



## Policy & Procedure - Complaints

Last reviewed: Aug 2025

Next review: Aug 2026

Resp Person: Jude Williams, Chief Executive

Date	Changes made to policy	Reason for change	Person signing off changes
1 <sup>st</sup> Aug 2024	No changes	NA	JW
14 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2025	Rewritten for clarity, content unchanged	Rewritten for clarity	JW
14.1.25	Clarified manager discretion to escalate concerns for advice or risk management where wellbeing or organisational risk is identified	To support early, appropriate management action and clarify organisational duty of care	CHG

### 1. Purpose of this policy

The Literacy Pirates welcomes feedback. We see complaints as an opportunity to:

Put things right where needed.

Learn and improve our work for the future.

Maintain trust and good relationships.

We are committed to:

Providing a fair, clear, and easy-to-use complaints process.

Publicising this policy on our website and in other appropriate places.

Ensuring all staff know how to handle complaints.

Investigating complaints promptly and fairly.

Respecting confidentiality and data protection at all times.

Using learning from complaints to improve our services.

### 2. What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of The Literacy Pirates, whether justified or not.

This policy covers complaints from:

Children and young people we work with.

Parents and carers.

Volunteers.

Supporters, customers, partner organisations, and members of the public.

It does not cover complaints from staff, who should use our Grievance Policy.

### 3. Confidentiality & fairness

Complaints will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need to know.

Personal information will be processed in line with our Data Protection Policy.

Complainants will not be treated less favourably because they have made a complaint.

### 4. Accessibility

We will make reasonable adjustments to help people use this policy, such as:

Large print or alternative formats.

Support from a trusted representative.

Language translation if needed.

## 5. How to make a complaint

You can complain in writing, by email, by phone, or in person.

By post:

The Literacy Pirates  
138 Kingsland High Street  
London E8 2NS

By email: [admin@literacypirates.org](mailto:admin@literacypirates.org)

By phone: 020 3327 1777 (ask to speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team)

## 6. Complaints process – at a glance

Stage	Action	Who handles it	Timescale
Stage 1	Complaint acknowledged and investigated by the relevant staff member and/or their manager.	Staff member/Manager	Acknowledge within 7 days; full reply within one month
Stage 2	If unsatisfied, complainant requests Board-level review. Chair of Trustees (or delegate) investigates.	Chair of Trustees or senior delegate	Acknowledge within 7 days; full reply within one month
External	If still unsatisfied, complainant may contact the Charity Commission.	Charity Commission	N/A

## 7. Stage 1 – Informal or initial complaint

Where possible, complaints should be resolved quickly by the person responsible for the area of work concerned, with their line manager's support if needed.

The staff member will:

- Listen to the concern.
- Write down the facts.
- Take the complainant's contact details.
- Explain the process and timescales.
- Where possible, resolve the matter immediately.

All complaints must be recorded and passed to the Chief Executive within one week to be logged in the Complaints Log.

We will acknowledge receipt within 7 days and aim to give a full written response within one month. If more time is needed (e.g., for investigation), we will explain why and give a new timescale.

## 8. Stage 2 – Board-level review

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 1 outcome, they can request a Board-level review within 30 days of receiving the Stage 1 response.

Requests should be addressed to:

Chair of Trustees  
The Literacy Pirates  
138 Kingsland High Street  
London E8 2NS

Or by email to [admin@literacypirates.org](mailto:admin@literacypirates.org)

If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, it will go straight to the Chair of Trustees.

The Chair (or a delegated senior person) will:

- Review all documentation.
- Speak to relevant people.
- Give both the complainant and the person complained about an opportunity to respond.

We will acknowledge within 7 days and aim to reply in full within one month.

The Board's decision at this stage is final, unless they decide to seek independent mediation.

## 9. External escalation

If the matter remains unresolved, complainants can contact the Charity Commission:

[www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity)

The Commission generally looks at complaints where there is evidence of:

- Serious harm to beneficiaries.
- Misuse of charity funds.
- Damage to public trust and confidence.

## 10. Variation of procedure

The Board may vary this procedure where necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. For example, a complaint about the Chair will be handled by another Trustee.

## 11. Managerial Responsibilities

Literacy Pirates encourages concerns to be raised and addressed at the earliest appropriate stage. Managers should listen carefully, act fairly, and support individuals in deciding how they wish to proceed. While an individual's wishes regarding formal action will be respected wherever possible, the organisation also has a duty of care to protect employee wellbeing and maintain a safe and respectful working environment.

Where concerns indicate a potential risk to wellbeing, involve differences in seniority or influence, or could reasonably affect others, managers may escalate the matter for advice, oversight, or risk management, even if the individual does not wish to pursue a formal complaint. Any escalation will be proportionate and mindful of confidentiality.

## 11. Related policies

Whistleblowing Policy

Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

Data Protection Policy

