

# **Schools Mutual Services – Complaints Policy**

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

Schools Mutual Services is committed to providing a high-level service to our customers and clients. If you do not receive satisfaction from us, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards. We ensure that making a complaint is as easy as possible and we treat complaints as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our services, calling for immediate action to be taken.

### 1. Complaints Procedure

In the first instance, we ask for complaints to be resolved informally. Should this not be possible, complaints must be made formally in writing, by either an email or letter to Leigh Rackham (National Director of Operations & DSL) using the following details:

Postal address: Wizu Workspace – Portland House, New Bridge St W, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 8AL

Telephone number: 0191 9338 300

Email address: [info@schoolsmutualservices.co.uk](mailto:info@schoolsmutualservices.co.uk)

Your complaint should contain the following information:

- Your full name and contact details;
- Explain the issue as clearly and fully as possible, including any action taken so far; and
- Names of the employees, clients or customers involved; and the resolution sought.

### 2. Next Steps

We will record your complaint upon receiving it.

We endeavour to send you an acknowledgment of your complaint within **5 working days** and confirm what will happen next. This will be communicated by either letter or email, depending on how the complaint was received. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint.

We may need to verify your identity and may request additional information/documentation from you.

We will then investigate your complaint. This will normally involve the following steps:

- Reviewing your complaint;
- Speaking with you;
- Establishing the relevant facts;
- Speaking to the person/s you have dealt with and any other relevant parties; and
- We may request further information or documents from you as appropriate.

We will let you know of the outcome of this review within **10 working days** of acknowledgement. However, if you have raised a request for access to information held about you on our system ("Subject Access Request"), we may take up to one month to respond to you, subject to the UK GDPR.

If we have to change any of the time scales above, we will let you know and explain why.

### 3. Complaint Outcome Appeals Process

Following **Schools Mutual Services'** response to your complaint, if you feel that we have been unable to resolve your complaint satisfactorily, you may request that your complaint is referred to **Leigh Rackham, National Director**, for further review and investigation.

Any request for an appeal should be submitted in writing within **10 working days** of receiving the complaint outcome and should clearly explain the reasons why you remain dissatisfied or provide any additional information that you wish to be considered.

The appeal will involve a review of the original complaint, the investigation undertaken and any additional information provided. Where reasonably practicable, the appeal will be considered by a person who has not had direct involvement in the original investigation.

Schools Mutual Services will endeavour to provide a written outcome of the appeal within **10 working days** of receipt of the appeal request. Where additional time is required due to the complexity of the matter, the complainant will be informed of the revised timescale.

Once the appeals process has been completed, the original complaint outcome will either be upheld, or a revised complaint outcome will be issued.

The decision reached following the internal appeals process is final and there is no further right of internal appeal. Nothing within this procedure affects an individual's statutory or legal rights.

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