



Complaints Policy

2022/2023

Schools are required to have a procedure in place to deal with complaints relating to aspects of the school or the provision of facilities or certain services at the school. The NBS complaints policy will be published on the school website.

Key points:

- The vast majority of complaints and concerns can be resolved informally
- A complaint can be brought by a parent of a registered student at the school or any person who has been provided with a service or a facility at the school. The procedure refers to this person as a complainant in this policy
- The complainant must feel able to raise concerns and complaints with members of staff without formality, either in person, by telephone or in writing
- At first it may be unclear whether a complainant is asking a question or expressing an opinion rather than making an educational complaint. A complainant may want a preliminary discussion about an issue to help decide whether he or she wishes to take it further.
- A concern or unresolved problem becomes a complaint only when the complainant asserts that a school has acted wrongly in some significant decision, action or failure to take action.
 - Even when a complaint has been made it can be resolved or withdrawn at any stage.
- The Principal, has responsibility for the operation and management of the school complaints procedure unless the complaint is regarding herself in which case the Director will take responsibility

Other Solutions to Complaints

Where a matter can be resolved internally it will not be considered as a formal complaint. The key areas may be: admissions decisions; curriculum issues; certain decisions relating to formal assessment of special educational needs; and decisions to exclude a student.

Prior to the complaints procedures being implemented the school will endeavour to reconcile the issues internally. All complaints should be passed first to the class/subject teacher who will decide on the best action to take. It must be noted that all complaints have at least two sides and full evidence should be sought prior to any decisions or responses being made.

If issues cannot be resolved in this way then the Stage 1 procedures will apply.

Stage 1 in the complaints procedure

Dealing with concerns informally

- The complainant should be given an opportunity to discuss their concern with the appropriate member of staff, initially their child's classroom teacher. An appointment will need to be made.
- The complainant is able to bring a friend to any discussion.
- The complainant must be precise and factual in the complaint
- The member of staff dealing with the concern should make sure that the complainant is clear what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed and this should be agreed, written and signed by both parties
- This stage should be completed speedily and concluded in writing with appropriate detail.
- Where no satisfactory solution has been found, the complainant should be informed that s/he will need to consider whether to make a formal complaint in writing to the Principal. To assist in this process a complaint form is provided in Appendix 1.

Stage 2 – Referral to the Principal, Dr Sue for investigation

- The Principal will acknowledge the complaint in writing.
- The Principal should consider providing an opportunity to meet with the complainant to supplement any information previously provided.
- If the complaint is against a member of staff, the Principal should talk with the staff member against whom the complaint has been made.
- If necessary, the Principal will interview witnesses and take statements from those involved.
- The Principal will keep reasonable written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.
- Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Principal should produce a written response to the complainant. The Principal will then meet the complainant to discuss/resolve the matter before confirming the outcome in writing.
- The written response should include a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, it should include what action the school will take to resolve the complaint.
- Stage 2 should be completed within 15 school days. However, it is recognised that where the case is complex, it may prove difficult to meet this timetable. In such cases, the Principal will write to the complainant giving a revised target date.
- NBS will not pay financial compensation as a response to complaints
- The formal stage 2 response should also advise the complainant that if s/he is not satisfied with the response and wishes to take the matter further, s/he should write to the Director within 15 school days of receiving the outcome

letter. The outcome letter from the Principal should set out the name of the Director and the address to which the complainant can send the letter.

Complaints against the Principal

If the complaint is wholly or mainly about the Principal, the Director, should consider the complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of the procedure described above. However, before Stage 3 is instigated the Director will invite the Principal to respond to the complaint in writing within ten school days. The Director will send a copy of the Principal's response to the complainant who will be asked to indicate within five school days of receipt of the response whether s/he is satisfied with the response. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the Principal regarding another staff member or herself stage 3 should commence as described below.

