

# Complaints Policy



Policy Updated	Sept 2019					
Adopted by	Miss Michelle Taylor		Mrs Elizabeth Brown		Sept 2019	
Policy Review	2020	DATE	INITIAL	2021	DATE	INITIAL
Annually August						
This policy applies equally to all pupils across the school, including pupils of EYFS, Breakfast Club and Late Room.						

## Introduction

At the New School, we aim to provide high quality teaching and pastoral care for our pupils. If parents have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the New School staff in accordance with this policy and following these procedures.

## Timescales

We aim to resolve any complaints as soon as possible. Timescales for each stage of the Complaints Procedure are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. For the purposes of this policy, a "working day" is defined as a weekday during term time, when the New School is open. The definition of "working day" excludes weekends and Bank Holidays. For the avoidance of doubt, term dates are published on the New School's website, and information about term dates is made available to parents and pupils periodically.

## **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's Class Teacher, or in the case of the nursery (Class 1) the Nursery Manager. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff who is approached is unable to resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to refer the matter to Miss Taylor the Headmistress.

The Nursery Manager/ Class Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 14 days or in the event that the staff member concerned and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

## **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmistress, Mrs Brown, and this will be logged.

The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

Your complaint will be acknowledged by telephone (and followed up in writing) normally within 24 hours of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays. The acknowledgement will indicate the action that is being taken and the likely timescale for resolution.

In most cases, Mrs Brown will speak to the parents concerned, normally within three days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for Mrs Brown to carry out further investigations. She will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Headmistress is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing, normally within a further 7 working days. The Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision. Please note that as some staff are not available through the holiday period, the complaint may take longer to resolve at this time. The aim would always be to resolve things within 28 days.

For parents with children in Classes 1 and 2 (EYFS settings) there are additional regulatory requirements and information is provided below under the heading Complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they can request that the complaint (as written above) be referred to a Panel hearing - that being Stage 3 of this procedure. This referral should be made in writing within 5 working days to The Headmistress, The New School, The Avenue, Exminster, EX6 8AT.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), Miss Taylor the Proprietor, will arrange a hearing of the Complaints Panel. Miss Taylor will acknowledge receipt of the complaint normally within 24 hours.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the New School. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by Miss Taylor. Miss Taylor, on behalf of the Panel, will schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.

If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than three days prior to the hearing. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 14 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmistress, and where relevant, the person to whom the complaint refers. A copy of those findings and recommendations are available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor/Headmistress. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Parents may make request for the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. This information is published on the school website.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except to the extent as required by paragraph 25(k) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) 2010, that is where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act requires access to them. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will normally be retained only for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary in the circumstances.

A record of all complaints, including EYFS, is kept for 3 years, including whether they have been resolved at stage 1 or 2 or proceeded to a hearing by the Panel, to permit independent scrutiny by OFSTED or ISI of our handling of complaints. In addition, the New School must provide Ofsted and ISI, on request with a written record of all complaints made during any specific period and the action taken as a result of each complaint. When we are notified of an Inspection, we will notify all of our parents, including EYFS. Once the final inspection report has been provided, we will supply it to parents of children, including all those within EYFS.

Parents may make separate complaints to ISI or OFSTED as detailed at the end of the policy.

## **Complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements**

(For parents with children in Classes 1 and 2 - EYFS settings)

Additional regulatory requirements apply to written complaints for EYFS settings beyond those which apply to the children at Key Stage One.

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

In the event of dissatisfaction with the above actions, the complainant may refer the matter to the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) or to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The contact details for these are as follows:

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
<http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaints/>  
0300 123 1231

Independent Schools Inspectorate  
Cap House  
9-12 Long Lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA  
[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)  
[concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)  
0207 600 100

## **Monitoring and review of complaints policy and procedures**

The Proprietor will monitor the number and type of complaints received and the operation of procedures set out in this policy. They will also review the policy at least annually to ensure it meets statutory requirements and continues to reflect best practice.