ENCOURAGING EXCELLENCE, NURTURING TALENT!

SPORTING CHANCES GROUP

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Lead	Emma Marshall
Last Reviewed	September-2025
Next Review Date	September-2026

To be reviewed **annually**.

This policy is enforced across **all** Sporting Chances Group provisions.

SC SURREY

SC OUTREACH PROGRAMME

MINI

CREATIVE HAIR&LASHES

SC ONLINE MENTORING PROGRAMME

SC FOOTBALL ACADEMY

FITNESS ACADEMY

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1. AIMS

The Sporting Chances Group (SCG) aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of students at the provision, and others.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
- Ensure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how the complaint can feed into provision improvement evaluation processes

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

The provision will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.

To support this, we will ensure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the provision website.

Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

2. LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

Whilst the SCG is an alternative learning provision, we aim to meet the same requirements as set out for independent and maintained schools.

This document meets the requirements of section 29 of the ***Education Act 2002***[1], which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

It is also based on ***Guidance for Schools on Complaints Procedures***[2] from the Department for Education (DfE), including the model procedure, and model procedure for dealing with unreasonable complaints.

This document meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to ***The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014***[3], which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of students.

It is also based on guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on ***Creating a Complaints Procedure***[4] that complies with the above regulations, and refers to good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures[2] from the DfE.

This document meets the requirements of section 35 of the schedule to ***The Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2011***[5], which states that non-maintained special schools must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints relating to their school. It also refers to good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures from the DfE[2]. This document also incorporates the guidance outlined in ***Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023***[6] which states that organisations should have a clear policy when dealing with allegations against staff who work with children and one that makes the distinction between an allegation, concern and a complaint and sets out what constitutes each category in paragraphs 223–232.

Sources Linked

1 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/29

2 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures

3 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/schedule/made

4 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-an-academies-complaints-procedure

5 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1627/schedule/made

6 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6849a7b67cba25f610c7db3f/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

3. DEFINITIONS & SCOPE

3.1 DEFINITIONS

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint:

ALLEGATIONS (All allegations must be dealt with as a co-ordinated, multi-agency approach. Seeking the advice and guidance of the LADO is crucial. All allegations must be reported to the DSL or their senior within 1 working day or directly to the police. Where following an investigation SCG has removed/dismissed a person who poses/posed a risk of harm to a child, it is SCG's legal duty to make a referral to the Disclosure barring Service even if the person has left of their own accord.)	defined as "a claim or assertion that someone has done something illegal or wrong, typically one made without proof". Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (WTSC) qualifies this by stating that an allegation made against a member of staff may be someone who has: • behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child • possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child • behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children • behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
CONCERN	defined as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought".
COMPLAINT	defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action".

3.2 SCOPE

SCG intends to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage.

There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.

This policy does NOT cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion
- Whistleblowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.

Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) about the provision's support are within the scope of this policy. Such complaints should first be made to the key worker for your child they will then be referred to this complaints policy.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use provision premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

STUDENT VOICE

To effectively amplify student voice and enhance their active participation in shaping their experience within the Sporting Chances Group, in Spring 2026, SCG will be implementing a Student Council structure that operates collaboratively across all provisions. This council will serve as the primary forum for gathering, discussing, and championing the collective student voice. Each provision will elect representatives who will meet once a half-term both locally within their provision and jointly with representatives from across the group. The joint council will work to identify shared concerns, propose solutions, and collaborate on initiatives that benefit the entire student body. This unified approach guarantees that student feedback directly informs policy, curriculum development, and cultural/environment improvements, fostering a cohesive and responsive system.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 THE COMPLAINANT

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- Follow these procedures
- Co-operate with the provision throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved with respect
- Refrain from publishing details about the complaint on social media

4.2 THE INVESTIGATOR

An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint and establish the facts. **They will:**

- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
- Prepare a comprehensive report to the head of provision or complaints committee which includes the facts and potential solutions

4.3 COMMITTEE CHAIR

The committee chair (usually the Managing Director) will:

- Chair the meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout
- Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the committee, and are allowed to present their case

5. PRINCIPLES FOR INVESTIGATION

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

5.1 TIMESCALES

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident.

We will consider exceptions to this time frame in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

When complaints are made outside of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first day after the holiday period.

If at any point we cannot meet the time scales we have set out in this policy, we will:

- Set new time limits with the complainant
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay

6. STAGES OF COMPLAINT

(NOT COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE HEAD OF PROVISION)

6.1 STAGE 1: INFORMAL

The SCG will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly.

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the Head of Provision as appropriate, either in person or by letter, telephone, or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact a Head of Provision via the emails below.

