



Complaints, Concerns & Feedback from Students & Families Policy

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1. Policy Statement

Karate & Dance Federation Ltd (KDF) is committed to listening carefully to students and families and using complaints, concerns, compliments and feedback to improve provision. KDF recognises that people should be able to raise concerns without feeling that doing so will negatively affect their relationship with the organisation or the student's access to karate, dance or wider opportunities.

KDF aims to resolve concerns fairly, promptly and proportionately. Wherever possible, low-level issues should be resolved through open communication before they become formal complaints. More serious matters should be handled through a clear written process that ensures appropriate oversight, confidentiality and accountability.

KDF also believes that feedback should not be limited to situations where something has gone wrong. The organisation will actively seek student and family views through planned consultation, including a family survey every September and a wider round-up polling survey each May alongside an under-18 student survey.

KDF's approach reflects its values of Kindness, Diversity, Friendship and supports the KDF Promise: Every Student, Every Session, Every Time.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain how students and families can raise concerns, provide feedback, make complaints and contribute to the ongoing development of KDF.

It sets out the distinction between informal concerns, formal complaints, safeguarding matters and general feedback, and explains how KDF will record, investigate, respond to and learn from information received.

The policy also establishes KDF's planned consultation cycle so that student and family voice becomes part of routine quality assurance rather than only being sought after a problem.

3. Scope

This policy applies to current students, parents, guardians, carers and other family members who wish to raise a concern about KDF provision.

It may also be used by former students or families where the matter relates to their time with KDF and it remains reasonable and possible to review.

The policy applies to concerns about teaching, communication, behaviour, staff conduct, membership administration, premises, inclusion, grading, events, student experience and other aspects of KDF provision, except where another procedure is more appropriate.

4. Principles

KDF will handle complaints and concerns fairly, respectfully and without unnecessary defensiveness.

The organisation will seek to establish what happened, what impact occurred, whether any policy or standard was not met and what action, if any, is appropriate.

KDF will not assume that a complaint is valid simply because it has been made, but neither will it dismiss a concern merely because staff disagree with the person raising it.

5. Informal Concerns

Many issues can be resolved quickly through informal communication.

A parent or student may raise a concern with the Main Office, relevant coach or another appropriate member of staff where the issue is straightforward and does not involve safeguarding, serious misconduct or a conflict of interest.

Staff should listen carefully, clarify the concern and seek a practical resolution where this is within their role.

6. When a Concern Becomes a Formal Complaint

A concern may become a formal complaint where the person raising it remains dissatisfied, the issue is serious, the matter involves repeated failure or the person specifically asks for formal review.

Formal complaints should normally be made in writing so that the issue can be understood accurately and investigated fairly.

Where a person has difficulty making a written complaint, KDF should consider reasonable support to help them set out the concern.

7. Formal Complaint Address

Formal complaints should be sent to:

admin@kdfederation.com

The complaint should be marked for the attention of the Chief Executive Officer.

Using this central route helps KDF ensure that complaints are logged, acknowledged and directed appropriately.

8. Role of the Administration Team

The administration team may receive, acknowledge, log and coordinate complaints on behalf of KDF.

Administrative staff should not determine the outcome of a complaint where this falls outside their authority.

Where a complaint is addressed to the CEO, the administration team should ensure that it is escalated promptly and handled confidentially.

9. Role of the Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for oversight of formal complaints concerning KDF.

The CEO may investigate personally, delegate fact-finding to an appropriate senior person or appoint another suitable person where independence or specialist knowledge is required.

Where the complaint concerns the CEO directly, an alternative senior or independent route should be identified so that the CEO is not responsible for determining a complaint about their own conduct.

10. What a Complaint Should Include

A formal complaint should explain what happened, when it occurred, who was involved and what outcome or resolution the complainant is seeking where possible.

Supporting information may be included where relevant.

KDF should not reject a complaint simply because it is not perfectly structured or does not use formal language.

11. Acknowledgement

Formal complaints should be acknowledged within a reasonable period.

The acknowledgement should confirm that the complaint has been received and explain the next stage.

Where the matter is complex or requires information from several people, KDF may explain that a fuller response will take longer.

12. Timescales

KDF will aim to resolve complaints as promptly as reasonably possible while ensuring sufficient time for a fair review.

Simple matters may be resolved quickly, while complex complaints involving multiple witnesses, safeguarding issues or external agencies may require longer.

Where the process is delayed significantly, the complainant should receive an appropriate update.

13. Fair Investigation

The person reviewing the complaint should gather relevant information proportionately.

