

# South-West Wexford School Completion Programme

## Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

### Document Control

- Policy Title: Complaints Policy
- Effective Date: [Insert Date]
- Review Date:[every 3 years]
- Approved By: Local Management Committee.

### 1. Purpose

- To provide a clear framework for handling comments and complaints received from children, families, staff, and other stakeholders, to ensure accountability, transparency, and trust.
- To ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly, consistently, and promptly.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and stakeholders associated with South-West Wexford School Completion Programme (SWWSCP) and covers comments and complaints concerning the organisation's services, staff conduct, and overall practices.

### 3. Definitions

Comment: A remark or observation that provides feedback, clarification, or an opinion .

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction concerning the service, behaviour, or decision made by the organisation or its staff.

### 4. Principles

- Safety: All complaints shall be addressed in a manner that prioritises the safety and well-being of children.
- Confidentiality: Complaints will be handled confidentially, and information will be shared only with those who need to know.

- Respect: All individuals will be treated with respect, and their concerns will be valued and taken seriously.
- Timeliness: Complaints will be acknowledged and responded to promptly.

## 5. How to Make a Complaint

Informal comments or complaints should initially be addressed to the person(s) in question.

Where a person feels that their comment / complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily through the informal process, the comment / complaint should be put formally, in writing, to the Project Co-ordinator, by emailing [annemaria.irish@scp.ie](mailto:annemaria.irish@scp.ie) or writing to the Project Co-ordinator, South-West Wexford SCP, c/o Edmund Rice Senior School, Castlemoyle, New Ross, Co Wexford.

Individuals are encouraged to provide specific details regarding their complaint, including what happened, who was involved, and any relevant information that may assist in the investigation.

## 6. Procedure for Handling Written Comments and Complaints

- Acknowledgement: Complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
- Response: The Project Co-ordinator or Local Management Committee, as appropriate, will endeavour to resolve the matter as soon as possible.
- Escalation: Where the matter cannot be resolved, the Local Management Committee will investigate the matter and issue a complaint investigation report within 30 working days from the commencement of the investigation, where practicable.

The complainant reserves the right to appeal to the Local Management Committee decision to any relevant authority.

## 7. Record Keeping

All comments/complaints and their outcomes will be recorded and maintained by Project Co-ordinator in a secure location to ensure confidentiality and for monitoring trends and issues.

## 8. Monitoring and Review

The comments and complaints policy will be reviewed every 3 years, and feedback will be sought from stakeholders to enhance the process and ensure it meets the needs of children and families effectively.

# Appendix

## Support for Complainant

Supporting a child or adult to make a complaint requires sensitivity and a clear understanding of the procedures involved. Here are some steps to providing effective support:

1. Create a Safe Environment
  - a. Ensure the setting is private and comfortable to encourage open communication.
  - b. Use non-threatening body language and maintain eye contact to build trust.
2. Listen Actively
  - a. Give your full attention and listen without interrupting.
  - b. Show empathy and validate their feelings; use phrases like "I understand" or "It's okay to feel this way."
3. Clarify the Situation
  - a. Help them articulate their thoughts by asking open-ended questions.
  - b. Encourage them to describe what happened, how it made them feel, and what outcome they hope for.
4. Provide Information
  - a. Explain the complaint process clearly, outlining what to expect.
  - b. Ensure they understand their rights and the confidentiality of their complaint.
5. Support Their Choices
  - a. Empower them to make decisions regarding how they want to proceed with the complaint.
  - b. Respect their autonomy while offering options, and ensure they know it's okay to seek help, but they have the final say.
6. Assist with Documentation
  - a. If they wish, help them write down their complaint. Make sure the language is their own and accurately reflects their feelings.
  - b. Encourage them to include specific details, such as dates, times, locations, and names, if relevant.
7. Practice What to Say
  - a. Role-play the conversation if they are nervous about speaking to someone.
  - b. Reassure them that it's okay to ask for clarification or to express concerns during the complaint process.
8. Keep Them Informed
  - a. Notify them about what will happen next, who will handle the complaint, and the timeframe for responses.
  - b. Encourage them to keep a record of any follow-up communication.
9. Follow Up
  - a. Check in with them after the complaint has been made to see how they feel and if they need any further support.
10. Seek Professional Help if Needed
  - a. If the situation is severe or they have experienced trauma, consider involving professionals, such as counsellors or social workers, who specialise in handling such cases.