

Complaints Policy

Date of policy: September 2026

Review cycle: Every 12 months (minimum)

Introduction

Operam Education Group (OEG), including all subsidiary businesses — Provide Education, Teachers UK, The Education Specialists, Key Stage Teacher Supply, First For Education, Bridge Education, and Horizon Teachers, is committed to providing a professional, fair and responsive recruitment service. We recognise that complaints provide valuable opportunities to improve our services and are committed to investigating all complaints promptly, fairly, consistently and confidentially.

We take all complaints seriously, whether raised by candidates, clients, staff, or other stakeholders. This policy sets out how we will handle complaints in line with:

- APSCo best practice
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Equality Act 2010

This policy should be read alongside:

- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Allegations Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Scope

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction regarding OEG's services, recruitment processes, placements, conduct of employees or workers, compliance processes or safeguarding responsibilities, whether justified or not, where a response or resolution is expected.

This policy applies to:

- All employees, directors, and volunteers of OEG
- All registered candidates
- Clients and partner organisations

Where your concern relates to the below, the listed policies should be followed:

Employee concerns about employment → Grievance Policy.

Safeguarding concerns → Safeguarding/Allegations Policy.

Whistleblowing → Whistleblowing Policy.

Service complaints → Complaints Policy

Accessibility

We will make this policy available in alternative formats (large print, audio, other languages) upon request. Complainants can request assistance in submitting a complaint if needed.

Confidentiality and Impartiality

All complaints will be handled confidentially, with details shared only on a strict “need-to-know” basis. OEG will ensure the investigation is impartial, and no complainant or complainee will be treated less favourably as a result of raising or being subject to a complaint.

Complaints Process Overview

Acknowledgement: All complaints will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt.

Investigation: Our aim is to complete investigations within 10 working days. Where this is not possible due to complexity or external enquiries, the complainant will be kept informed of progress and revised timescales.

Outcome: Complainants will be informed of the outcome in writing.

Stage 1 – Receipt of Complaint

Complaints can be made by phone, email, or in writing to the relevant Manager of the location.

If the complaint relates to safeguarding, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL must be informed immediately.

The complainant will be asked to confirm:

- The nature of the complaint
- Relevant dates and details
- Whether they wish to continue working with the other party during the investigation
- Whether they require any adjustments to participate in the process

Stage 2 – Investigation

The Regional Director/Operations Director (or DSL for safeguarding matters) will:

- Request a written statement from the complainant and any supporting evidence
- Notify the complainee and request their account
- Gather relevant documentation (clearance checks, references, feedback, records)
- Maintain a centralised, confidential record
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If the complaint escalates to an allegation that meets safeguarding criteria, we will revert to the Allegations Policy and inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as required.

Stage 3 – Meeting / Review

Candidates: Will be invited to attend a meeting with the Manager or Regional Director to discuss findings.

Clients: Will be offered a meeting with the Manager or Regional Director/Operations Director.

The meeting will be minuted and added to the complaint file.

Stage 4 – Outcome & Resolution

The Regional Director/Operations Director (or DSL for safeguarding matters) will decide on the outcome, which may include:

- No further action.
- Informal resolution.
- Apology.
- Additional training.
- Mediation.
- Review of recruitment procedures.
- Improvement actions.
- Removal from assignments.
- Removal from the OEG candidate register.
- Disciplinary action.
- Referral to statutory agencies.
- Referral to professional regulators.

Complainants will receive a written outcome within 3 working days of the decision being made.

Stage 5 – Appeals Process

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing to the Chief Operating Officer within 5 working days of receiving the decision.

The appeal will be reviewed by a senior leader not previously involved in the case. The appeal outcome will be final.

The appeal will consider whether:

- the investigation was conducted fairly;
- relevant evidence was considered; and
- the outcome was reasonable based on the evidence available.

Complaints Against Operam Education Group (OEG)

Complaints about OEG's conduct will be investigated by the COO, unless they involve the COO directly, in which case they will be investigated by the CEO.

If a complainant is still dissatisfied after the appeal stage, they may refer the matter to APSCo via their complaints procedure.

Whistleblowing

This policy should be read in conjunction with OEG's Whistleblowing Policy. Workers raising concerns in the public interest will be protected from detriment or disadvantage.

Record Keeping

OEG will maintain a secure record of all complaints, investigations, evidence, correspondence, decisions and outcomes. Complaint records will be retained in accordance with the Record Retention Policy.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Personal information obtained during a complaint investigation will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and OEG's Data Protection and Processing Policy.

Protect Against Victimisation

No individual will suffer detriment, victimisation or retaliation for raising a complaint in good faith.

Immediate Safeguarding Escalation

If, at any stage of a complaint, information is received that suggests a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm, the complaints process will be paused where necessary and the matter immediately referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Safeguarding procedures will take precedence over the complaints process.

Responsibilities

Managers

- Investigate complaints promptly.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Keep accurate records.
- Escalate safeguarding concerns.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Lead safeguarding-related complaints.
- Liaise with statutory agencies.
- Ensure KCSIE compliance.

Employees

- Cooperate with investigations.
- Report concerns honestly.
- Maintain confidentiality.

Policy Review

Policy Owner: Chief Operating Officer

Review Frequency: Annually or sooner following legislative or regulatory changes