This may include speaking with staff, reviewing records, checking communication, examining policies and considering other evidence.

The investigation should remain focused on the issues raised rather than becoming an unnecessarily broad inquiry into unrelated matters.

14. Hearing Different Accounts

Where accounts differ, KDF should consider the available evidence objectively.

The organisation should not assume that staff are automatically correct because they hold a professional role, nor should it assume that a complainant's account is necessarily accurate without review.

Findings should be based on the balance of information available.

15. Student Voice Within Complaints

Where a complaint directly concerns a student's experience, KDF may seek the student's views where appropriate to age, understanding and circumstances.

The student should not be pressured to give an account merely to support an adult's position.

Their voice should be considered sensitively and independently.

16. Safeguarding Complaints

Where a complaint raises a safeguarding concern, KDF's safeguarding procedures take priority over the ordinary complaints process.

The matter should be referred promptly to the Safeguarding Lead and external agencies where required.

A complainant should not be promised that the issue will remain within the complaints process if safeguarding referral is necessary.

17. Allegations About Adults

A complaint about the conduct of an adult working with children may fall under KDF's Allegations & Low-Level Concerns About Adults Policy.

Where the concern may meet the relevant safeguarding threshold, KDF should seek appropriate LADO or other safeguarding advice before carrying out a substantive internal investigation.

The complaints process must not compromise an external safeguarding process.

18. Complaints About Teaching

Concerns about teaching quality, lesson structure, progression or communication should normally be considered alongside KDF's Curriculum, Teaching & Learning Policy and Lesson Quality, Observation & Student Experience Policy.

The review should consider whether the concern reflects an isolated issue or a wider pattern.

Where appropriate, observation or quality assurance evidence may inform the response.

19. Complaints About Grading or Assessment

Complaints about grading, progression or examination decisions should be reviewed against the relevant curriculum and assessment criteria.

A disagreement with professional judgement does not automatically mean that the process was unfair.

The review should focus on whether criteria were applied consistently and whether reasonable adjustments were considered where relevant.

20. Complaints About Behaviour Management

Where a complaint concerns behaviour management, KDF should consider the Behaviour Management Policy and any relevant incident records.

The review should consider whether staff responses were proportionate, respectful and consistent with the student's needs.

Where physical intervention is involved, the Physical Contact & Appropriate Touch Policy and Aggressive, Volatile & Challenging Behaviour Policy should also be considered.

21. Complaints About SEND or Inclusion

Concerns about SEND support, reasonable adjustments or inclusion should be reviewed under KDF's SEND & Inclusive Practice Policy and Curriculum Differentiation, Adaptation & Inclusive Learning Policy.

KDF should consider whether reasonable steps were taken to understand and reduce barriers.

The fact that a requested adjustment was not provided does not automatically establish poor practice if KDF had a legitimate safety, operational or proportionality reason.

22. Complaints About Staff Conduct

Complaints about staff conduct should be considered carefully and, where appropriate, referred through HR, disciplinary, safeguarding or low-level-concern procedures.

The complaints process should not be used to bypass fair employment procedures.

The complainant may be informed that the matter has been addressed without being entitled to confidential employment details.

23. Confidentiality

Complaints should be handled on a need-to-know basis.

KDF will not disclose another student's medical, safeguarding, disciplinary or personal information simply because it is relevant to a complaint.

Similarly, confidential staff information should not be disclosed beyond what is necessary to explain the outcome.

24. Data Protection

Complaint records and related evidence should be handled in accordance with KDF's data-protection arrangements.

Information should be retained only for legitimate organisational, safeguarding, legal or quality purposes.

Sensitive information should not be circulated casually through staff messaging groups.

25. Respectful Communication

KDF expects complaints and responses to be communicated respectfully.

A person may be upset, frustrated or critical without losing the right to have their concern considered.

However, threatening, abusive, discriminatory or intimidating communication may be addressed under KDF's conduct procedures while the underlying complaint is still considered separately where appropriate.

26. Vexatious or Repetitive Contact

KDF may place reasonable boundaries around repetitive or excessive contact where a matter has been fully considered and no genuinely new information is being provided.

This should be used cautiously and should not be applied simply because a complainant is persistent.

Any communication restriction should be proportionate and should not prevent genuine new safeguarding or complaint information from being raised.

27. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous concerns may be considered where sufficient information is available to allow meaningful review.

KDF may be limited in its ability to investigate or respond where the source cannot be contacted for clarification.

