



## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<b>Responsible Person (S)</b>	Managing Director & Business Manager
<b>This version Date</b>	January 2023
<b>Review Date</b>	January 2024
<b>Review By</b>	GG

### Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are connected with Soccer Schools UK Ltd (SSUK). Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to SSUK Ltd about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

### The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

**Concerns** expressed about staff and volunteers working with children could include: -

- Inappropriate use of language, shouting or swearing
- Discussing personal or sexual relationships with, or in the presence, of children
- Making (or encouraging others to make) unprofessional comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate children, or might be interpreted as such.

A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

**Complaints** expressed about staff and volunteers working with children could include: -

- Breaches of the code of Conduct





- Any breach of data protection or confidentiality
- Poor behaviour management
- Inappropriate use of social media
- Misadministration of medication

Concerns and complaints, which do not reach the allegations harm threshold as defined by KCSiE 2021 (Keeping Children Safe in Education), are defined as Lower-Level Concerns (LLC's). They are managed using the business's Lower-Level Concerns procedure (as set out in our Code of Conduct), and/or the relevant internal procedures (for example, the business's Disciplinary Procedure or Capability Procedure).

It is in everyone's interest that concerns, and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaint's procedure. SSUK Ltd takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, George Gough Managing Director, will refer you to another staff member or James Townley (Business Manager & Head Coach). Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, George Gough Managing Director, will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, SSUK Ltd will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

## How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with either the sessions coach, head coach or managing director. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complainants should not approach staff members to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints against coaching staff (except the managing director) should be made in the first instance, to George Gough (the managing director) via emailing [georgeg@soccerschools-uk.com](mailto:georgeg@soccerschools-uk.com). Please mark them as Private and Confidential.



Complaints that involve or are about the managing director should be addressed to James Townley, as the member of staff appointed to this responsibility, the business manager and head coach, via emailing [jamest@soccerschools-uk.com](mailto:jamest@soccerschools-uk.com). Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the appropriate member of staff who can deal with your complaint. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

## Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the managing director or business manager & head coach, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

## Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

## Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision or service offered by Soccer Schools UK Ltd other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<input type="checkbox"/> Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.  If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).



<input type="checkbox"/> Whistleblowing	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the business's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff grievances	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the business's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff conduct	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the business's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Soccer Schools UK Ltd in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

## Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Soccer Schools UK Ltd wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better



- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint & an apology.

## Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

### Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the managing director (unless they are about the managing director), via email. This must be done in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form).

The managing director will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 7 working days.

Within this response, the managing director will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The managing director can consider whether a phone meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

*Note: The managing director may delegate the investigation to another member of the business's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.*

During the investigation, the managing director (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the managing director will provide a formal written response within 21 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the managing director is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Soccer Schools UK Ltd will take to resolve the complaint.

The managing director will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the managing, a suitably skilled member of staff will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about the managing director must be made to the business manager & head coach, via email.



## Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with the managing director and business manager & head coach, which will be formed. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the managing director, within 7 working days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The managing director will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 7 working days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The managing director will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 21 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the managing director will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the managing director will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three members of staff with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from SSUK Ltd available, the managing director will source any additional, independent individual (usually a member of school staff, if the complaint is related to a school activity). Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

For instance, if an employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

*Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.*

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 10 working days before the meeting, the managing director will:





- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 7 working days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 working days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the business's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and SSUK Ltd with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 7 working days.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions SSUK Ltd will take to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.



## Complaint Form

Please complete and return to George Gough, Managing Director, Soccer Schools UK Ltd, Ropley CofE Primary School, Church Street, Ropley, Hampshire, SO24 0DS who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Child's name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Your relationship to the child (if relevant):</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b>
<b>Day time telephone number:</b>
<b>Evening telephone number:</b>
<b>Email Address:</b>





**Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to provide details of their complaint.



What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.





<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Official use</b>
<b>Date acknowledgement sent:</b>
<b>By who:</b>
<b>Complaint referred to:</b>
<b>Date:</b>