SC Surrey Provision
Daniel Aurelien: ***daniel@sportingchances.org***

Creative Hair & Lashes
Ellie Paskin: ***ellie@sportingchances.org***

All Other Provisions & Programmes
David Johnson: ***david@sportingchances.org***

The provision will acknowledge informal complaints within 24 hours and investigate and provide a response within 10 working days.

The informal stage will involve a meeting between the complainant and the Head of Provision as appropriate.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

6.2 STAGE 2: FORMAL

Formal complaints can be raised:

- By letter or email
- Over the phone
- In person
- By a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

If complainants need assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the Head of Provision by email:

SC Surrey Provision
Daniel Aurelien: ***daniel@sportingchances.org***

Creative Hair & Lashes
Ellie Paskin: ***ellie@sportingchances.org***

All Other Provisions & Programmes
David Johnson: ***david@sportingchances.org***

The Head of Provision will call a meeting to clarify concerns and seek a resolution. The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting and should inform SCG of the identity of their companion in advance.

In certain circumstances, the provision may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the Head of Provision will notify the complainant as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant can arrange alternative accompaniment.

The Head of Provision or a suitable delegated person will then conduct their own investigation. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 5 working days from the culmination of the investigation.

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform the Head of Provision within 10 working days.

HOW TO ESCALATE A COMPLAINT

Complaints can be escalated by contacting the Managing Director, David Johnson:

- By email or letter - ***david@sportingchances.org***
- Over the phone - **0779 1262 122**
- In person
- Through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

The Managing Director will require details of the complaint as set out above, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 10 working days.

6.3 STAGE 3: SUBMIT THE COMPLAINT TO AN INDEPENDENT REVIEWER

Complaints will be escalated to the independent reviewer stage if the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint at the second, formal stage.

The independent reviewer is appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor. This person must not, at any time, have been a member of staff or supply staff at SCG, and must not have been the parent of a registered or former registered student at an SCG provision. They must also not have been directly involved in any matter detailed in the complaint.

The independent reviewer will convene a review meeting with the complainant and representatives from the SCG, as appropriate. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting.

At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence.

The independent reviewer, the complainant and SCG's representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions.

The complainant, proprietor and Head of Provision, and where relevant, the subject of the complaint, will be given a copy of the findings and recommendations made by the independent person.

SCG will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 10 working days.

7. COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE HEAD OF PROVISION

7.1 STAGE 1: INFORMAL

Complaints made against a Head of Provision should be directed to the Managing Director of SCG, David Johnson in the first instance.

7.2 STAGE 2: FORMAL

An independent investigator will carry out the steps in stage 2 (set out in section 6 above) and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

8. REFERRING COMPLAINTS ON COMPLETION OF THE PROVISION'S PROCEDURE

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the SCG's complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to their Local Authority.

9. PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS

9.1 UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. **However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:**

- Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the provision's complaints procedure

- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
- Knowingly provides false information
- Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the time frames it sets out
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation goes on
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on provision time
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value

STEPS WE WILL TAKE

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact SCG in a disruptive way, we may put other communication strategies in place. **We may:**

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as *Citizens Advice*
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary

STOPPING RESPONDING

We may stop responding to the complainant when all these factors are met:

- We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns
- We have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
- The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our provision sites.

9.2 DUPLICATE COMPLAINTS

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and the local process is complete
- Direct them to the Local Authority if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint

If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

9.3 COMPLAINT CAMPAIGNS

Where the provision receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the provision, **SCG may respond to these complaints by:**

- Publishing a single response on the website
- Sending a template response to all of the complainants

If complainants are not satisfied with the provision's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

10. RECORD KEEPING

The provision will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and held centrally and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or through a subject access request under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during an inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law.

11. LEARNING LESSONS

The Head of Provision will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Senior Leadership Team where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the provision can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

12. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The Head of Provision and Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly and will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in section 11.

The complaints records are logged and managed by the Head of Provision. This policy will be reviewed by a Head of Provision every 2 years.

13. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

1. *Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy*

APPENDIX: SCG COMPLAINTS FORM

SPORTING CHANCES GROUP

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COMPLAINTS FORM

To be completed and emailed to the Director, David Johnson: **david@sportingchances.org**

Required*

Your Full Name*	
Relationship to Young Person*	
Young Person's Name*	
Young Person's Year Group*	
Your Address (Inc. Postcode)*	
Daytime Phone Number*	
Evening Phone Number	
Your Email Address*	

Your complaint is...*

What action have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?*
(Who did you speak to and what was the response?)

What would you like as an outcome from your complaint?*

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, give details here:

Signature*		**Date*** dd/mm/yy	

Thank you for completing this form. We always aim to provide an outstanding service to young people and the adults in their lives and as such, take complaints very seriously. Your complaint will be reviewed and responded to within 3 working days following receipt.