Thallo
ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Complaints Procedure

Thallo Education Ltd.

VERSION: 1.0
DATE: 25th September 2026
AUTHOR: May MacKay-Morris

Policy Owner	May MacKay-Morris Provision Lead / Director
Applies to	Learners, parents/carers, commissioners and other service users
Effective From	25th September 2026
Approved by	May MacKay-Morris Provision Lead / Director
Review Date	September 2027, or sooner following any significant complaint or change in requirements Or sooner, following relevant change.
Status	Live policy; commissioner-specific escalation contacts/routes to be kept current

1. Purpose

Thallo aims to provide a safe, respectful and responsive service. Children and young people, parents/carers, commissioners and other service users should be able to raise a concern or complaint without fear of disadvantage. Complaints will be taken seriously, recorded appropriately and used to improve practice.

2. Principles

- Concerns should be resolved as early and fairly as possible, while allowing immediate escalation where the matter is serious.
- Children and young people will be supported to express concerns in a way that reflects their age, communication needs and preferences.
- No person will be disadvantaged because they have made a complaint in good faith.
- Information will be shared only with those who need it to consider, investigate or respond to the matter.
- A person who is the subject of a complaint will not investigate or determine that complaint.
- Complaints involving safeguarding, allegations about adults, criminal matters or immediate risk will be referred through the appropriate safeguarding or statutory route rather than being dealt with only as an ordinary complaint.

3. How a child or young person can raise a concern

Learners may raise a concern verbally, in writing, by email, through a parent/carer or trusted professional, or by any other accessible communication method agreed with them. Staff will explain during induction who learners can speak to if they are worried about the service, another learner or an adult.

A learner does not need to use the word "complaint". Any expression of dissatisfaction, worry or concern will be listened to and considered.

4. Stage 1 - early resolution

Where appropriate, a concern may first be discussed with the member of staff best placed to resolve it. The aim is to understand the concern, identify any immediate action required and provide a prompt response.

Stage 1 will not be used where the concern is about safeguarding, an allegation against an adult, a serious breach of professional conduct, or where the complainant reasonably does not feel able to approach the person concerned.

5. Stage 2 - formal complaint

A formal complaint should normally be made to the Provision Lead. It may be made verbally or in writing; where a complaint is made verbally, Thallo will make an appropriate written record and confirm the substance of the complaint with the complainant where practicable.

The complaint will be acknowledged, reviewed by a person who is not the subject of it, and investigated proportionately. The complainant will receive an outcome explaining the findings and any actions that can appropriately be shared. If more time is required, Thallo will explain this and provide an updated timescale.

6. Complaints about the Provision Lead / founder

Because Thallo is a small provider and the Provision Lead is also the founder, a complaint about the Provision Lead must not be investigated or determined by the Provision Lead.

A complaint about the Provision Lead will be handled through a route that is independent of the Provision Lead. Where the complaint concerns a commissioned placement, Thallo will notify and liaise with the relevant commissioner or contract manager and use any applicable commissioner complaints route. For Suffolk County Council commissioned provision, the Council's complaints route may be available for complaints about services delivered on its behalf. Where another school, education setting or commissioner arranged the placement, the relevant complaints or commissioning route for that organisation may apply. Thallo will cooperate with the appropriate commissioner in considering and resolving the complaint.

If a complaint about the Provision Lead includes a safeguarding allegation or concern about their suitability to work with children, staff must follow section 8 below and must not refer the matter to the Provision Lead for a decision.

7. Review of a complaint outcome

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following a formal response, the complaint will be reviewed through an appropriate route that does not involve a person who previously investigated or determined it. Where the provision is commissioned, this may include the relevant commissioner's complaints or contract-management process. The review will consider whether the complaint was handled fairly, whether relevant information was considered and whether appropriate action has been taken.

Where the provision is commissioned, the complainant may also use any applicable commissioner complaints or contract-management route. For services under Suffolk County Council's CD1397 Agreement, Thallo will notify the Council's Authorised Representative of complaints within two working days of receipt and, at the same time, explain how Thallo proposes to resolve the complaint. Thallo will cooperate with legitimate commissioner enquiries and any Action Plan required under the Agreement.

8. Safeguarding concerns and allegations about adults

A complaint that indicates a child may be at risk of harm, or contains an allegation about an adult working with children, is not handled solely under this complaints procedure. Thallo's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Allegations Against Staff and Low-Level Concerns Procedure apply.

Where an allegation or safeguarding concern relates to the Provision Lead / DSL, the person receiving the concern must not report it to the Provision Lead for investigation. The concern must be escalated directly through the appropriate safeguarding route. This may include the Suffolk Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the commissioning school's DSL and/or the relevant Suffolk commissioner, depending on the circumstances. Immediate danger must be reported to the emergency services.

Staff will be given the current LADO and safeguarding contact route during induction and it will be accessible within Thallo's safeguarding information.

9. Recording and confidentiality

Thallo will maintain an appropriate record of formal complaints and significant concerns, including the nature of the issue, actions taken, outcome, communications and any learning or service improvements identified. Safeguarding records will be managed separately in accordance with safeguarding requirements.

Complaint records will be stored securely with access limited to those who require it. Personal information will be handled in accordance with Thallo's Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy.

10. Learning from complaints

Complaints and concerns will be reviewed for themes, recurring issues and opportunities to improve practice. Where appropriate, learning will result in changes to risk assessments, procedures, staff guidance, training or service delivery. Significant learning relevant to commissioned provision will be shared with the commissioner where appropriate.

11. Accessibility and support

Thallo will make reasonable adjustments to the complaints process where required. Children and young people may be supported by a parent/carer, advocate or trusted professional. Information will be provided in an accessible form where reasonably required.

12. Operational arrangements

Thallo will ensure that complaints about the Provision Lead can be escalated outside the Provision Lead. The appropriate route will depend on who commissioned the placement and the nature of the concern, and will be explained to learners, parents/carers and staff.

- Publish clear information explaining how to complain, including how a complaint about the Provision Lead can be escalated to the relevant commissioner or other appropriate external route.
- Ensure the complaints route aligns with Thallo's safeguarding, allegations, whistleblowing and data-protection arrangements.
- Brief all staff and sessional practitioners on how to recognise and escalate a complaint, including the separate route where the concern is about the Provision Lead / DSL.