

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Parenta®
Working together for our children

This policy and procedure has been developed to support Parenta's mission to provide a remarkable service for all customers. Its purpose is the recognition that all users of the company's services have a right to raise complaints and to have problems investigated and appropriately acted upon.

Commitment

Parenta welcomes and encourages feedback from learners, employers and other stakeholders to enable continuous improvement of our services. Where complaints occur, Parenta makes every effort to resolve them quickly and at the most appropriate level.

It is our aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- All complaints are treated as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service or product/s, which calls for an immediate response.
- We deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially.
- We will respond to your complaint, informing you of what action we've taken.
- We learn from complaints and feedback, and we use them to improve our service.

Scope and Definitions

This policy applies to all complaints from enrolled learners and those applying for courses, parents/carers of learners under 18, employers, software customers and users of Parenta's additional services and facilities.

Any expressed dissatisfaction with the following will be treated as a complaint:

- Failure by Parenta to meet obligations, including those outlined in the learner or employer contract and learner handbooks
- Concerns about the delivery of a course, quality of teaching, administration, information, advice and guidance, software or any other service provided by Parenta
- The quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by Parenta
- Complaints involving external organisations or contractors providing services on behalf of Parenta

The Policy does not cover complaints about assessments. This is covered by the Appeals procedure. Staff complaints will be resolved using the Parenta Staff Grievance procedures.

Complaints which are deemed to fall into any of the categories listed below will not be considered under the scope of this policy and procedure.

- Anonymous
- Already been investigated and resolved
- Outside the scope of the procedure
- Made without adequate grounds
- Made outside the time limit
- Been disposed of in court or tribunal proceedings brought by the complainant, or under a settlement agreement with the complainant
- Are malicious, vexatious or frivolous

If a learner is found to have made a malicious complaint, this could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

It is anticipated that the majority of complaints will be resolved satisfactorily on an informal basis and close to their point of origin.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will try to ensure that your complaint remains confidential, but in some cases the circumstances may need to be discussed with other parties, therefore it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. In these situations we will discuss this with the complainant.

Legal Framework

The Department for Education (DFE) requires Training Companies to have a complaints procedure. The Complaints Policy and Procedure also supports Parenta's policy on Equality and Diversity.

Principles

Whenever possible, any concerns will be dealt with as soon as any member of staff is made aware of them. Many concerns can be dealt with informally by contacting our Customer Experience team on 0800 002 9242 or by emailing customerservice@parenta.com. If you are not satisfied with the response or feel your concern requires a more official or formal response, please follow our process as defined within this policy.

Parenta will only respond to formal complaints that have been raised within three months of the occurrence of the complaint.

A formal complaint (made in writing) will be acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt by the Complaints Officer.

The Head of Customer Service will act as the company's Complaints Officer and maintain a full record of complaints received and their outcome.

Following the investigation, a response will be sent to the complainant within 7 working days using Parenta's complaint ticketing system, where more time is needed, e.g. the complaint is complex and prevents the completion of the investigation, the complainant will be sent an interim ticket update outlining progress with the investigation and giving a date for the full response.

Responses to complaints will include details on appeals. Valid appeals will usually be investigated and responded to within 20 working days.

Although staff cannot make a complaint on behalf of a student, they will assist in recording a complaint. Staff will, on request, provide support for enrolled students in presenting a complaint.

Complainant Responsibility

Complainants are expected to bring their complaint to Parenta's attention, detailing the reasons for the complaint.

To facilitate the investigation, the complainant should explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible (such as including names, times, dates) and include any action taken to date.

Complainants must recognise that some circumstances are beyond the control of Parenta and will impact on the final outcome of any complaint.

The Procedure

The complainant should raise their concerns with the member of staff who has direct responsibility for the matter in question to try to achieve a satisfactory resolution. If they are unable to do this, then we have a Customer Experience team who can be contacted directly on 0800 002 9242 or by email customerservice@parenta.com. They will pass the information on to a relevant manager who will try to satisfactorily resolve the complaint. If you are not satisfied with the response or feel your concern requires a more official or formal response, please follow our process as defined within this policy.

Managers dealing with complaints must complete a ticket, which will be sent to the complainant, and a copy will be sent to all Senior Managers to ensure they are aware of the complaint. This must be sent within 24 working hours of dealing with the complaint.

If the complainant does not feel that their concerns have been addressed by the member of staff or the Customer Experience team, then they should make a formal complaint to the company's Complaints Officer.

The complaint may involve the manager; in such cases, it is reasonable to pass the complaint directly to the Complaints Officer.

Stage 2 (Formal)

Formal complaints must be issued in writing via email and sent to:

Complaints officer
Customerservice@parenta.com

On receipt of a formal complaint, the Complaints Officer will log the complaint using the Ticketing System and acknowledge its receipt within 24 working hours.

If a department receives a formal complaint in writing, they must create a ticket and assign it immediately to the Complaints Officer, who will acknowledge its receipt to the complainant.

The Complaints Officer will then appoint an appropriate investigating manager who will conduct a full investigation - this will usually be the relevant manager. However, if that person has already had some involvement with the issue, another manager or head of department will be appointed to conduct the investigation.

