

Feedback and Complaints Policy

Purpose and legal framework

Global Schools Forum (GSF) is committed to providing high-quality services to our members, partners, and the wider education community. We value feedback as essential to our continuous improvement and our ability to serve the global education sector effectively.

We recognise that no organisation is exempt from the risk of mistakes, misconduct, or poor service. Being open to feedback, criticism and complaints makes GSF stronger, more accountable, and better able to support quality education globally. We are committed to creating a culture where feedback, concerns and complaints can be shared safely and where we respond constructively.

This policy applies to all aspects of GSF's work and to all individuals and organisations who interact with us. It works alongside our Child Protection Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, and Code of Conduct to support our commitment to operating with integrity and accountability.

The purposes of this policy are to:

- Provide a clear, accessible route for anyone to raise concerns or complaints about GSF
- Ensure complaints are handled fairly, promptly, and consistently
- Demonstrate GSF's commitment to accountability and transparency
- Enable GSF to learn from complaints and improve our services
- Protect complainants from adverse treatment when raising legitimate concerns
- Meet GSF's obligations as a UK registered charity

This policy is based on UK charity law and guidance that seeks to ensure charities operate with transparency and accountability, namely guidance from the Charity Commission on handling complaints effectively.

GSF's commitment

Guided by our values of Collaboration, Intentional Inclusivity, Continuous Improvement, and Honesty and Transparency, we are committed to:

- **Being accessible** making it easy for anyone to raise a complaint through multiple channels
- **Listening actively** to feedback, suggestions, concerns, and complaints
- **Responding transparently** acknowledging feedback and complaints promptly, explaining our processes and decisions clearly
- **Acting with integrity** investigating complaints objectively and thoroughly, acknowledging when things go wrong, taking responsibility and putting things right
- **Celebrating successes** acknowledging positive feedback and sharing it with the GSF team

- **Learning continuously** to improve our services and operations. Using complaints data to identify patterns and make improvements
- **Protecting complainants** – ensuring no one suffers detriment for raising a legitimate complaint, handling complaint information sensitively and securely

Definitions

Feedback: Information shared about experiences with GSF that may include positive observations, concerns or constructive suggestions for improvement.

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about GSF's actions, decisions, services, staff conduct, or failure to act, which requires a formal response and investigation.

Safeguarding complaint: A complaint relating to child protection, welfare, or safety concerns, handled under GSF's Child Protection Policy.

Vexatious or malicious complaint: A complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, without substance, or made with intent to cause distress rather than seek resolution.

Scope

This policy applies to complaints about:

- GSF staff, trustee or consultant conduct or behaviour
- GSF services, programmes, or events
- GSF's decision-making or governance
- Breaches of GSF policies or procedures
- Discrimination, bullying, or harassment by GSF staff, trustees or consultants
- Child protection concerns (which are also covered by our Child Protection Policy)
- Any other matter relating to GSF's operations or conduct

This policy does not apply to:

- Complaints about member or partner organisations' internal operations (see Section C)
- Employment disputes (which are handled through GSF's HR procedures)
- Trustee disputes (which are handled through Board governance procedures)

Procedures

Who can provide feedback or make complaints

Anyone can share feedback or make complaints to GSF, including members, partners, event participants, beneficiaries, the public, and GSF staff. Third-party complaints will normally only be considered with the affected person's consent. GSF staff should consult the whistleblowing policy and assess which best suits their issue at the time of raising it.

How to provide feedback or make complaints

In writing: Email the form (Appendix 1) or a description to the relevant contact (see reporting pathways in Appendix 2 and process in Appendix 3)

Verbally: Telephone, video call, or in-person meeting with the relevant contact. A written record will be made and shared with you for confirmation.

We encourage written feedback using the form to ensure all information is captured. We will provide support if needed due to language barriers, disability, or other access needs.

For reporting pathways and processes see Appendices 2 & 3. If your complaint involves the person indicated in the reporting pathway, escalate to the next level.

3. Handling process

Positive feedback and suggestions:

- Acknowledged within 3 working days with thanks
- Shared with relevant staff and considered for implementation
- Significant suggestions discussed by Senior Management Team

Concerns and formal complaints:

- **Acknowledgement (3 working days):** Receipt confirmed, handler and timelines identified, confidentiality assured
- **Initial assessment (2 weeks):** Nature and seriousness assessed, investigation determination made, initial response provided outlining approach. Straightforward complaints may be resolved at this stage
- **Investigation (if required):** Conducted by appropriate person (see reporting pathways in Appendix 2). Process includes planning scope, gathering evidence through interviews and documentation review, analysing evidence objectively, determining findings, and preparing a response. Updates provided every 2 weeks. If completion exceeds 4 weeks, revised timeline communicated with reasons. Investigation may be escalated to official external investigation depending on the nature of the complaint.

