

STEFFI HESKETH TUTORING

Complaints Policy

Public website policy

Purpose

This policy provides a clear, fair and child-centred process for raising concerns about tuition, tutors, administration, payments, communication, safeguarding or the way a complaint has been handled.

Document control	Details
Policy owner	Steffi Hesketh, Founder
Applies to	Parents, carers, students, tutors, applicants and website users as relevant
Approved	21 July 2026
Version	1.0
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Status	Approved and operational - public website version

Important

A safeguarding concern is not an ordinary customer-service complaint. It must be acted on immediately under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and may be referred to children's services, the LADO or police without waiting for the complaint process.

steffiheskethtutoring@gmail.com | 07802 828910 | www.steffiheskethtutoring.co.uk

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This policy should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the other policies available on our website.

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1. Purpose and principles

- Concerns are welcomed as an opportunity to resolve problems and improve the service.
- Complaints will be treated seriously, fairly, proportionately and without retaliation.
- The welfare and voice of the child will be considered throughout.
- People involved will be treated respectfully and information will be shared only where necessary.
- The process will be accessible and reasonable adjustments will be offered.
- Statutory rights and safeguarding duties are not reduced by this policy.

2. What can be complained about

- Tutor conduct, teaching quality, punctuality, communication or professional boundaries.
- Tutor matching, administration, payment requests, refunds, cancellations or group arrangements.
- Online lesson safety, recording, privacy, accessibility or SEND adjustments.
- Discrimination, harassment, bullying or disrespectful behaviour.
- Safeguarding practice or the handling of a concern.
- A decision made under a policy or dissatisfaction with an earlier response.

A disagreement about a professional judgement, predicted grade or teaching method is not automatically evidence of poor service. It may still be reviewed to confirm that the service was delivered with reasonable care and skill and that communication was appropriate.

3. Urgent safeguarding concerns

Do not wait

Where a child may be at immediate risk, call 999. Other safeguarding concerns should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Steffi Hesketh, using 07802 828910 or steffiheskethtutoring@gmail.com.

- Safeguarding information may be shared without consent where necessary to protect a child.
- Allegations about an adult who works with children may require consultation with the local authority designated officer and/or police.
- The person raising the concern will receive appropriate confirmation, but confidential details of another person's investigation or employment position may not be disclosed.

4. How to raise a concern

A concern can be raised by email to steffiheskethtutoring@gmail.com, by telephone or WhatsApp on 07802 828910, or through the website contact form. A person may ask another adult to assist them.

Please provide, where possible:

- The student and tutor or service involved.
- What happened, including dates and times.
- What has already been done to resolve it.
- Any relevant messages, invoices, screenshots or documents.
- The outcome being requested.
- Any accessibility, communication or safeguarding need relevant to handling the complaint.

Anonymous complaints will be considered where sufficient information is provided, particularly for safeguarding, but anonymity may limit the investigation or the response that can be given.

5. Stage 1 - informal resolution

- Where safe and appropriate, the concern should first be raised with the tutor or with Steffi Hesketh Tutoring so that it can be resolved quickly.
- The aim is to clarify what happened, correct misunderstandings, agree practical action and preserve a positive working relationship where possible.
- We aim to acknowledge the concern within 3 working days and provide a response or update within 10 working days.
- A person may ask for the matter to move directly to Stage 2 where it is serious, sensitive, involves Steffi Hesketh, or informal discussion is unsuitable.

6. Stage 2 - formal complaint

1. The complaint is logged and its scope is confirmed.
2. The investigator gathers proportionate evidence, which may include lesson records, recordings, messages, policies, payment records and accounts from relevant people.
3. The tutor or person complained about is told enough to respond fairly, unless doing so would create a safeguarding risk or prejudice an external investigation.
4. The investigator considers the evidence on the balance of probabilities for internal service matters while respecting any separate criminal, safeguarding or regulatory process.
5. A written outcome explains what was considered, whether the complaint is upheld, partly upheld, not upheld or unable to determine, and what action will follow.

We aim to acknowledge a formal complaint within 3 working days and provide the Stage 2 outcome within 15 working days. Complex or externally referred cases may take longer; the complainant will receive an update and revised date.

7. Stage 3 - review

- A Stage 3 review may be requested within 10 working days of the Stage 2 outcome.
- The request should identify a material procedural error, important new evidence, a clearly unreasonable conclusion or an outcome that does not address the complaint.
- A review is not a full reinvestigation simply because the person disagrees with the decision.
- Where reasonably practicable, the review will be completed by a suitably experienced person who was not responsible for the original decision. This may be an independent education, safeguarding, legal or business adviser.
- The reviewer may uphold the decision, change it, require further investigation or recommend a different remedy.
- We aim to provide the review outcome within 20 working days.

