



Aesendia Advisory

INDEPENDENT INSIGHT | RESOLUTION IN EDUCATION

COMPLAINTS TRAINING PROGRAMMES · 2026

INDEPENDENT INSIGHT | RESOLUTION IN EDUCATION

Building Complaints Confidence

Practical training to **prevent, contain and resolve** concerns before they escalate.

Five-Tier Programme

Training tailored to every role in your school

Aligned to DfE 2026

Built around the new national guidance

In Person, Remote or Hybrid

Available nationwide, all school types

TARGETED MODULES INCLUDED IN THIS PROSPECTUS

- Tier 1:** Teaching & Pastoral Staff — Early De-escalation
- Tier 2:** Front-of-House & Support Staff — Triage & Calm First-Contact
- Tier 3:** Senior Leaders — Defensible Investigations
- Tier 4:** Headteachers & Principals — Strategic Oversight & Prevention
- Tier 5:** Governors & Trustees — Water-tight Stage 2 Panel

“Every formal complaint begins as an informal concern that wasn’t resolved.”

GET IN TOUCH

enquiries@aesendia.co.uk · www.aesendia.co.uk

Available nationwide
Discreet · Professional · Independent



THE CHALLENGE

Why every school needs this, now

A complaint rarely sits with one person. It moves from the gate to the office, through your leadership team, to your own desk, and sometimes to the governing board — and each meets it differently.

ALIGNED WITH THE LATEST NATIONAL GUIDANCE

In January 2026, the DfE, Ofsted and Parentkind published national guidance on parental complaints — a response to a sharp rise in disputes and in abuse directed at school staff. It asks every school to help staff tell the difference between feedback, a concern and a formal complaint, and to de-escalate early. This programme is built around exactly those expectations.

Following recent discussions at leadership briefings and headteacher forums across Lincolnshire, many schools are asking the same question: does every member of staff understand their role in preventing, handling and escalating concerns appropriately? For most, the honest answer is **"not yet"** — and genuinely specialist, school-centred training in this area is very hard to find.

THE PRESSURE IS REAL AND RISING

4 in 5

school leaders reported being abused by parents, in a recent NAHT survey.

A concern handled badly in its earliest moments can rapidly harden into a formal complaint, and then escalate — to governors, the trust, the DfE, a solicitor, or social media — consuming leadership time, draining staff morale, and putting your school's reputation at risk.

Ofsted does not resolve individual complaints, but may take account of how a school handles them at inspection.

Aesendia Advisory closes that gap. We help schools prevent concerns from escalating, handle those that do with fairness and confidence, and protect both relationships and reputation — by making sure the right people have the right skills at every stage.



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The complaints journey through your school

Five distinct groups, five distinct training needs:

WHO	WHERE THEY MEET COMPLAINTS	WHAT THE TRAINING GIVES THEM
TIER 1 Teaching & Pastoral Staff	The first quiet worry, the gate conversation, the early email — the “pre-complaint” stage.	Confidence to defuse concerns early and stop small issues escalating.
TIER 2 Front-of-House & Support Staff	The first phone call, email or visit — often an upset parent, with no warning.	Calm first-contact handling, de-escalation, and accurate triage.
TIER 3 Senior Leaders	Investigating and responding to formal complaints — including those involving staff.	Fair, defensible investigations and sensitive communication.
TIER 4 Headteachers	Owning the policy, delegating well, and preventing complaints in the first place.	Watertight process, smart delegation, and preventative systems.
TIER 5 Governors & Trustees	Stage 2 panels, complaints about the head, whole-school concerns.	Lawful, impartial panels and the confidence to act.

Every school is different. If you lead a small primary, you may wear several of these hats yourself — in a larger school they may sit with different teams. The programme flexes to fit, so you only ever train the people who need it, in the way that suits your setting.



GETTING STARTED

Where to begin

Two clear ways to start — one to find out where you stand, one to put it right across the school.

START HERE

The Complaints Health Check

Not sure where your school is exposed?
Begin with an independent diagnostic.

We review your complaints policy and procedure against statutory requirements and good practice, examine how recent complaints were handled and closed, assess the systems around them, and identify recurring themes and risk hot-spots.

You receive a short, confidential written report with clear, prioritised recommendations — the calm, low-commitment way to see exactly where you stand, and what will make the biggest difference.

Independent diagnostic · Written report · Action Plan

RECOMMENDED

The Whole-School Complaints Confidence Package

The simplest way to know it's handled.
We coordinate and deliver training across all five tiers over a single term, so every layer of your school is prepared in step — the right people learning the right skills, in the right order.

It includes a complimentary review of your complaints policy and procedure, so the whole system is watertight before training begins — a complete, joined-up solution rather than five separate bookings.

Includes:

- All five training tiers, coordinated across one term
- Complimentary complaints policy review
- Single point of coordination — one conversation

Prefer to start smaller? Each tier below is also available as a **standalone module**.



● TRAINING PROGRAMME · TIERS 1 & 2 OF 5

TIER 1 OF 5

Teaching & Pastoral Staff

The First Line

WHO IT'S FOR

Class teachers, form tutors and teaching assistants — the people a concern usually reaches first.

