



TEENAGE KICKS

Engagement • Progress • Outcomes

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Approved by:	James Docherty
Last reviewed on:	29 August 2026
Next review due by:	29 August 2027

Teenage Kicks Limited

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Headteacher: Mr C Valentine

Purpose and scope

Teenage Kicks aims to resolve concerns fairly, promptly and, wherever possible, informally. This procedure meets the requirements of Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 for complaints from parents/carers of current pupils about the education or welfare provided to their child. The school may also consider concerns raised by other people, including members of the public, but the statutory three-stage procedure below is specifically for parents/carers of pupils currently attending the school. A complaint that began while a pupil was attending the school may continue after the pupil has left.

Related policies and procedures

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- Improving Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Concern or complaint?

A concern is an expression of worry or doubt about an issue for which reassurance or clarification is sought. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an action taken, or a failure to act. Concerns will normally be dealt with informally in the first instance.

How to raise a concern or complaint

Concerns may be raised in person, by telephone or in writing. Formal complaints must be made in writing. A third party may act on behalf of a complainant where the school is satisfied that the complainant has authorised them to do so.

Complaints about members of staff should normally be addressed to the Headteacher. Complaints about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Proprietor. Where a complaint concerns the Proprietor, the school will arrange for the formal complaint to be considered by a suitably independent person who has not been involved in the matter.

Correspondence should be marked Private and Confidential and sent via the school office. Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to enable a complainant to access this procedure.

Complaints outside the scope of this procedure

Some matters are dealt with under separate procedures or by other bodies. These include:

- safeguarding concerns, which are managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and relevant statutory safeguarding procedures;
- staff grievances or disciplinary matters, which are dealt with under the school's employment procedures;
- whistleblowing concerns raised by workers, which are dealt with under the Whistleblowing Policy;
- complaints about services provided by a third-party provider, which should normally be raised through that provider's complaints procedure; and
- admissions decisions or matters which fall within the responsibility of a placing local authority, which should be raised with the relevant body where appropriate.

Where another public body, the police, a safeguarding agency or a court is investigating matters connected with a complaint, the school may pause all or part of its investigation where proceeding would prejudice that process. The complainant will be told if this happens.

Timescales

Complaints should normally be raised within three months of the incident, or within three months of the most recent incident where a series of related events has occurred. The school may consider complaints outside this period where there are good reasons to do so.

A complaint received during a school holiday will normally be treated as received on the first school day of the following term or half-term. "School day" means a day on which the school is open to pupils.

Stage 1 - Informal resolution

The complainant should raise the concern with an appropriate member of staff, the Headteacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team. The member of staff will seek to clarify the concern, the outcome sought and whether the matter can be resolved promptly.

The school will normally acknowledge an informal concern within two school days and aim to provide a response within five school days. Where more time is required, the complainant will be told why and given a revised timescale.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 - Formal written complaint

A formal complaint must be made in writing and should set out the nature of the complaint, relevant facts, any action already taken and the outcome sought. It should be addressed to the Headteacher, or to the Proprietor where the complaint is about the Headteacher.

The school will acknowledge the formal complaint within five school days. The person investigating the complaint will consider relevant documents, speak to those involved where appropriate and keep a written record of the investigation.

A written outcome will normally be provided within ten school days of acknowledgement. If this is not possible, the complainant will be informed of the reason and given a revised date.

The response will explain whether the complaint is upheld in whole, in part or not upheld, any action the school proposes to take where appropriate, and how the complainant may request a Stage 3 panel hearing if they remain dissatisfied.

Data protection complaints

Where a complaint concerns the handling of personal data and is also a complaint by a data subject under section 164A of the Data Protection Act 2018, the school will ensure that the additional statutory requirements for data protection complaints are met. This includes facilitating the making of the complaint, acknowledging it within 30 days, taking appropriate steps to investigate it without undue delay and communicating the outcome promptly. Further information is set out in the Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.

Stage 3 - Complaints panel hearing

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, they may request a panel hearing in writing. The request should normally be made within ten school days of receiving the Stage 2 response.

The panel will:

- be appointed by or on behalf of the Proprietor;
- consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
- include at least one person who is independent of the management and running of Teenage Kicks; and
- consider the complaint fairly and impartially.

The clerk will seek to arrange the hearing as soon as reasonably practicable and will normally give the parties at least five school days' written notice of the date, time and place. The complainant may attend and may be accompanied if they wish. The panel hearing will still take place if the complainant chooses not to attend, provided reasonable arrangements have been made to facilitate attendance.

Relevant written material should normally be circulated to the panel and parties at least three school days before the hearing, subject to safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection considerations.

The panel may make findings and recommendations. The decision will be reached on the balance of probabilities and will normally be issued in writing within five school days of the hearing.

A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and Headteacher.

Records and confidentiality

The school will keep a written record of all formal complaints made under Stage 2, including whether each complaint was resolved following the formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing, and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether it was upheld.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the Secretary of State or by a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, or where disclosure is otherwise required by law.

Complaint records will be retained in accordance with the school's records-retention and data-protection arrangements. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be made available to parents as required by the Independent School Standards.

Anonymous complaints

The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Proprietor may decide that an anonymous complaint should be investigated where the information indicates a safeguarding concern, serious misconduct or another matter requiring action.

Resolving complaints

At any stage, the school may offer an explanation, apology, clarification, action to prevent recurrence, a review of practice or another proportionate remedy. An acknowledgement that something could have been handled better is not necessarily an admission of legal liability.

A complainant who wishes to withdraw a complaint should confirm this in writing where possible.

Further complaint to the Department for Education

After the school's complaints procedure has been completed, a complainant who believes that Teenage Kicks has failed to meet the Independent School Standards, including the requirements for handling complaints, may raise the matter with the Department for Education. The Department for Education does not normally re-investigate the merits of an individual complaint or overturn the panel's decision, but it may consider whether the school is meeting its regulatory duties.

Complaint form

Name: _____

Pupil's name (if relevant): _____

Relationship to pupil (if relevant): _____

Address: _____

Telephone/email: _____

Please describe your complaint, including relevant dates and people involved:

What action, if any, have you already taken to resolve the matter?

What outcome are you seeking?

Signature: _____ Date: _____