Stage 3 – Consideration by the Director

The Director should take a decision at the beginning of Stage 3 on whether to seek the services of an administrator to record the minutes of the conversation and deal with the administration of the procedure, provide independent advice on procedure and evidence, ensure that the relevant facts are established and draft the decision letter

- If the complainant decides to take the matter further, the Director should write to the complainant to acknowledge the complaint within five school days of receipt of the complaint. A copy of the acknowledgement and the complaints form should be sent to the Principal
- If the complaint has been investigated at Stage 1 and Stage 2, the result of the investigation must be made available to the Director by the Principal. However, where the complaint is against the Principal and the complaint is referred to Stage 3, the Director must decide how the complaint should be investigated.
- The Director should consider the complaint on the basis of the written evidence and set up a hearing to hear both parties.
- The administrator should write to the complainant to explain how the review will be conducted. The letter should be copied to the Principal.
- The administrator should confirm the date of the meeting with the Director
- The complainant and Principal should be invited to attend the meeting. The date and time of the meeting should be convenient to the complainant and the Principal within reason. The notification should inform the complainant of his/her right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/representative. It should also explain how the meeting will be conducted and of the complainant's right to submit further written evidence to the committee.
- The Principal will also be invited to prepare a written report for the meeting in response to the complaint.

- It is the responsibility of the Director to ensure that the meeting is properly conducted. However, the proceedings should be as informal as possible.
- The aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.
- If either party wishes to introduce previously undisclosed evidence or witnesses, it is in the interest of natural justice to adjourn the meeting so that the other side has time to respond to the new evidence. Late evidence of witnesses should not be accepted unless there is a good reason for the lateness.

The meeting should allow for:

The complainant to explain his or her complaint and the Principal to explain the reasons for her decision;

The Principal to question the complainant about the complaint and the complainant to question the Principal;

The Director to have an opportunity to question both the complainant and the Principal;

Any party to have the right to bring witnesses (subject to the approval of the Director) and all parties having the right to question all the witnesses; and

There will be a final statement by the Principal and complainant.

- The Director should explain to the complainant and the Principal that a written response will be sent to both parties as soon as possible. The complainant, Principal and any witnesses will then leave.
- The Director will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and reach a decision on the complaint. Where appropriate the Director can decide on the action to be taken to resolve the complaint and/or suggest recommended changes to the school's system or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.
- The Director will send a written statement outlining the decision with reasons to both the complainant and the Principal (appendix 2)

Stage 3 should be completed in 15 school days. However, it is recognised that this timetable is likely to improve impossible for complaints which are complex. In such cases the Director should write to the complainant and Principal giving a revised target date.

If the complainant is unhappy with the way in which a school has dealt with the complaint, they may be able to approach the Owners of the school to intervene but for this to happen, the complainant needs to be sure that the school has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise or performance of its functions

Vexatious Complaints

There will be occasions when despite all stages of the procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Owners can inform the complainant in writing that the decision reached by the Director was a final decision.



Parent Discussion Form

Student name and class:

Parent name:

Date of meeting:

Time of meeting:

Discussion:

Outcome:

Actions (dated when completed):

Actions completed:

Name:

Signed:

Date:

School Complaint Form 1

If you have tried unsuccessfully to resolve your complaint and wish to take the matter further, please complete this form and send it to the Principal. (If your complaint is against the Principal you will need to send the form to the Director.)

Your Name:

Address:

Telephone Number (Home):

Telephone Number (Day):

Telephone Number (Mobile):

Name of Student

Date of Birth of Student

What is your complaint about?

When and with whom did you initially discuss your concern/complaint?

What was the result of the discussion?

Signed:

Date:

Example letter

An example of a letter that the Director may wish to send to the complainant upon receipt of a complaint at Stage 3

Dear

Complaint re:

Thank you for your letter dated..... setting out the reasons why you are not satisfied with the Principal's response to your complaint about I write to let you know that I will be considering your complaint in accordance with Stage 3 of the complaints procedure. As explained in the procedure, I will let you know in writing how the I intend to consider your complaint.

(or in the case of complaints against the Principal)

I have received your complaint against the Principal of Nottingham British School I write to let you know that I have forwarded a copy of your complaint to the Principal with a request that she respond within ten school days to the issues raised in the complaint. A copy of the Principal's response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If you are not satisfied with the Principal's response, I will arrange to consider your complaint in accordance with Stage 3 of the complaints procedure. As explained in the procedure, I will let you know in writing how the complaint will proceed.

Yours sincerely

Director

This policy will be reviewed in April 2018

