
School Complaints Management Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

This course provides school and trust leaders with the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to effectively manage complaints in schools. Aimed at those responsible for managing and investigating complaints, the core of this interactive and engaging course will run for five months and is delivered in eight two-hour learning sessions and three one-hour Q&A sessions for delegates to have their questions answered and issues discussed to ensure a personalised learning experience.

The interactive training course is led by our expert education lawyers, who advise schools and trusts on complaints in schools every day. Through this school leader training course, delegates will gain a clear understanding of the legal framework governing school complaints, take away best practice advice and top tips and make valuable new connections along the way.

Spaces are limited to approximately 30 delegates per cohort.

The Managing Complaints in Schools training course costs £825 plus VAT per delegate. Discounts are available for three or more registrations from the same school or trust.

Indicative course programme

1. Introduction to complaints management [2 hours]

- The 'who' and the 'why' of complaints
- Regulatory and best practice framework
- Scoping the complaint - what can be raised?
- Complaint process and the role of third parties

2. Designing an effective complaints strategy [2 hours]

- Vision, values and building a great complaints policy
- Whole-school approach, the importance of training
- Creating templates, systems and processes

3. Avoiding complaints and de-escalation [2 hours]

- Strong parental relationships
- Causes of complaints - avoiding the pitfalls
- Conflict resolution strategies
- Recognising and managing escalation

4. One-hour free form Q&A [1 hour]

- Q&A session to ask questions and discuss issues

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- 5. Managing vexatious complaints and unreasonable complainant behaviour [2 hours]**
- Separating the complaint from the complainant
 - Spotting a genuine vexatious complaint and what you can do about it
 - Practical tips for responding to unreasonable complainant behaviour

- 6. Getting complaints investigation right [2 hours]**
- Scoping the complaint
 - The importance of a skilled investigator
 - Exploring practical investigation strategies and questioning skills
 - How to communicate investigation outcomes

- 7. Conducting an effective complaints panel [2 hours]**
- Selecting a complaints committee panel and chair
 - Common pre-hearing issues and how to respond (e.g. data protection)
 - What does good clerking look like and why is it important?
 - Communicating complaint outcomes effectively

- 8. One-hour free form Q&A [1 hour]**
- Q&A session to ask questions and discuss issues

- 9. Exploring complex complaints [2 hours]**
- Avoiding the pitfalls of complex complaints:
 - SEN and disability complaints
 - Complaints relating to social services or active police matters
 - Complaints impacted by Family Court orders
 - Managing complaint campaigns

- 10. Beyond the internal complaints process [2 hours]**
- Clarity on the roles of the local authority and the ESFA/DfE in complaints
 - Responding effectively to Ofsted complaints
 - Understanding where legal claims arise from complaints (e.g. discrimination claims)
 - Protecting your reputation effectively – including traditional media and social media

- 11. One-hour free form Q&A [1 hour]**
- Q&A session to ask questions and discuss issues