

Complaints Policy & Procedure



**Newwingate
School**

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF OUR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

We believe that our school provides an outstanding education for all our students, and that the Newingate School team work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents, carers and other stakeholders. However, we acknowledge that from time to time parents, carers and others connected with the school, will become aware of matters which cause them concern. To encourage resolution of such situations we have adopted this simple and clear complaints procedure.

The school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the student above all other issues. Written records will be kept of all complaints including the stage at which they were resolved and all correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential.

The procedure is devised with the intention that it will:

- usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means (before or at stage one of the procedure)
- be simple to use and understand
- treat complaints confidentially
- allow problems to be handled swiftly
- address all points causing concern
- inform future practice so that the problem is unlikely to recur
- reaffirm the partnership between families and staff as they work together for the good of the students in the school
- ensure that the school's attitude to a student would never be affected by a parental complaint
- discourage anonymous complaints
- ensure that all staff have opportunities to discuss and understand the school's response to concerns and complaints made by families or other persons
- ensure that any person complained against has equal rights with the person making the complaint.

OUR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Newingate School has a simple and transparent complaints procedure. If you have a concern or a complaint you wish to raise, it is your right to do so.

If your complaint is about the headteacher/proprietor, please direct your complaint to the Chair of Governors.

STAGE 1 (INFORMAL) SHARING YOUR COMPLAINT

If you are concerned about anything at the school you should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with your child's teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way.

We always want to know if there is a problem, so that we can take action before the problem seriously affects the student's welfare and/or progress. After hearing the concern we shall act as quickly as we can. Please allow time for any action we may take to be effective. It may be possible to see the teacher straight away but usually it is better to make an appointment so that you can sit and talk things through.

STAGE 2 (FORMAL) MAKING A COMPLAINT TO THE HEADTEACHER

If you are still unhappy, ask for an appointment with the headteacher.

If you wish to do so, it is helpful if you can give a brief outline of your concern when you make the appointment. It may be useful to complete the **complaints form** (at the end of this document) at this point. After your discussion with the headteacher you may have to wait a short time while investigations are carried out.

Every effort will be made to resolve the situation as quickly as possible; the headteacher will keep you updated and will send you a written response within seven working days.

STAGE 3 (FORMAL) MAKING A COMPLAINT TO THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

If you are still unhappy, ask for an appointment with the chair of governors.

If you wish to do so, it is helpful if you can give a brief outline of your concern when you make the appointment. It may be useful to complete the **complaints form** (at the end of this document) at this point. After your discussion with the chair of governors you may have to wait a short time while investigations are carried out.

STAGE 4 (FORMAL)

MAKING A COMPLAINT TO OUR COMPLAINTS PANEL

If the complaint has still not been resolved at stages 1, 2 or 3, you may ask for your complaint to be heard by our complaints panel, which will include at least three members who have been appointed by the governing body.

None of the three appointed members of the complaints panel will have been directly involved in any of the matters detailed in the complaint, and at least one of the three will be completely independent of the leadership of the school.

The complaints panel will consider all written complaints within twenty working days of receipt. The panel will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite you to attend the meeting, so that the complaint can be explained in more detail. The complainant is welcome to be accompanied by a family member or friend to the meeting. The school will always give the complainant at least five days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing all the evidence, the complaints panel will consider their decision and inform the complainant, and where relevant the person complained about, their key findings and recommendations which will be provided in writing within two school days.

The complaints panel will do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction.

A copy of the findings and recommendations will be made available for inspection at the school by the proprietor and the leadership team.

SUMMARY OF TIMESCALE

Stage	Description	Response
1	INFORMAL: SHARING YOUR CONCERN A discussion with a relevant member of staff, for example teacher or learning lead	As soon as possible, within 2 working days
2	FORMAL: MAKING A COMPLAINT TO THE HEADTEACHER A meeting and/or written complaint to the headteacher	Acknowledged on the day of receipt, responded to within a maximum of 7 working days
3	FORMAL: MAKING A COMPLAINT TO THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS A meeting and/or written complaint to the chair of governors	Acknowledged on the day of receipt, responded to within a maximum of 7 working days
4	FORMAL: MAKING A COMPLAINT TO OUR COMPLAINTS PANEL Attendance at a complaints panel hearing	Hearing arranged within 20 working days, providing the complainant with 5 working days' notice. Findings and recommendations sent within 2 working days of the hearing.

COMPLAINTS LOG

All complaints are recorded in a complaints log. The detail of the complaint is recorded, including informal complaints (stage 1), as is whether the complaint is resolved at stage 1, or at any stage of the formal complaints procedure. Any actions taken by the school as a result of a complaint (regardless of whether the complaint has been upheld or not) are also recorded on this log.

All information (correspondence, statements, records) related to all individual complaints is kept confidential and locked away, accessed only by the headteacher.

COMPLAINTS RECORD

No complaints have been made. (will be updated as necessary)

POLICY REVIEW CYCLE

This policy and all policies at Newingate School will be reviewed and updated by the governing body as per our policy review cycle.

Newingate School complaints form

Please send this completed form to our school address Newingate School, 48 New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3DT or email it to office@newingateschool.co.uk When we receive a complaint, we aim to acknowledge its receipt on the same day.

Your name:
The student's name:
Your relationship to the student:
Address:
Postcode:
Home telephone number:
Mobile telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use only

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: