



Complaints Procedure (external)

1. Purpose of this Policy

Dan Gaze Support Service Ltd is committed to providing a high-quality, safe, and effective alternative education provision. We recognise the importance of listening to concerns, responding fairly, and resolving complaints promptly.

This policy sets out a clear and transparent procedure for **external complainants** to raise concerns or complaints and explains how these will be handled in line with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Education and safeguarding standards
- Principles of natural justice and fairness

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints raised by external individuals, including but not limited to:

- Parents and carers
- Local Authorities
- Commissioners and referrers
- Other professionals
- Members of the public

This policy does **not** apply to:

- Internal staff grievances (covered by the Staff Grievance Policy)
- Safeguarding disclosures (covered by the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)
- Whistleblowing concerns (covered by the Whistleblowing Policy)

3. Principles

Complaints will be handled:

- Fairly, openly, and without bias
- Confidentially, in line with data protection law
- Without fear of reprisals or disadvantage
- Proportionately and constructively
- In a timely manner

Raising a complaint will not negatively affect a pupil's access to provision or the way a family is treated.

4. What Is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about:

- The standard of education or support provided
- The conduct of staff
- Policies, procedures, or decision-making
- Health, safety, or safeguarding practice (unless it meets the threshold for a safeguarding referral)

5. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints should be raised as soon as reasonably possible after the issue arises.

Complaints may be made:

- Verbally
- In writing (email or letter)

Where possible, complaints should be raised informally first.

6. Complaints Process

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

The complainant should first raise the concern directly with the **staff member involved**.

- Many issues can be resolved quickly and informally at this stage
- Staff will listen, respond professionally, and attempt resolution
- A brief record may be kept if appropriate

If the matter is resolved, the complaint will be considered closed.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint to Business Manager

If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 1, or the complainant does not feel comfortable raising it directly, it should be escalated to:

Business Manager

Name: Laura Wilkinson

Email: Laurawilkinson@outlook.com

At this stage:

- The complaint should be submitted in writing where possible
- An acknowledgement will be sent within **5 working days**
- The complaint will be investigated fairly and impartially
- A written response will normally be provided within **10 working days**

Stage 3 – Formal Complaint to Director

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, the complaint may be escalated to:

Director

Name: Dan Gaze

Email: dgssltd@outlook.com

At this stage:

- The Director will review the complaint and previous responses
- Further investigation may be undertaken if required
- A final written response will normally be issued within **15 working days**

The Director's decision represents the final internal stage of the complaints process.

7. Stage 4 – External Escalation

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after exhausting the internal procedure, they may consider raising their concern with an appropriate external body, depending on the nature of the complaint. This may include:

- The commissioning Local Authority
- The referring body
- The Information Commissioner's Office (for data protection concerns)
- Social Care or safeguarding authorities (where relevant)

Creating Futures Together Ltd will cooperate fully with any lawful external investigation.

8. Safeguarding Concerns

Any complaint that raises a **safeguarding concern** will:

- Be dealt with under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Be escalated immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Be referred to external agencies where required

Safeguarding concerns should **not** be delayed by this complaints procedure.

9. Equality and Accessibility

Dan Gaze Support Service Ltd will make reasonable adjustments to:

- Support individuals with disabilities
- Address language or communication needs
- Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010

Complaints will be handled without discrimination based on protected characteristics.

10. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be handled confidentially and in accordance with:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018

Information will be shared only with those who need to know to investigate and respond to the complaint. Records will be retained securely and only for as long as necessary.

11. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

Dan Gaze Support Service Ltd reserves the right to manage complaints that are:

- Repetitive and unfounded
- Abusive or threatening
- Clearly intended to harass or disrupt

This will be handled sensitively and proportionately.

12. Record Keeping

A written record of:

- Formal complaints
- Investigations
- Outcomes

will be maintained securely and reviewed to identify learning and improvement opportunities.

13. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed:

- Annually
- After significant complaints
- Following legislative or regulatory changes

Learning from complaints is used to improve practice, safeguarding, and provision quality.

Approval Statement

This policy has been approved by the management of Dan Gaze Support Service Ltd and applies to all external complaints.

Date: 01.06.2026

Review: 01.06.2027