Within 7 working days of receiving a complaint from the Complaints Officer, the investigating manager will provide the Complaints Officer with the results of the investigation and a ticket response for the complainant will follow, detailing the outcome and actions arising from the investigation.

In highly exceptional cases where the investigating manager is unable to meet the above timescale, the investigating manager will inform the Complaints Officer, who, in turn, will communicate this to the complainant.

The Complaints Officer will advise the Managing Director of any investigations where a complaint has not been fully resolved.

Appeals

The complainant has the right of appeal against the response to his/her complaint. The appeal may only be made on one or more of the following grounds:

- That there is additional evidence that could not have been made available at the time the original complaint was considered
- Proper procedure was not followed

Appeals Procedure

The complainant should make their appeal in writing to the Managing Director within 15 days of the date of the ticket, outlining the outcomes of the investigation. The letter of appeal should clearly state the grounds of appeal (see above). Any appeals which do not include this information will not be considered.

The Managing Director will review the investigation and provide a written response to the complainant - usually within 20 working days.

If the appeal is upheld, Parenta will apologise and make clear the actions taken to address the issue. If the appeal is not upheld, the response will detail the findings of the appeal process.

Both the appeal and the response will be copied to the Complaints Officer.

In exceptional circumstances, the Managing Director will convene a panel. This would only occur where significant new evidence has been received.

The appeal panel will consist of a member of the Senior Management Team and another Senior Manager.

The Managing Director agrees on a date for the appeal hearing and confirms the details in writing to the complainant. The appeal panel meeting is usually arranged within 20 working days of the receipt of the grounds for appeal.

The complainant will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a friend or a representative (who may not be a practising solicitor or barrister).

The appeal panel considers the matters identified in the grounds for appeal and may uphold, amend or overturn the original decision of the company.

The record of the decision of the appeal panel will be provided within 10 working days of the panel meeting.

There is no further right of appeal within Parenta's procedures. If complainants are unhappy with the outcome of their formal complaint regarding the delivery of Parenta Training Courses, they can contact Awarding Bodies or The Department for Education (DfE) and ask the relevant organisation to intervene via their complaint policy.

Monitoring

A ticketing report will provide an analysis of complaints and the action which Parenta has taken as a result of them.

The monitoring process will be used to ensure that all complainants are treated fairly and equally.

Where available, Parenta will collect and analyse anonymised data on complainants to identify differences between groups and to allow issues to be identified and practices addressed: age, gender, ethnic origin, disability, and medical ill health. This will be identified through the Central Records Management System.

Breach of the Policy

Parenta will take seriously any instances of non-adherence to the policy by its staff. Where appropriate, instances may be referred to the Company's disciplinary procedure.

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Parenta - The Home of Early Years

Growing a setting and a great childcare team shouldn't be hard - Parenta makes it simple. We're the UK's leading specialist apprenticeship training provider for the early years sector - helping nurseries recruit, train, and retain brilliant practitioners,

And it doesn't stop there. From nursery management software, business support that actually makes a difference, and expert free sector resources, Parenta is the partner your setting didn't know it needed.

EARLY YEARS TRAINING

Boost your team's motivation and keep staff for longer by offering them childcare training – the ideal tool for you to develop and retain your staff.

TRAINING COURSES:

Government Funded:

- Level 2 Early Years Practitioner
- Level 3 Early Years Educator – now with a 'Fast Track' option – 52 weeks + EPA
- Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner

Qualification only courses:

- L3 SEND Coordinator
- L5 Diploma for Senior Early Years Practitioners

FREE RECRUITMENT

Our team of dedicated recruitment experts will help you find a suitable apprentice - **for free**. Once found, we will sign them up and get them started on their childcare course - providing one-to-one support throughout their training.

Book a call with us today and discover how we can grow your setting

NURSERY MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE – ABACUS ADVANTAGE

- **Abacus Advantage** helps nursery managers and owners understand their money simply and clearly
- It combines **easy-to-use software**, covering all aspects of your nursery business
- Practical guidance and hands-on support to show you exactly where your income comes from, where the pressure builds, and what to do about it

Book a free clarity call today

MARKETING SOLUTIONS

Parenta designs and builds childcare websites that attract parents, impress Ofsted, and turn visitors into enquiries.

- **Websites that work** - built by a team that knows childcare inside out.
- **Branding that means business** - from logos and prospectuses to newsletters and business cards, we create a look that makes your setting stand out and stick in people's minds.
- **Social media made simple** - we'll get you set up, show you what works, and help you build a visible, trusted presence that keeps your setting front of mind for local families.

Contact our marketing solutions team

FREE RESOURCES FOR ALL THOSE WHO WORK IN CHILDCARE

How To Guides
Covering the common challenges you face whilst working in childcare, both for childcare practitioners and business owners.

Free Webinars
Early years experts share their insights, best practices, and valuable experiences LINK

Parenta Blog
Over 3000 articles covering all things early years, written by sector experts LINK

Working together for our children

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Follow us on social media **@TheParentaGroup**

www.parenta.com

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