date of the outcome letter and progress to Stage Three.



Stage Three

If the complainant is still dissatisfied following Stages 1 and 2, they can make a written request for the complaint to be heard by a panel.

The panel will consist of three members who have had no prior involvement with the investigation of the complaint, and who are independent from the management and daily running of the service/ individual in question.

A date for the hearing will be set within seven days of the written request being received, and complainants invited to attend with a representative should they wish to do so.

The panel will make findings and recommendations, with copies of the findings sent or given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.

Copies of the findings and recommendations from any panel hearing will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and Headteacher.

Provision will be made to keep a written record of all complaints that are made, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing and action taken by the school as a result of the complaints (regardless of whether they were upheld)

4 Anonymous Compliments and Complaints

Compliments and complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

5 Data Protection

To process a complaint, we will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides and which other people give in response to investigating the complaint. We will hold this data securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and only use it to help address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be made known to those who need to consider the complaint. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applies or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.



Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, individuals have a right to obtain a copy of their personal data. However, there are exceptions to this right. We will normally destroy compliments and complaints files in a secure manner six years after the compliment has been made or the complaint closed.

6 Monitoring

Compliments and complaints are an important tool which, alongside data provided by exit surveys, user feedback and focus groups, will allow us to learn more about the services we provide. They offer a useful source of information about how individuals see our Group and how we are serving them. To ensure we can learn from compliments and complaints, the following data will be collected:

Compliments:

- Name and address
- Nature of the compliment
- Date of compliment
- Action(s) taken/ recommendations made in response to the compliment, if appropriate

Complaints:

- Name and address
- Name of person dealing with the complaint
- Date of complaint and response date
- Nature of complaint
- Action(s) taken/ recommendations made in response to the complaint
- Lessons learnt.

Compliments and complaints information will be considered on a quarterly basis by the Quality and Governance Team and The Aurora Group Executive Board. Wherever possible the data will be used to improve and develop the service.

7 External organisations

If, at the conclusion of this process, a complainant remains dissatisfied or considers there may have been a breach of the law, the person making the complaint may contact any of the below appropriate channels:

Child/ Adult Protection

For any complaint that involves a potential child/ Adult protection issue, these must be reported immediately to the appropriate service senior manager and/ or local authority (please refer to our Safeguarding Policy and procedures for details).

For Independent Schools and Residential Special Schools:

Independent and Boarding Team
Department for Education
Mowden Hall
Staindrop Road
Darlington
DL3 9BG

For children's services with residential accommodation over 38 weeks

Ofsted
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 123 1231

For Adult Services:

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Tel: 03000 616161
Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk



In addition to the other methods for making complaints, as described above children and young people have been informed about **Childline** and telephone numbers for the following organisations are displayed in a prominent position. The Aurora Group provides guides in an accessible format for those

NSPCC Helpline: **0800 800 500**

CHILDLINE: **0800 1111**



REFERENCES AND USEFUL GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

Care Standards Act 2000

Children Act 2004

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015

Data Protection Act 1998

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Independent Health Care (Wales) Regulations 2011

Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009

Residential Special Schools: National minimum standards 2015

Welsh Assembly Government (2002) National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes

Welsh Assembly Government (2003) National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools

Welsh Assembly Government (2004) National Minimum Standards for Care Homes for Younger

Adults

Schedule 1 (Part 7) of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations

2014

Appendix 1 – Complaint Flowchart

