

Educational Psychology Services for Schools

Educational Psychology Services for Schools Ltd

Complaints Policy

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Review Date	May 2027
Approved By	Richard Cooper Dr Kathryn Gibb
Applies To	All staff, associates, and contractors of Educational Psychology Services for Schools Ltd
Jurisdiction	England and Wales

1. Introduction and Purpose

Educational Psychology Services for Schools Ltd (hereafter referred to as “EPSS” or “the Company”) is committed to providing high-quality educational psychology services to schools, local authorities, families, and other organisations. We value all feedback, including complaints, as an opportunity to improve our services and ensure the highest standards of professional practice.

This policy sets out our approach to receiving, acknowledging, investigating, and resolving complaints in a fair, transparent, and timely manner. It has been drafted in accordance with applicable UK legislation, regulatory requirements, and professional standards current as of 2026.

EPSS is committed to the following principles in handling complaints:

- **Accessibility:** Any person who has received our services or been affected by them should be able to raise a concern or complaint easily, without barriers.
- **Fairness:** All complaints will be investigated impartially and thoroughly.

- Responsiveness: We will acknowledge and respond to complaints within the timeframes set out in this policy.
- Confidentiality: Complaints will be handled with appropriate discretion and in accordance with our data protection obligations.
- Continuous Improvement: We will use complaint data to improve our services.
- Non-retaliation: No complainant will be treated adversely as a result of making a genuine complaint.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Schools, academies, multi-academy trusts, and other educational institutions that have commissioned our services.
- Parents, carers, and guardians of children and young people to whom we have provided or are providing services.
- Children and young people themselves (aged 13 and over, or younger where appropriate), in relation to services provided directly to them.
- Local authorities and other statutory bodies commissioning services from EPSS.
- Any other individual or organisation that has received services from, or been materially affected by the actions of, EPSS or its staff.

This policy covers complaints about:

- The conduct, behaviour, or professional practice of EPSS educational psychologists, staff, or associates.
- The quality or outcomes of assessments, reports, consultations, training, or other services provided by EPSS.
- Delays, missed appointments, or failures in service delivery.
- How a previous complaint was handled.
- Administrative or communication failures.

This policy does not cover:

- Matters that are subject to active legal proceedings or formal tribunal processes.
- Complaints from employees about employment matters (which are governed by EPSS's HR and grievance procedures).
- Anonymous complaints, which will be considered at the discretion of the Complaints Manager.
- Matters that fall exclusively within the jurisdiction of another regulatory or professional body.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following legislation, regulations, and professional standards:

3.1 Data Protection

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as retained in UK law by the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.
- Data Protection Act 2018.

Complaints and associated personal data will be processed in accordance with our Privacy Notice and Data Retention Policy. Personal data collected during the complaints process will be retained for a minimum of three years from the date of resolution.

3.2 Equality and Non-Discrimination

- Equality Act 2010: We will make reasonable adjustments to our complaints process to ensure it is accessible to people with disabilities, those whose first language is not English, and other individuals with additional needs.

3.3 Children and Young People

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004: Where complaints relate to services provided to children, the welfare of the child remains paramount.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2015 (as updated): Services provided in connection with SEND assessments and Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans are subject to additional statutory requirements.

3.4 Professional Regulation

- Educational psychologists registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) are bound by the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics and Standards of Proficiency. Complaints alleging serious professional misconduct may be referred to the HCPC.
- Chartered Psychologists who are members of the British Psychological Society (BPS) are subject to the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct.

3.5 Consumer Rights

- Consumer Rights Act 2015: Services must be provided with reasonable care and skill.
- Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013, where applicable.

3.6 Online Publication Requirements

In accordance with UK requirements for online publication of complaints policies (including Ofsted's Inspection Framework, the ICO's guidance, and best practice guidance from the BPS and HCPC), this policy is published on the EPSS website and is available in accessible formats upon request. We comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 as a matter of best practice.

4. What Constitutes a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by EPSS or its staff, contractors, or agents that requires a response.

A complaint is different from:

- A service request or enquiry, which is a request for information or for a service to be provided.
- A routine expression of concern during the course of service delivery, which should be raised directly with the relevant educational psychologist or account manager in the first instance.
- Feedback or a suggestion for improvement that does not involve dissatisfaction.

If you are unsure whether your concern constitutes a complaint, please contact our Complaints Manager, who will advise you and ensure your concern is directed to the appropriate process.

5. How to Make a Complaint

5.1 Contact Details

Complaints may be submitted by any of the following methods:

In Writing (Post)	Complaints Manager, Educational Psychology Services for Schools Ltd, Educational Psychology Services for Schools Three Gables Corner Hall Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP3 9HN
Email	Contact@EdPsychSchool.com
Online Form	Available at www.EdPsychSchool.com/complaints
Telephone	01442 503 404 – Monday to Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm. Please ask for Richard Cooper.

