FORWARD FUTURES

GROUP

Complaints Policy

Accessible fair and timely resolution of concerns about Forward Futures Group services

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Applies To	All relevant employees, volunteers, associates, contractors, learners, parents/carers, commissioners and visitors, as specified in this document

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Document Control

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Reviewed By	Approved By
2.1	September 2026	Reviewed and aligned with SGP-001, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. Updated operational wording, cross-references and document format.	DSL	Founder & CEO

Approval

This document must be formally approved before issue. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that related procedures, forms, training and local referral information remain aligned with it.

Reviewed by / role	Brooke Wager - Founder, CEO and Designated Safeguarding Lead
Approval date	14 September 2026
Founder & CEO approval	Brooke Wager

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1 Purpose

Forward Futures welcomes concerns and complaints as opportunities to resolve problems, protect people and improve services. Complaints will be handled fairly, proportionately, promptly and without disadvantage because a person raised a concern in good faith.

2 Scope

This policy may be used by learners, parents/carers, commissioners, partners, visitors and members of the public. Employee grievances, whistleblowing, data-subject rights, safeguarding concerns and allegations against staff follow their specialist procedures, although one matter may require coordinated routes.

Complaints about services commissioned by a school, college, local authority or another organisation may also fall within the commissioner's process. Forward Futures Group will explain the applicable routes, cooperate with proportionate enquiries and agree who will communicate with the complainant. A complainant will not be passed between organisations without clear ownership of the next action.

3 Safeguarding First

A complaint suggesting abuse, neglect, exploitation, immediate risk, unsafe adult conduct or another safeguarding concern must be reported immediately to the DSL/DDSL and managed under the safeguarding framework. The complaints process must not delay referral, LADO or police action, investigate safeguarding matters in parallel, or promise confidentiality that cannot be maintained.

4 How to Complain

Complaints may be made verbally, in writing, by email, through an advocate or in another accessible format. Staff will help a child or person with communication needs to record their complaint. The complaint should identify what happened, when, who was involved, the impact and the outcome sought where known. Anonymous complaints will be considered according to the information and risk available.

A learner may complain independently or with help from a parent, carer, advocate or trusted adult. Their complaint will be taken seriously and explained in a way they can understand. Consent and confidentiality will be considered according to age, understanding and safeguarding need; support from an adult will not be made a condition of hearing the learner's concern.

5 Stage One Early Resolution

Where appropriate and safe, the receiving manager will seek early resolution. The concern and agreed action will be recorded. A person is not required to attempt informal resolution where the matter is serious, concerns the relevant manager or they do not feel safe doing so.

6 Stage Two Formal Complaint

A formal complaint will normally be acknowledged within five working days. An investigator without a material conflict will define the issues, gather proportionate evidence, offer relevant people an opportunity to respond and keep the complainant informed. A written outcome will normally be issued within 20 working days. Where more time is required, the reason and revised date will be given. The outcome will state findings, reasons, actions, any learning and the review route.

The investigator will declare actual or potential conflicts, preserve relevant records, distinguish fact from opinion, use the civil standard of proof where a factual finding is required, and avoid reaching conclusions outside the evidence available. Reasonable adjustments will be offered throughout the process.

7 Stage Three Review

A request for review should normally be made within 10 working days of the formal outcome and explain the alleged procedural error, unreasonable conclusion or important evidence not considered. A person not previously responsible for

the decision will review the process and may uphold, partly uphold or not uphold the complaint, require further work or revise the remedy. The review outcome will normally be issued within 15 working days and is the final internal stage.

The review considers whether the procedure was fair, relevant evidence was addressed, findings were reasonable and the response was proportionate. It is not normally a complete reinvestigation, but further enquiries may be directed where necessary for fairness or safety.

8 Complaints About the Founder and CEO

A complaint about the Founder & CEO will not be received, investigated or determined by them. It will be referred to an independent appropriate person. If it includes a safeguarding allegation and the Founder & CEO also holds the DSL role, it must be reported to the DDSL and directly to the LADO, with an independent case manager identified following external advice.

9 Fairness Confidentiality and Records

Information will be shared only as necessary for fair resolution, safeguarding and legal duties. Records will include the complaint, evidence, conflicts, decisions, rationale, communication, actions and outcome, and will be retained under the Records Retention Policy. Outcomes about another person may be limited by confidentiality and employment law.

Complaint records will be kept securely and separately from routine learner or personnel records where appropriate. Records will identify whether the complaint was upheld, partly upheld or not upheld and whether action was completed. Personal information will not be retained longer than required by the Records Retention Policy or applicable legal duties.

10 Unreasonable or Persistent Conduct

Forward Futures will distinguish persistent conduct from the substance of a complaint and will not label a complaint malicious merely because it is strongly expressed, repeated or unproven. Proportionate communication controls may be introduced only where conduct is abusive, threatening, discriminatory, knowingly false, excessively repetitive after completion, or materially obstructive. Reasons, scope, duration and a review date will be recorded and communicated. New safeguarding or materially different concerns will still be considered.

11 External Routes

The final response will identify any relevant external route, which may include the commissioning organisation, local authority, Information Commissioner's Office, police, LADO, safeguarding service, regulator, funder or court depending on the issue. Using this policy does not remove a person's right to seek external advice or make a statutory report.

Forward Futures Group is not a school and this internal process does not create a school-governing-body appeal. Where a complaint concerns a commissioning school’s statutory responsibility, the complainant will be directed to that school or commissioner and any later external route applicable to it. Forward Futures will not suggest that an external body has jurisdiction unless that route is genuinely available for the issue raised.

Related Documents

- SGP-001 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SGP-002 Low-Level Concerns Policy
- SGP-003 Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Whistleblowing Speak Up Policy
- HRP-016 Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- OPS-006 Accessibility Statement
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Retention Policy