Safeguarding concerns should still be assessed on their substance rather than dismissed solely because they are anonymous.

28. Complaints From Children

Children and young people may raise concerns directly with a coach, administrator, Safeguarding Lead or another trusted adult.

They should not be required to use adult-style formal language or submit an email in order to be heard.

Where the issue can be resolved informally, staff should do so; where it is serious, it should be escalated appropriately.

29. Advocacy and Support

A student or family may ask another person to support them in communicating a concern where this is reasonable.

KDF may also make reasonable communication adjustments for disability, language or other access needs.

Support arrangements should not be used to create unnecessary confrontation or turn informal resolution into adversarial proceedings.

30. Outcomes

Possible outcomes may include no further action, clarification, apology, correction, staff guidance, policy change, additional training, quality review, safeguarding action or another proportionate response.

The outcome should reflect the findings rather than simply the result requested by the complainant.

Where KDF identifies that something went wrong, it should acknowledge this appropriately.

31. Apologies

Where KDF concludes that an error occurred, an apology may form part of the resolution.

An apology should be meaningful and should not be avoided solely because the organisation is concerned that acknowledging poor practice may appear embarrassing.

Where an issue is not upheld, KDF may still acknowledge the person's experience or communication difficulties without accepting an allegation that was not substantiated.

32. Appeal or Review

Where the complainant remains dissatisfied after a formal response, KDF may offer a further review where there is a reasonable basis to do so.

This may include new evidence, an alleged procedural flaw or a significant concern that the original review was not sufficiently independent.

The review should not become endless repetition of the same issues where no new basis exists.

33. Complaints Involving External Bodies

Some concerns may need to be referred to insurers, police, social care, LADO, regulators, venue operators or other external organisations.

Where another body has jurisdiction over part of the issue, KDF should cooperate appropriately.

The existence of an external process may affect what KDF can investigate or disclose at that stage.

34. Feedback and Suggestions

Families and students are encouraged to provide suggestions and positive feedback as well as complaints.

Feedback may relate to classes, events, communication, facilities, curriculum, inclusion or wider student experience.

Not every suggestion can be implemented, but KDF should consider themes that may improve provision.

35. Compliments

Compliments are valuable quality information and should be recognised as such.

Positive feedback may identify staff strengths, successful initiatives or parts of the student experience that should be protected and replicated.

Where appropriate, compliments may be shared with relevant staff as part of recognition and development.

36. September Family Survey Consultation

KDF will conduct a family survey consultation every September.

This survey should gather views on areas such as communication, teaching quality, student experience, inclusion, premises, administration and priorities for the year ahead.

September consultation should inform the organisation's planning and help identify early themes at the beginning of the academic and operational year.

37. Purpose of the September Survey

The September survey is intended to provide a structured opportunity for families to influence KDF development rather than relying only on spontaneous complaints.

It should allow families to identify strengths, concerns and improvement priorities.

Findings should be reviewed by leadership and translated into action where appropriate.

38. May Round-Up Polling Survey

KDF will conduct a round-up polling survey each May.

This should provide a broader end-of-year pulse check on how families have experienced KDF and whether improvements made during the year have had the intended effect.

The May survey may use shorter polling questions alongside targeted opportunities for comment.

39. Under-18 Student Survey

The May round-up process will also include an under-18 student survey.

The student survey should be age-appropriate and should seek views on enjoyment, safety, teaching, inclusion, relationships, confidence, rewards, regulation support and anything students would like KDF to improve.

KDF should consider student responses separately from adult family feedback so that children's own experiences are not lost within parent opinion.

40. Age-Appropriate Student Consultation

Student consultation should be adapted to age and communication need.

Younger children may respond better to simple rating scales, visual options or short questions, while older students may provide more detailed written feedback.

SEND students should be supported to contribute through accessible methods where required.

41. Survey Confidentiality

KDF should design surveys so that respondents understand how information will be used.

Anonymous or confidential response options may be used where appropriate.

Where a survey response raises a safeguarding concern or serious risk, KDF may need to act even where the survey was intended to be confidential.

42. Survey Analysis

Survey findings should be reviewed for themes rather than relying only on headline percentages.

Leadership should consider both positive trends and recurring concerns.

Where feedback differs significantly between Karate, Dance, age groups or other areas, this may warrant more detailed review.

43. Closing the Feedback Loop

KDF should communicate significant themes and actions arising from surveys where appropriate.

Families and students are more likely to engage meaningfully with consultation when they can see that feedback has been considered.