- **Resolution (4 weeks target):** Written response provided with investigation findings, whether complaint is upheld (fully, partially, or not upheld), actions GSF will take, and explanation of appeals process

Rights: The complainant and the GSF representative(s) the complaint relates to have the right to be heard, provide evidence, receive updates, know the outcome (subject to confidentiality), be accompanied at meetings, and appeal the outcome.

4. Appeals

If dissatisfied with GSF's handling or outcome of your complaint, you may appeal within 2 weeks of receiving the final response on grounds of: new evidence that could not reasonably have been provided earlier; investigation not conducted fairly or thoroughly; decision unreasonable based on evidence; or outcome does not adequately address harm.

Appeals should be submitted in writing setting out grounds, desired outcome, and any new evidence. Appeals will be reviewed by the person at the next level in reporting pathway (CEO or Board). They will receive the original complaint file and may conduct further investigation. Final decision will be provided within 4 weeks where possible. Board decision is final.

External escalation: If dissatisfied after exhausting GSF's internal process, you may refer to Charity Commission (www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity) for charity governance, mismanagement, or safeguarding concerns; relevant professional bodies for professional conduct; or seek legal advice.

5. Record keeping and learning

All feedback and complaints will be recorded by the Operations Director in a central register including outcome, actions and appeals. Records will be retained for 10 years. Personal data will be processed in accordance with GSF's Data Protection Policy.

The Operations Director will review complaints data to identify patterns, and report to Senior Management Team and Board on trends and learning, recommending improvements, and ensuring lessons are communicated to staff and incorporated into GSF policies and practice. The GSF Board reviews the report at least annually and considers any themes or systemic issues, and oversees implementation of improvements.

Concerns about Members and Partners

GSF is a membership network supporting independent education organisations. While GSF sets standards and expectations of members and partners, including safeguarding standards, GSF does not have governance authority over these organisations' internal operations.

If you have concerns about a member or partner organisation's internal operations:

- Raise the matter directly with the organisation concerned

- If you share it with GSF, we will refer you to the organisation and their own complaints procedures
- GSF will inform the member or partner that a concern has been received
- GSF may request information about how they are handling the matter
- GSF will assess whether the matter raises concerns about continued membership or partnership

GSF will become directly involved when:

- The concern relates to GSF-convened activities (such as events or programmes)
- The concern raises serious safeguarding issues (response will be in line with our Child Protection Policy)
- The matter raises concerns about alignment with GSF's values and membership standards

In such cases, GSF will follow this policy's procedures and may escalate to the Board for decisions about membership or partnership status.

Appendices

Appendix 1: GSF Feedback and Complaint Form

Your details	
Name	
Organisation	
Email	
Telephone	
Preferred Contact method	
Types of Feedback	
☐ Positive feedback or appreciation ☐ Constructive suggestion for improvement ☐ Concern (informal) ☐ Formal complaint	
What would you like to share? (Please describe what happened, when, and who was involved)	
What impact has this had on you or others?	
What outcome are you seeking? (For complaints)	

Have you raised this matter with anyone at GSF before? If yes, please provide details:	
Supporting information	
Please attach any relevant documents, emails, or other evidence as relevant.	
Data protection GSF will handle your personal information in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. Your information will be used to respond to your feedback or investigate your complaint and will be stored securely. Information will be shared only with those who need to know.	
Declaration I confirm that the information I have provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge. Signed: Date:	

Please return this form to the relevant contact (see Appendix 2 for reporting pathways)

Appendix 2: Contacts and Reporting Pathways

Reporting pathways

If your complaint relates to...	Contact	Escalate to
Membership or member services	Community Director	CEO, then Board
GSF programmes	Programme Director	CEO, then Board
GSF's non –programmatic work or conduct of a GSF staff member, or consultant	Operations Director	CEO, then Board
GSF Trustee	Chair of Trustees	

Child protection (refer to Child Protection Policy)	CEO (Dedicated Safeguarding Lead)	Board DSL
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Contact details

Contact	Email	Telephone
Programme Director	Kavita Rajagopalan	+91 9840155443
Operations Director	Philippa Frankl	+44 7930 657022
CEO (Designated Safeguarding Lead)	[As per Child Protection Policy]	[As per Child Protection Policy]
Designated Board Lead for Complaints and Whistleblowing	[To be confirmed]	[To be confirmed]

External bodies

Organisation	When to contact	Website
Charity Commission	Concerns about charity governance or serious misconduct	www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity

Policy Owner	Director of Operations
Last Updated	February 2026
Approved by	Not yet approved
Next review	February 2029

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