Complaints Policy & Procedure

Company name:	Vision for Education / Smart Teachers
Document	Complaints Policy & Procedure
Topic:	Information for making an Informal/Formal complaint
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Complaints Policy

1. Policy Statement

Vision for Education and Smart Teachers are committed to ensuring that any concerns and complaints are dealt with as quickly and appropriately as possible. In addition, concerns and complaints brought to our attention can be an opportunity to inform, review and help improve the companies' procedures.

Please note that we are only able to consider complaints which are raised within 3 months of the date of the issue. Any complaints raised outside of this timeframe will not be considered.

2. Aims and principles of the policy

This policy aims to:

- Encourage the resolution of concerns and complaints by informal means wherever possible.
- Ensure that concerns are dealt with quickly, fully and fairly and within defined time limits where possible.
- Provide effective and appropriate responses to concerns and complaints.
- Maintain good working relationships between the group and all those involved.

Key principles of the policy are:

- Accessibility – useable format, free from jargon, assuming no specialist knowledge.
- Good communication – clarification of the process involved in dealing with complaints.
- Clear and adhered to recommended timescales where appropriate.
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities of those involved in the process.
- Appropriate confidentiality which must be maintained by all involved in the process.

3. Informal complaint

If you have a complaint, please contact your consultant in the first instance so that we can try to resolve your complaint informally.

4. Formal Complaint

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the informal stage, please set out your complaint in writing to the corresponding company complaints inbox:
complaints@visionforeducation.co.uk or complaints@smartteachers.co.uk

5. Uploading/Not Upholding Complaints

At each stage of the complaints process, the conclusion will be either:

- That the complaint is upheld (in part or in full) and where appropriate some form of action is taken, **OR**
- That the complaint is not upheld and reason(s) for this, where appropriate, are clearly stated.

You may be satisfied with the response to your complaint, or you may choose to take your complaint to the next stage.

6. Stages of the Complaints Process

Stage 1 (also known as the Informal Stage)

The complainant raises and discusses their complaint with the consultant. The consultant may liaise with their Manager. The consultant will try to resolve the concern informally.

Stage 2 (also known as the Formal Stage)

If the complainant remains unhappy with the outcome of the informal stage, then they should put their complaint in writing to the company complaints@visionforeducation.co.uk/complaints@smartteachers.co.uk

Type of complaint	Person to manage complaint
AWR complaint	Payroll Manager
Pay complaint	Payroll Manager
CCS complaint	Payroll Manager
Candidate complaint	Candidate Manager
Compliance/Clearance complaint	Safeguarding Manager

The relevant department Manager will then investigate the complaint and respond within agreed timescales. An acknowledgement of their complaint will be sent within five working days and a response within 14 working days of receiving a complaint. For CCS complaints, an acknowledgement of their complaint will be sent within two working days and a response within 15 working days of receiving a complaint. If it is not possible to meet these timescales, then the relevant department Manager will contact the complainant to discuss reviewing these. Complaints should be logged on the shared Complaints Log Spreadsheet in the Complaint folder in OneDrive.

If the complaint is against the hiring school or staff not employed by the Vision for Education or Smart Teachers we may need to liaise with the school and share information as appropriate to resolve the issue informally.

Stage 3 (also known as the Appeal Stage)

If the complainant remains unsatisfied by the outcome of the Formal Stage, they may appeal to the relevant Company Director who will investigate if the complaints process has been followed appropriately.

Stage 4 (also known as the External Stage)

If the complainant thinks there are unresolved issues that come under the Recruitment and Employment Confederation's (REC) remit, they may refer the matter to REC the industry trade association, of which we are a member by writing to the Consultancy and Compliance Team, REC, 20 Queen Elizabeth Street, London, SE1 2LS, or by completing the REC complaint form. Documentary evidence should be attached, as the decision to proceed with any complaint will be based on the information provided.

Alternatively, if the complainant is still not satisfied, they can contact the Employment Agencies Standards Inspectorate at the Department for Business and Trade.

What is not covered by this Complaints Policy

- Complaints about entitlement to usurp or avoid our requirements to adhere to Agency Workers' Regulations (AWR) legislation and rights.
- Issues relating to child protection and safeguarding. In the first instance, contact the Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO) for child protection at the appropriate authority office.
- Criminal investigations. These should be referred to the police.
- Ofsted has some powers to investigate complaints, but they do suggest the complainant discusses their complaint directly with the hiring school in the first instance. Where this is applicable, we will share such information as may be appropriate with parties to resolve the issue.

7. Model Complaints Procedure

