

## Cognus Customer Service Standards Policy

### General

- 1 Cognus is committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone we deal with, and we expect staff to act in accordance with our company values.
- 2 Your feedback helps us to know what we're doing well and what we need to do better so we welcome all comments and suggestions that may improve our service.
- 3 For more information about providing feedback, please visit our [website](#).
- 4 **What you should expect from us - we will:**
  - Treat all those we work with fairly
  - Be helpful, polite, respectful and show empathy
  - Be honest, open and transparent
  - Make written communications easy to understand
  - Explain service decisions clearly
  - Answer your questions and give you guidance so you know what to expect from us and our services
  - Try and respond to your enquiries at the first time of asking
  - Respond within specified time frames and keep you informed of any delays
  - Follow processes and guidance correctly
  - Keep you informed of key changes that affect you
  - Apologise for our mistakes and put things right as soon as possible
  - Request feedback from all those we work with and act on it to continuously improve our services
  - Ensure our employees act according to our company values (appendix 1), are aware of what is expected of them, and receive training and feedback through an appraisal process
- 5 **What we expect from you – you should:**
  - Show the same courtesy and respect that you expect from us (see also paragraph 11)
  - Let us know if you have any specific communication needs which we can share with our services
  - Be patient whilst we deal with your enquiries and await a response within the stated timescales
  - Keep any arranged appointments
  - Not record telephone calls or meetings without the consent of those present
  - Let us know how we can improve our services
  - Work in partnership with us

- 6 **Points of Contact:**

**Telephone** us on 020 8323 0450 (for general queries / requests / advice) between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Key Service telephone numbers can be found [here](#)

**Email** us at [enquiries@cognus.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cognus.org.uk)

**Write** to us at Cantium House, Railway Approach, Wallington, SM6 0DZ

**Service Orders** from schools and other agencies will be processed within 7 days of receipt

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**Freedom of information and Subject Access Requests** can be made through the London Borough of Sutton [here](#)

**Feedback and Complaints** through an online form [here](#)

**Your personal information** will be protected. Our privacy notice can be found [here](#)

### 7 **Contacting Cognus:**

- Cognus will be contactable during normal business hours of 9am to 5pm; this means:
  - Our main telephone number and [enquiries@cognus.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cognus.org.uk) email address will be covered during these times only
  - Requests through our main telephone and email channels will be directed to the correct teams to respond, if a response cannot be given directly
- Staff will be available during their normal working hours. If an individual member of staff is unavailable due to meetings, absence or working pattern (e.g. part-time or term-time):
  - Telephones will be redirected or a voicemail may be left
  - Emails will have an out of office message giving an alternative contact for urgent contact, and stating when the member of staff will return to work if known
  - Staff will include any non-standard working pattern in their email signature
  - Occasionally, our staff will work unsociable hours in the evenings or at weekends and may send emails during these times; this means that they may not be available to take calls in response until the next working day
- We aim to respond to voicemails, emails and letters within 3 working days unless otherwise stated. This may be by acknowledgement if the query is complex or you are requesting a lot of information, but you should then be informed of when to expect a response, and this will normally be no later than 10 working days of the original enquiry
- If, in exceptional circumstances, something will take longer than expected, we will keep you informed of progress

### 8 **Communicating with advocates:**

- If you ask someone to contact us on your behalf, please provide them with your written consent as we will need this when they contact us. We need to ensure we are acting within data protection laws and principles. This means:
  - We will not communicate with them if this consent is not current or was gained for a specific enquiry
  - We will not automatically copy them into communications with you unless in response to an email where they have been included; this means you may need to send them communications or letters from us

### 9 **Communications Preferences:**

- If you have specific communications needs, please email [feedback@cognus.org.uk](mailto:feedback@cognus.org.uk) or call 020 8323 0450 so that your request can be coordinated and considered by our Strategic Leadership Team. We aim to meet all reasonable requests
- Where requests are agreed, our pupil database will have an alert placed on it which can be viewed by staff accessing records. We will use our best endeavours to act in accordance with preferences but there may be occasions where the preferred method of communication may not be followed

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- We are not a visiting office unless by appointment or by invite to meetings or training events. If you have any specific **accessibility needs** please discuss these with the event organiser, and we will try and make reasonable adjustments

### 10 **Feedback & Complaints:**

- If you have any positive feedback for us, for example where staff have provided excellent service, please let us know so we can share this with them and others as good practice
- If you have not been happy with our service, it is important you tell us about this so that we can put things right for you and those we work with in the future
- Our Feedback & Complaints Policy can be found on our [website](#)

### 11 **Unreasonable Behaviour & Conduct**

- Where someone is in communication with our services, we expect our staff to be treated respectfully and fairly, and we will take action to protect staff from unreasonable behaviours aimed at them. These may include:
  - Threatening or abusive behaviour, whether this is in verbal or written communications, or physical actions
  - Excessive or persistent communications
  - Making unreasonable demands
- Where we believe unreasonable behaviour or conduct has been displayed, we will
  - Issue a warning about future behaviour
  - Limit how often you can contact Cognus and who you can contact
  - Notify other relevant authorities, for example, Council officers and police, depending on the severity of the behaviour
- Should such measures be necessary, we will notify you in writing of this

**Appendix 1 - Our Values:**