8. Complaints about Steffi Hesketh or the safeguarding lead

- A complaint about Steffi Hesketh should state clearly that it concerns the owner or Designated Safeguarding Lead so it is not handled solely by the person complained about.
- Where the complaint is not safeguarding-related, a suitably independent adviser will be asked to review the relevant evidence where reasonably practicable.
- Where the concern relates to possible harm, professional conduct or suitability to work with children, the matter may be referred directly to the LADO, children's services, police or another appropriate authority.
- The business will preserve evidence and will not obstruct an external investigation.

9. Data protection complaints

A complaint about how personal information is collected, used, shared, secured, corrected or deleted is handled under the Privacy Notice and current data protection law.

- Email steffiheskethtutoring@gmail.com with the subject "Data Protection Complaint" or use the website form.
- The complaint will be acknowledged as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 30 days.
- It will be investigated appropriately and the outcome will be communicated without undue delay.
- The complainant may raise the matter with the Information Commissioner's Office.

10. Possible outcomes

- An explanation, clarification or apology.
- Correction of an invoice, refund, credit or rearranged lesson where appropriate.
- A tutor rematch or change to communication arrangements.
- Additional training, supervision, policy reminder or improvement plan.
- A reasonable adjustment or accessibility change.
- A safeguarding referral, low-level concern record, suspension from new introductions or termination of a tutor arrangement.
- No further action where the evidence does not support the complaint.
- A service-wide change to systems, policies or training.

An outcome will be proportionate. Confidentiality may prevent disclosure of detailed action taken against another person.

11. Timescales and keeping people informed

Stage	Target acknowledgement	Target outcome
Stage 1 - informal	Within 3 working days	Within 10 working days

Stage	Target acknowledgement	Target outcome
Stage 2 - formal	Within 3 working days	Within 15 working days
Stage 3 - review	Within 3 working days	Within 20 working days
Data protection complaint	As soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 30 days	Without undue delay; updates provided if investigation continues
Safeguarding concern	Immediate triage	Timescale set by risk and any external authority

Working days exclude weekends and public holidays in England. School holidays do not automatically pause the process, although availability of witnesses or external agencies may affect timescales.

12. Confidentiality and records

- Complaint information is shared only with people who need it to investigate, safeguard, advise or decide the outcome.
- Records are stored securely and normally retained for 6 years after closure, or longer where a safeguarding, legal or regulatory reason applies.
- A complaint about a child will not be placed in routine lesson chat. The child's views will be recorded carefully and without leading questions.
- Personal information is handled under the Privacy Notice and data-protection rights continue to apply.

13. Unreasonable behaviour and repeated complaints

Most complainants act reasonably. Where communication becomes abusive, threatening, discriminatory, excessively repetitive or prevents a fair investigation, the business may set proportionate boundaries, such as one contact route, scheduled updates or communication through a representative.

A complaint will not be labelled unreasonable merely because it is persistent, critical or difficult. Safeguarding information and genuinely new evidence will always be considered.

14. External routes and statutory rights

- The Information Commissioner's Office for data protection concerns.
- Local authority children's services, the LADO or police for safeguarding or criminal concerns.
- Citizens Advice Consumer Service, which can refer appropriate matters to Trading Standards, for consumer-law advice.
- A court or other legally available remedy. This policy does not require a consumer to give up statutory rights.

15. Learning and review

- Complaint themes, timescales and outcomes are reviewed to identify patterns.
- Policies, tutor guidance, payment information or training are updated where learning shows this is needed.
- The policy is reviewed at least annually and after a serious complaint or relevant legal change.

Contact Steffi Hesketh Tutoring

Email: steffiheskethtutoring@gmail.com

Phone / WhatsApp: 07802 828910

Website: www.steffiheskethtutoring.co.uk

Based in: Southampton, Hampshire, United Kingdom

Legal and guidance framework

This document has been prepared with reference to the following legislation and official guidance in force or published at the approval date:

- Consumer Rights Act 2015 and Competition and Markets Authority guidance on fair terms and cancellation practices.
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and Information Commissioner's Office data-protection complaints guidance.
- Department for Education safeguarding guidance for out-of-school settings, including private tuition.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and relevant local safeguarding arrangements.
- Equality Act 2010.

This policy is reviewed at least annually and sooner when relevant law, guidance, systems or business arrangements change.