5.2 Information to Include

To help us investigate your complaint effectively, please provide the following information where possible:

- Your full name and contact details (address, telephone number, and/or email address).
- The name of the school, organisation, or child/young person in relation to whom the service was provided (where applicable and where you have authority to share this information).
- The name of the EPSS educational psychologist, staff member, or associate your complaint concerns (if known).
- A clear description of what happened, including relevant dates.

- Any supporting documents or correspondence.
- What outcome you are seeking from this complaints process.

5.3 Accessibility

EPSS is committed to ensuring its complaints process is accessible to all. Upon request, we can:

- Provide this policy and the complaints form in alternative formats, including large print, Easy Read, and electronically accessible versions.
- Arrange for a telephone conversation or in-person meeting to support a complainant who finds written communication difficult.
- Provide information in languages other than English, or arrange an interpreter.
- Allow a third-party advocate, representative, or McKenzie Friend to submit and pursue a complaint on behalf of a complainant.

5.4 Time Limits

Complaints should normally be submitted within 12 months of the incident that gave rise to the complaint, or within 12 months of the complainant first becoming aware of the issue. Complaints submitted outside this timeframe will still be considered, but EPSS reserves the right to decline to investigate if the passage of time makes it impractical to do so fairly. The Complaints Manager will notify the complainant in writing if this is the case.

6. The Complaints Procedure

Our complaints procedure has three stages. Complainants are encouraged to work through the stages in order before seeking external escalation.

STAGE 1 Informal Resolution

We encourage complainants to raise concerns informally with the relevant educational psychologist, account manager, or team leader in the first instance. Many concerns can be resolved quickly at this stage without the need for a formal investigation. An informal complaint should be raised as soon as possible, and the member of staff contacted will aim to provide a response within 5 working days.

STAGE 2 Formal Investigation

If the concern is not resolved informally, or if the complainant prefers to proceed formally, a written complaint should be submitted to the Complaints Manager using the contact details in Section 5. A formal investigation will then be conducted.

STAGE 3 Review Panel

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation, they may request a review by an independent panel. Details are set out in Section 6.3 below.

6.1 Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Where a complainant feels comfortable doing so, they are encouraged to raise their concern directly with the educational psychologist, account manager, or other EPSS member of staff involved. The relevant member of staff will:

1. Acknowledge the concern promptly, normally within 2 working days.
2. Listen carefully and seek to understand the complainant's concerns.
3. Attempt to resolve the matter informally, for example through a conversation, an explanation, or an apology where appropriate.
4. Provide a written summary of any agreed outcome within 5 working days of the concern being raised.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the informal response, or if they feel uncomfortable raising the concern directly with the member of staff involved, they may proceed directly to Stage 2.

6.2 Stage 2: Formal Investigation

6.2.1 Acknowledgement

Upon receipt of a formal written complaint, EPSS will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (by post or email) within 3 working days.
- Provide the complainant with the name of the Complaints Manager or investigating officer who will handle the complaint.
- Confirm the expected timeframe for a full response.

6.2.2 Investigation

The Complaints Manager will conduct a thorough and impartial investigation, which may include:

- Reviewing all relevant documentation, records, reports, and correspondence.
- Speaking with or obtaining written statements from relevant staff members and, where appropriate, other parties.
- Considering the complaint against EPSS's policies, professional standards, and legal obligations.

The person who is the subject of the complaint will be informed of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond. The investigating officer will not be the same person who is the subject of the complaint.

6.2.3 Response

EPSS will aim to provide a full written response to the complainant within 20 working days of the date of acknowledgement. If the investigation requires more time — for example, due to the complexity of the complaint or the availability of witnesses — EPSS will notify the complainant in writing, explain the reason for the delay, and provide an updated timeframe. Extensions will not normally exceed a further 20 working days without the complainant's agreement.

The written response will:

- Confirm the outcome of the investigation (upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld).
- Provide clear reasons for the decision.
- Detail any actions EPSS will take as a result of the complaint.

- Offer an apology where the complaint is upheld and an apology is appropriate.
- Advise the complainant of their right to escalate to Stage 3 if they remain dissatisfied.

6.3 Stage 3: Review Panel

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after receiving the Stage 2 response, they may request a Stage 3 Review within 20 working days of receiving the Stage 2 decision.

The Stage 3 Review will be conducted by a panel of at least three persons, which will normally include:

- An independent member who is not employed by or associated with EPSS (e.g. a Chartered Psychologist, retired education professional, or lay representative).
- A senior director of EPSS who was not involved in the Stage 2 investigation.
- A further independent or external member where practicable.

The Review Panel will:

5. Review all documentation relating to the complaint and the Stage 2 investigation.
6. Invite written submissions from the complainant and from EPSS.
7. At the complainant's request, offer the opportunity for an oral hearing (conducted in person, by video conference, or by telephone).
8. Issue a written determination within 30 working days of the request for review.

The Review Panel may:

- Uphold, partially uphold, or dismiss the complaint.
- Recommend specific actions or remedies.
- Recommend changes to EPSS policies or practices.