KDF does not need to implement every suggestion, but should be transparent about major actions or reasons for not proceeding.

44. Feedback and Strategic Planning

Complaints, concerns and survey findings should inform strategic improvement.

Recurring themes may influence staff training, premises changes, curriculum development, communication systems, safeguarding practice or membership arrangements.

Feedback should therefore connect directly with KDF's wider quality assurance and strategic planning processes.

45. Feedback and the KDF Lesson Guarantee

Student and family feedback should be used to test whether the KDF Lesson Guarantee is being experienced in practice.

If families or students repeatedly report that lessons are unclear, insufficiently inclusive, poorly structured or inconsistent, KDF should review whether the Guarantee is being met.

Positive feedback can similarly identify where the Guarantee is working strongly.

46. Feedback and the KDF Promise

The KDF Promise: Every Student, Every Session, Every Time provides a central standard against which complaints and feedback can be considered.

A complaint may indicate that one student, one session or one process has not met the standard KDF expects.

The Promise should therefore support both accountability and improvement.

47. Non-Retaliation

No student should be treated less favourably because they or their family raised a concern, complaint or critical survey response.

Staff must not retaliate through grading, selection, opportunities, communication or attitude.

Any evidence of retaliation would itself be treated seriously.

48. False or Malicious Allegations

A complaint that is not upheld is not automatically false or malicious.

People may misunderstand events, remember details differently or raise genuine concerns that are ultimately not substantiated.

Where there is clear evidence that an allegation was deliberately fabricated to cause harm, KDF may address that conduct separately.

49. Record Keeping

KDF should maintain appropriate records of formal complaints, key findings, outcomes and significant actions.

Records should be proportionate and should support organisational learning as well as accountability.

Minor informal concerns resolved immediately do not always require a formal complaint file, but recurring themes should still be noticed.

50. Trend Monitoring

Leadership should periodically review complaint and feedback trends.

This may include frequency, subject area, department, recurring staff or operational issues and whether previous actions have been effective.

Trend review should support improvement rather than create a blame-focused culture.

51. Staff Learning

Where complaints identify genuine improvement needs, KDF should use them to strengthen practice.

Actions may include coaching, supervision, policy clarification, additional training or changes to systems.

Complaints should not automatically trigger disciplinary action where development and correction are more appropriate.

52. Serious Misconduct

Where a complaint identifies conduct that may constitute serious or gross misconduct, safeguarding harm, criminal behaviour or serious professional breach, KDF may begin the appropriate formal process.

The complaints route should then operate alongside or give way to the relevant safeguarding, HR or legal process.

The person raising the complaint may be told that appropriate action is being taken without receiving confidential internal details.

53. Kindness

The value of Kindness means listening to concerns respectfully, communicating clearly and avoiding defensive or dismissive responses.

It also means recognising that families may raise concerns because they care about the student's experience.

Kindness should shape both the complaint process and the way KDF gives difficult outcomes.

54. Diversity

The value of Diversity means ensuring that different voices can be heard and that communication needs do not become barriers to feedback.

KDF should be alert to whether quieter families, SEND students or younger students are underrepresented in ordinary consultation.

Different perspectives should be considered seriously even where they do not reflect the majority view.

55. Friendship

The value of Friendship means maintaining constructive relationships even where disagreement occurs.

A complaint does not need to end the relationship between a family and KDF.

Where possible, KDF should seek resolution that restores trust and allows the student to continue positively.

56. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside KDF's Student, Parent, Guardian & Visitor Code of Conduct, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Roles, Reporting & Responding to Concerns Policy, Allegations & Low-Level Concerns About Adults Policy, Behaviour Management Policy, SEND & Inclusive Practice Policy, Curriculum, Teaching & Learning Policy, Assessment, Progression, Grading & Examination Policy, Lesson Quality, Observation & Student Experience Policy and Staff Supervision, Appraisal & Performance Management Policy.

These policies should be applied together where complaints overlap with safeguarding, staff conduct, curriculum, inclusion, behaviour, grading or quality assurance.

57. Policy Review

This policy will normally be reviewed annually, but earlier review may take place following a serious complaint, recurring concern, significant safeguarding issue, survey findings or evidence that the complaints process is not operating effectively.

KDF will continue to maintain a clear formal complaint route through admin@kdfederation.com, for the attention of the Chief Executive Officer, alongside routine opportunities for informal feedback and consultation.

The organisation will use its September family survey, May round-up polling survey and May under-18 student survey to ensure that student and family voice remains embedded within KDF's quality assurance and strategic improvement.