

StudyNest Education

Complaints Policy

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT TO RESPONSIVE SERVICE

StudyNest Education values feedback and recognises that legitimate concerns or complaints may arise from students, parents, schools, host families, or other stakeholders regarding our guardianship services. We actively encourage the communication of concerns to facilitate collaborative resolution and drive continuous improvement in our service delivery.

Our Service Promise

At StudyNest Education, we are committed to:

Comprehensive Response - Treating every concern and complaint with seriousness and respect - Prioritising early intervention through informal resolution wherever possible - Ensuring fair and thorough investigation when circumstances require formal procedures

Timely Resolution - Resolving all complaints within 28 working days of receipt - Providing regular progress updates throughout the investigation process - Maintaining transparent communication with all parties involved

Professional Standards - Following established procedures consistently and fairly - Pursuing resolution that satisfies complainants or achieves appropriate alternative outcomes - Ensuring no individual faces penalisation for raising legitimate concerns in good faith

Continuous Improvement - Maintaining comprehensive written records for a minimum of three years - Conducting regular senior-level reviews of complaint patterns and outcomes - Implementing service improvements based on feedback and lessons learned - Protecting confidentiality of all complaint-related documentation and communications

Record Management and Oversight

Jessie Chang, Operations Director, maintains comprehensive electronic records of all formal complaints and their outcomes, regardless of whether complaints are upheld, ensuring accountability and organisational learning.

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Stage 1: Initial Concern Resolution

Accessibility and Flexibility Concerns or complaints may be submitted through multiple channels: - **In-person discussion** during meetings or visits - **Written communication** via email or post - **Telephone conversation** for immediate matters - **Third-party representation** with appropriate consent and authorisation

Immediate Response Protocol The receiving StudyNest Education representative will:

- **Document** the concern comprehensively with relevant details
- **Acknowledge** receipt within 24 hours of submission
- **Investigate** the matter promptly and thoroughly
- **Respond** with findings and proposed resolution within 7 working days

Resolution Focus Stage 1 aims to resolve concerns collaboratively through direct communication, clarification, and immediate corrective action where appropriate.

Escalation Criteria If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the initial response or resolution, they may proceed to Stage 2 formal complaint procedures.

Stage 2: Formal Investigation Process

Standard Formal Complaints

Submission Requirements Formal complaints should be submitted in writing to: **Jessie Chang, Operations Director** - **Email:** jessie@studynest.uk - **Phone:** 0735626882

Formal Response Framework Upon receiving a formal complaint, the Operations Director will:

- **Record** all complaint details and supporting documentation securely
- **Acknowledge** receipt within 24 hours with investigation timeline
- **Investigate** thoroughly, maintaining regular communication with the complainant about progress
- **Report** findings and decisions formally in writing within 28 working days maximum

Complaints Concerning Operations Director

Independent Review Process When complaints specifically concern Jessie Chang or potential conflicts of interest exist:

Alternative Reporting Options:

1. **Direct AEGIS Referral** - Immediate escalation to external oversight body
2. **Independent External Investigator** - Appointment of qualified third-party investigator
3. **AEGIS-Appointed Reviewer** - Request for AEGIS to designate investigation lead

Process Selection The complainant may choose their preferred option, or StudyNest Education will recommend the most appropriate approach based on the nature and complexity of the concerns raised.

Impartiality Assurance This process ensures completely independent review when internal investigation would be inappropriate due to potential bias or conflict of interest.

Stage 3: External Oversight and Final Resolution

AEGIS Referral Process When complainants remain unsatisfied following Stage 2 formal investigation, they may refer their concerns to the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students.

AEGIS Contact Information: - **Executive Officer:** Yasemin Wigglesworth - **Address:** The Wheelhouse, Bond's Mill Estate, Bristol Road, Gloucestershire, GL10 3RF - **Phone:** +44 (0) 1453 821293 - **Website:** www.aegisuk.net

AEGIS Review Authority AEGIS provides independent external review with authority to:

- Investigate complaints thoroughly using their established procedures
- Make binding determinations regarding complaint validity
- Recommend appropriate remedial actions or compensation
- Provide final resolution when internal processes have been exhausted

Cooperation Commitment StudyNest Education commits to full cooperation with AEGIS investigations, including:

- Providing complete documentation and evidence
- Facilitating access to relevant personnel and information
- Implementing any recommended corrective actions promptly
- Using AEGIS findings to improve our services and procedures

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND PROCEDURES

Urgent or Safeguarding Concerns

Immediate Response Requirements Complaints involving potential safety, welfare, or safeguarding issues receive priority handling:

- **Immediate escalation** to relevant authorities when required
- **24-hour response** regardless of normal working hours
- **Concurrent investigation** alongside complaint resolution process
- **Protection measures** implemented immediately to ensure student safety

Third-Party Complaints

Authorisation Requirements Third parties representing complainants must provide:

- **Written consent** from the affected party
- **Clear identification** of their relationship to the complainant
- **Specific authorisation** regarding the scope of their representation
- **Contact verification** to ensure legitimate representation

Anonymous Complaints

Handling Protocol Anonymous complaints are accepted and investigated where: - **Sufficient detail** is provided to enable meaningful investigation - **Verifiable facts** can be independently confirmed - **No response** to the complainant is possible, but corrective action may be taken - **Pattern analysis** can identify systemic issues requiring attention

COMPLAINT PREVENTION AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

Proactive Communication

Regular Feedback Mechanisms - Scheduled review meetings with students and families - Periodic satisfaction surveys and feedback requests
- Open communication channels for suggestions and concerns - Host family liaison meetings for service enhancement

Quality Assurance

Continuous Improvement Process - **Monthly review** of complaint trends and patterns - **Quarterly analysis** of resolution effectiveness and timeliness - **Annual policy review** incorporating lessons learned and best practices - **Service enhancement** based on feedback and complaint analysis

Training and Development

Professional Development - Regular training updates on complaint handling best practices - Communication skills development for difficult conversations - Conflict resolution and mediation technique enhancement - Cultural sensitivity training for international student support

DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD KEEPING

Comprehensive Record Management

Documentation Requirements All complaints generate comprehensive records including: - **Initial complaint** details and supporting evidence - **Investigation progress** notes and findings - **Communication logs** with all parties involved - **Resolution outcomes** and follow-up actions - **Lessons learned** and improvement recommendations

Confidentiality and Access

Privacy Protection - **Secure storage** of all complaint-related documentation - **Limited access** to designated personnel only - **Confidentiality maintenance** throughout the process - **Data protection** compliance with relevant regulations

Retention Policy - **Minimum three-year** retention period for all complaint records - **Secure disposal** following retention period expiration - **Archive access** available for regulatory or legal requirements

POLICY GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW

Regular Assessment

Policy Effectiveness Review StudyNest Education conducts annual comprehensive review including: - **Procedure effectiveness** assessment and improvement identification - **Resolution timeframe** analysis and optimisation - **Stakeholder satisfaction** with complaint handling process - **Best practice integration** from industry developments

Current Policy Authority

Policy Approval: This complaints policy was thoroughly reviewed and approved on **7th August 2025**

Authorising Officer: Jessie Chang, Operations Director, StudyNest Education

Next Review Date: August 2026

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Effective Date: August 2025

Distribution: All stakeholders including students, families, host families, and partner institutions

For urgent complaints requiring immediate attention, contact Jessie Chang at 0735626882. For complaints concerning the Operations Director, contact AEGIS directly at 01453 821293.