



Active Education • Inspiring Change

Complaints Procedure

Adopted by Utopia - for review by the Board of Directors

Last amended September 2021

For review - Annually - Review targets annually

1. Introduction

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet which may be about an event that has happened, failed to happen or the way in which something was handled.

The vast majority of concerns can be resolved informally. It is in everyone's best interests that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. This can usually be achieved through discussion and good communication. However, if you are not satisfied with the outcome, a formal procedure (as outlined in this policy) would then need to be followed when attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful.

The procedure described does not include complaints covered by a separate statutory procedure, for example: complaints about the National Curriculum; statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN); matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation; whistleblowing; staff grievances and procedures; complaints about services provided by other providers Utopia use.

Utopia have a number of policies that have been agreed by their governing body. You should check which policy is relevant to your concern before proceeding with a complaint.

For complaints to be investigated fully you need to give full information and not make them anonymously.

Advice

Many concerns can be resolved quickly with goodwill, often by making early contact with the staff.

Remember the more information you have the better able you will be to discuss the matter. If you need access to relevant policy documentation these are available on request or can be found at www.utopiaproject.org.uk

You can seek support from independent bodies such as Citizens Advice (<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>), community relations centres and Advisory Centre for Education (<http://www.ace-ed.org.uk/>) etc.

Utopia will always seek to work collaboratively to resolve any complaints, as such we would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss through any concerns in order to maintain a positive working relationship.

Utopia endeavour to support the complainant throughout the process, including welcoming any additional parties who may help, whether a family member, friend or independent advisor.

Complaint Procedure

Stage 1. Informal

Your expression of concern should be made to to a member of Utopia staff at the earliest opportunity.

First talk to the teacher most closely concerned to clarify the facts and resolve through discussion. A request for discussion with the head of centre or Programme Manager member may also be desirable before making a formal complaint.

Stage 2: Complaint

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 you may wish to make a formal complaint. This should be done in writing to the head of Centre. Your complaint should be acknowledged within three school days.

The investigation should be carried out and the outcome communicated to you **within 20 school days**. The written response should include a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it (if additional time is required to formulate a response this should be explained to you). Where appropriate the response should include what action Utopia will take to resolve it.

The Head of Centre may delegate the task of collating the information to another member of staff but not the decision on the action to be taken.

Once a decision has been reached, the Head of Centre should ensure that you are clear about the action taken and what to do if you remain dissatisfied.

When the Head of Centre receives your written complaint, they may decide to refer the matter immediately to the Board of Directors.

If the complaint is about the Head of Centre, the matter should be referred to Sarah Clarke, Board of Directors Safeguarding Advisor.