WHY IT MATTERS

Most complaints begin as an informal worry. How it's met in those first moments often decides whether it settles quietly or **hardens into something formal**.

THEY'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Tell the difference between everyday feedback, a concern and a formal complaint — the distinction at the heart of the new national guidance
- Spot a “pre-complaint” early and respond calmly — connecting before correcting
- Avoid the instinctive mistakes that inflame concerns (defensiveness, over-promising, going quiet)
- Know exactly what to record, and when to pass a concern on

FORMAT

Twilight or whole-staff INSET · Remote or in person

TIER 2 OF 5

Front-of-House & Support Staff

The Gatekeepers

WHO IT'S FOR

Office staff, receptionists, administrators and school business managers.

WHY IT MATTERS

They field the **angry phone call or the parent at the desk** — often with no warning and no context — and set the tone for everything that follows.

THEY'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Stay calm and in control at first contact — on the phone, by email or face to face
- Use practical de-escalation language that takes the heat out of a moment
- Capture accurate information, triage it (feedback, concern or formal complaint), and route it to the right person
- Protect their own wellbeing and handle information confidentially

FORMAT

Twilight or half-day session · Remote or in person



● TRAINING PROGRAMME · TIERS 3 & 4 OF 5

TIER 3 OF 5

Senior Leaders

The Investigators

WHO IT'S FOR

Anyone who may be asked to investigate or formally respond to a complaint — deputy and assistant heads in larger schools, or the head and senior staff in smaller ones.

WHY IT MATTERS

This is the **formal process**, and the most delicate ground of all: complaints that involve colleagues, which must be handled fairly without damaging working relationships.

THEY'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Run a fair, thorough and defensible investigation from start to finish
- Untangle complex, multi-issue “kitchen-sink” complaints into manageable strands
- Communicate sensitively under pressure, using our CALM framework
- Handle complaints involving staff without harming trust or relationships

FORMAT

Half-day or full-day · Remote or in person

TIER 4 OF 5

Headteachers

The Strategists

WHO IT'S FOR

Headteachers and anyone holding whole-school responsibility for complaints.

WHY IT MATTERS

The goal isn't only to handle complaints well — it's to **build a school where fewer ever reach a formal stage**, to delegate with confidence, and to keep the whole system defensible.

THEY'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Review and strengthen your complaints policy and procedure in light of the new national guidance — and ahead of the forthcoming Schools White Paper
- Delegate well — knowing what to pass down and what a head must retain
- Build preventative systems that catch and resolve issues early
- Read complaints as data, spotting themes and risks before they grow

FORMAT

Half-day session or focused one-to-one strategic review



● TRAINING PROGRAMME · TIER 5 OF 5 & MAT DELIVERY

TIER 5 OF 5

Governors & Trustees

The Panel

WHO IT'S FOR

Governing boards and trust boards — designed especially for volunteer governors who may only sit on a complaints panel occasionally, but need to act with complete confidence when they do.

WHY IT MATTERS

Governors face the **highest-stakes, most scrutinised decisions of all** — Stage 2 panels and complaints about the head. The fear of getting it wrong, appearing biased, or being challenged is real, and rarely matched by training.

THEY'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Sit on a complaints panel with confidence, knowing exactly what's expected
- Stay genuinely impartial — and be seen to be — even on difficult cases
- Avoid the common procedural pitfalls that invite challenge
- Reach and record clear, defensible decisions that withstand scrutiny

FORMAT

Twilight or half-day · Ideal for a full board

FOR TRUSTS

MAT Delivery

Scaling without compromise

IDEAL FOR

Trusts seeking consistent standards and coordinated complaints management across all their schools.

WHAT WE OFFER

For trusts, the same programme scales across your schools. We can deliver centralised, trust-wide training or roll it out school by school; train your local governing bodies and trust board; and review complaints systems across the trust to surface shared risks and inconsistencies.

*One coordinated approach,
consistent standards in every school
— and a clearer view of complaints
risk across the whole trust.*

**WHY AESENDIA**

Aesendia Advisory is led by Alex Sandbrook, who brings 21 years in education and over 11 years in senior leadership across state, independent and specialist settings.

As a Deputy Head, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Behaviour and Teaching and Learning lead, Alex has spent years at the sharp end of complaints — handling difficult conversations, staffing implications and governance scrutiny.

He now brings that experience to other schools: investigating complaints independently, resolving them, and reducing the risk of escalation. **This is training grounded in what actually happens — not theory.**

Fully insured for consultancy and advisory services · ICO Registered: ZB985599

“***Aesendia Advisory’s work on our last investigation was genuinely exceptional.***

— Headteacher, Lincolnshire

NEXT STEP

Strike it off your to-do list this week

We know how stretched school budgets and timetables are. So that you can judge whether we’re the right fit — with no pressure and no cost — start with a free 20-minute complaints readiness consultation: a calm, confidential conversation about where your school stands, and where it’s most exposed.

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