

Compliments and Complaints Policy

Document control	Detail
Policy title	Compliments and Complaints Policy
Version	2.1
Status	Approved for use
Policy owner	Nathan Warr
Approved by	Nathan Warr
Applies to	Directors, employees, tutors, associate tutors, subcontractors, volunteers and any person working on behalf of PACE Education Pathways
Date approved	21/08/2026
Next review date	12 months from approval, or earlier where a review trigger applies
Review trigger	Earlier review required if statutory guidance changes, the service model changes, or a serious incident, complaint, feedback theme, audit finding or safeguarding concern identifies a need for review.
Linked documents	Compliments and Complaints Log; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy; Staff Code of Conduct and Low-Level Concerns Policy; Whistleblowing Policy; Data Protection and UK GDPR Policy; Privacy Notice; Incident Reporting Policy; Equality and Diversity Policy; Quality Assurance, Teaching, Learning and Progress Reporting Policy.

Governance note

Where a compliment, concern or complaint includes a safeguarding issue, allegation against staff, disclosure of harm, unsafe practice or risk to a child or young person, the matter must be managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and, where relevant, the Staff Code of Conduct and Low-Level Concerns Policy. Safeguarding action must not wait for the complaints process to conclude.

1. Purpose

PACE aims to provide safe, professional and responsive education support. Feedback is an important part of quality assurance. Compliments help PACE recognise progress, celebrate effective practice and identify what is working well. Concerns and complaints help PACE identify where expectations have not been met, resolve issues and improve practice. This policy explains how compliments, concerns and complaints will be received, recorded, acknowledged, responded to and reviewed.

2. Scope

This policy applies to compliments, concerns and complaints about PACE services, staff conduct, communication, quality of provision, attendance reporting, invoices, safeguarding process concerns, data handling and other service issues. It applies to feedback received from pupils, parents/carers, schools, commissioners, professionals, staff and other stakeholders. It does not replace urgent safeguarding, whistleblowing, staff disciplinary, data breach or allegations procedures.

3. Principles

PACE will welcome feedback in a respectful, open and child-centred way. Compliments will be shared appropriately so that positive practice is recognised. Concerns and complaints will be taken seriously, handled fairly and resolved as early as possible. Feedback involving safeguarding, staff conduct, allegations or data protection will be escalated immediately through the correct procedure. Records will be kept securely and reviewed for learning.

4. Compliments and positive feedback

PACE welcomes compliments and positive feedback from schools, parents/carers, pupils, professionals and partner agencies. Positive feedback may relate to a young person's progress, confidence, attendance, emotional regulation, communication, behaviour, independence, engagement with learning or wider personal development. It may also relate to the conduct, professionalism, creativity, consistency, care or impact of a specific tutor, mentor or member of staff.

5. How compliments may be shared

Compliments may be shared verbally or in writing, including by email, telephone, meeting, review discussion, feedback form or communication with a tutor, mentor, school contact, parent/carer or member of the PACE leadership team. Where a compliment relates to a specific member of staff, it should be passed to their line manager or the leadership team so that it can be acknowledged and used as part of reflective practice, supervision or appraisal where appropriate.

6. Use of compliments and positive evidence

Compliments will be recorded proportionately. Where feedback relates to a young person's progress, it may be added to the relevant student record, review documentation or quality assurance evidence. Where feedback identifies effective practice, PACE may use the learning to improve provision for other young people. Anonymised positive feedback may be used for service evaluation, tender submissions, case studies, staff development or promotional material. Identifiable information about a young person, family, school or staff member will not be shared publicly without appropriate consent.

7. Concerns and informal resolution

PACE encourages concerns to be raised as early as possible so that they can be resolved quickly. Where appropriate, PACE will try to resolve a concern informally within five working days. This may involve clarification, apology, corrective action, review of arrangements, discussion with a tutor/mentor or a meeting. Informal resolution is not suitable where the issue involves serious safeguarding, allegations, discrimination, data breach, serious conduct concerns or other matters requiring formal escalation.

8. Stage 1 - formal complaint

A formal complaint will normally be acknowledged within five working days. PACE will identify an appropriate person to investigate who is not directly involved in the complaint where possible. The investigation may include review of records, discussion with relevant staff, contact with the complainant and consideration of any evidence provided. A

written response will normally be provided within twenty working days. If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed of the reason and the revised timescale.

9. Stage 2 - review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a review within ten working days of the Stage 1 response. The review will consider whether the complaint was handled fairly, whether relevant evidence was considered, whether the outcome was reasonable and whether any further action is required. The review outcome will normally be provided in writing within twenty working days.

10. Safeguarding, allegations and external escalation

If feedback, a concern or a complaint suggests that a child is at risk of harm, it must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. If the matter concerns an adult who may have harmed a child, behaved in a way that indicates risk, or may be unsuitable to work with children, allegations procedures and LADO advice may be required. Safeguarding concerns will not wait for the complaints process to conclude. Data protection concerns may need referral to the person responsible for data protection and, where appropriate, external reporting.

11. Record keeping

PACE will keep a feedback, compliments and complaints log. The log will include the date received, type of feedback, source, pupil or service area, summary, stage or route, safeguarding/data considerations, owner, action taken, outcome, response date, learning and follow-up actions. Records will be stored securely and retained according to the retention schedule.

12. Learning and improvement

The governance lead will review feedback, compliment and complaint themes at least annually. Compliments help PACE understand what is working well and recognise staff impact. Complaints help PACE identify gaps in policy, training, communication or service delivery. Where feedback identifies improvement actions, these will be recorded, allocated and tracked.

13. Confidentiality and data protection

PACE will handle feedback, compliments and complaints confidentially and in line with data protection requirements. Information will only be shared with those who need it in order to respond, investigate, safeguard, improve provision or meet legal and contractual obligations. PACE will avoid sharing identifiable student, family, school or staff information more widely than necessary.

14. Persistent, unreasonable or vexatious complaints

PACE will always consider genuine concerns carefully. However, where behaviour becomes abusive, threatening, repetitive without new evidence, or disproportionate to the issue raised, PACE may place reasonable boundaries around communication. Any such decision must be proportionate, recorded and approved by the governance lead. Safeguarding concerns will always continue to be considered regardless of communication boundaries.

Appendix A - feedback, compliment and complaint record fields

- Reference number
- Date received

- Feedback type: compliment, concern, complaint, mixed feedback or other
- Source: pupil, parent/carers, school, commissioner, professional, staff or other
- Pupil name or service area, if relevant
- Staff member, tutor, mentor or service area involved, if relevant
- Summary of feedback, compliment, concern or complaint
- Stage or route: compliment, informal concern, formal complaint or review
- Immediate safeguarding, allegations or data protection actions required
- Evidence considered
- Action taken, recognition given or resolution offered
- Outcome and response date
- Learning, service improvement or follow-up actions
- Date closed and person closing the record

15. Monitoring and assurance

The Governance Lead will review complaint themes, response times, outcomes, repeat issues and improvement actions at least annually and more frequently where activity or risk requires. Safeguarding, allegation, equality, data-protection or health-and-safety matters must be cross-referenced to the relevant governance record and must not be closed solely through the complaints route.