The Stage 3 determination represents the final stage of EPSS's internal complaints process. Following the Stage 3 determination, EPSS will write to the complainant with details of any applicable external escalation routes (see Section 8).

7. Remedies and Outcomes

Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, EPSS will consider the most appropriate remedy, which may include one or more of the following:

- A written apology.
- An explanation of what went wrong and what steps will be taken to prevent recurrence.
- A commitment to review or revise relevant policies, procedures, or practices.
- Additional supervision, support, or training for staff members.
- A repeat or revised service where the original service was deficient.
- A reduction in or refund of fees, where appropriate and proportionate.
- Financial compensation, in limited circumstances where demonstrable loss or damage has resulted directly from the failure complained of.

EPSS does not accept liability in any circumstances solely through the act of upholding a complaint or offering a remedy.

8. External Escalation Routes

Following completion of EPSS’s internal complaints procedure, complainants who remain dissatisfied may seek external review or redress through the following routes, depending on the nature of the complaint:

Body	When Applicable
Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)	Allegations of serious professional misconduct, lack of competence, or health concerns relating to a registered educational psychologist. Web: www.hcpc-uk.org
British Psychological Society (BPS)	Alleged breaches of the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct by Chartered Psychologist members. Web: www.bps.org.uk
Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO)	Complaints about the handling of personal data or breaches of data protection law. Web: www.ico.org.uk Tel: 0303 123 1113
SEND Tribunal (First-tier Tribunal)	Disputes about EHC needs assessments or the contents of EHC plans (where applicable). Web: www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-special-educational-needs-and-disability
Civil Courts	Legal claims in contract, negligence, or other civil matters. We recommend seeking independent legal advice before pursuing this route.

9. Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Complaints

EPSS is committed to treating all complaints fairly. However, in rare cases, a complaint or the manner in which it is pursued may be considered unreasonably persistent or vexatious. This policy defines such behaviour as including:

- Pursuing the same complaint repeatedly after it has been fully investigated and a final response provided.
- Refusing to accept a reasonable, evidence-based outcome.
- Making complaints that are clearly trivial, frivolous, or intended to cause inconvenience.
- Abusive, threatening, or harassing behaviour towards EPSS staff.
- Submitting a high volume of correspondence on the same matter without new evidence.

Where EPSS determines that a complaint is unreasonably persistent or vexatious, the Complaints Manager may, with the approval of a Director:

- Limit future correspondence on the matter to a single named contact.
- Decline to respond to further correspondence on the same matter.
- In cases of abusive or threatening behaviour, cease all direct communication and refer the matter to EPSS’s legal advisers or the police.

The complainant will be informed in writing if any of these measures are applied and will be advised of their right to submit new information that has not previously been considered.

10. Safeguarding

Where a complaint raises concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of harm, EPSS will immediately refer the matter to the relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead or statutory authority, in accordance with its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024 edition as current). The complaints process may be paused pending the outcome of any statutory safeguarding enquiry.

11. Confidentiality and Data Protection

EPSS will process all personal data collected during the complaints process in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Complainants have the following rights in relation to their personal data:

- The right of access (Subject Access Request).
- The right to rectification of inaccurate data.
- The right to erasure in certain circumstances.
- The right to restrict processing.
- The right to object to processing.

Complaint records will normally be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of final resolution, after which they will be securely destroyed, unless a longer retention period is required by law or professional regulation.

Information about a complaint will only be shared with those who need to be involved in investigating and resolving it. We will not disclose the identity of a complainant to the person complained about without the complainant's consent, unless we are legally required to do so or it is necessary to ensure procedural fairness.

For further information about how EPSS handles personal data, please refer to our Privacy Notice, available at [website URL].

12. Learning and Continuous Improvement

EPSS regards complaints as a valuable source of insight into the quality of its services. The Complaints Manager will:

- Maintain a secure complaints register recording all complaints received, their nature, how they were handled, and their outcomes.
- Produce an anonymised summary complaints report for the Board of Directors at least annually.
- Identify trends, systemic issues, and areas for improvement.
- Ensure that lessons learned from complaints are shared with relevant staff and incorporated into training and service development.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and updated as required to reflect changes in legislation, professional standards, and best practice.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Board of Directors	Approving and reviewing this policy; reviewing the annual complaints report; maintaining oversight of the complaints function.
Complaints Manager	Day-to-day management of the complaints process; conducting or overseeing Stage 2 investigations; maintaining the complaints register; producing the annual complaints report.
All Staff and Associates	Attempting to resolve concerns informally at Stage 1; cooperating with complaint investigations; adhering to this policy and professional standards.

14. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following EPSS policies and documents:

- Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct and Professional Standards Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Terms and Conditions of Service

15. Policy Review and Version Control

Version	Date	Reviewed By	Summary of Changes
1.0	May 2026	Board of Directors	Initial publication

This policy was approved by the Board of Directors of Educational Psychology Services for Schools Ltd and is effective from May 2026.

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