



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date	Review Date	Contact
01.09.18	01.09.19	Principal

Date approved by proprietor: 01.09.18

Legal Status:

- This policy details the way in which parental complaints are managed by Newbury Hall School. Any matter about which a parent of a student is unhappy and seeks action by the school is regarded as a complaint.

Applies to:

- Newbury Hall where the record of complaints is kept for a minimum of five years. The whole school along with all activities provided by the school, including those outside of the normal school hours (Residence and PLACES).
- All staff (teaching and non-teaching) working in the school and Proprietor.

Timescale

The process of dealing with a complaint in writing from the moment that it is received by the school to resolution will take no more than twenty eight (28) working days. The days specified in this policy refers to days that the school is in session. Complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as possible during holiday periods but no later than the first working day of the term.

Availability

This policy is made available to staff, students and parents in the following ways: via the School website, within the Policies Folder in the school office and on request a copy may be obtained from the Principal.

Monitoring and Review:

- The Principal logs all complaints received by the school and records at which stage and how they were resolved. The record includes: the person making the complaint, the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, any action taken and the outcome of the complaint.
- The Proprietor regularly monitors the Complaints Procedure and the management of complaints in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly, taking into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and making any modifications necessary to this policy. Details of the number of complaints, registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year are recorded at the end of this policy which is published on the school website.
- The Proprietor undertakes a formal annual review of these procedures for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown on the policy, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Newbury Hall will endeavour to ensure that the quality of teaching and pastoral care offered to students will be of the highest order. However, if parents have a complaint they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure. We are always willing to listen to concerns and anxieties, parental and student concerns being of particular importance. We aim for the closest co-operation between parents and the teachers to whom our students are entrusted. Dealing with parental concerns is a vital part of the ethos and mission of Newbury Hall. We aim to be open about the decisions we make and the actions we take and will always explain our rationale.

If parents of students at the school do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure. We use the term “complainant” to refer to the individual or individuals making the complaint. These may be one or a combination of any of the following: a parent or guardian of a student at the school, parents or guardians of a student at the school or several parents or guardians of students at the school. Complaints will be resolved either to the complainant’s satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of students. At every stage of the procedure, the handling of the complaint will be swift (using the agreed time frame), fair and necessarily confidential. Throughout the process, Newbury Hall will be willing to: listen, learn, admit mistakes, apologise if appropriate, address any issues raised and change practices and procedures if appropriate

Parents have the right to raise a concern about the school with OFSTED. Parents may do this online at <https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints>

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

(References to the number of working days refer to term-time only)

- It is hoped that parents feel able to voice any concerns with their child’s teacher as soon as they arise and that most concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. In most cases, discussion, explanation, further information or an apology, if appropriate, will resolve any issues. Parents may also speak informally to the Principal. In most cases the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parent’s satisfaction. If the Principal cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to consult the Proprietor.
- The Principal will make a written record of all concerns and complaints, the date they were received, any actions taken and the outcomes. Should the matter not be resolved within 5 working days, or in the event that the staff and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

(References to the number of working days refer to term-time only)

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Principal. In most cases, the Principal will contact the parents (or Guardians/ETOs where appropriate) concerned, normally the day of receiving the complaint but within 5 working days in order to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at the informal stage.
- Within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, the Principal will complete the investigation and then contact the complainant. At any point in the process the Principal may decide or agree to commission a further investigation. If this occurs, the timescale may be extended by up to 10 working days and the complainant will be informed of the extension and the reason for it.

The Principal will:

- establish what has happened so far and who has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- contact the complainant;
- clarify what the complainant feels would resolve the issue;
- interview those involved, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conduct each interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in questioning and

- keep notes of each interview (interviews may be held in person or via telephone).

When the investigation is complete, the Principal will contact the complainant to try to resolve the complaint. Any of the following may be appropriate at this point:

- An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part
- An apology
- An explanation
- A clarification of any misunderstanding
- An admission that the situation could have been handled better or differently
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it will not be repeated
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.
- The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Principal 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. The Principal will give reasons for the decision. A note will also be kept of when a final outcome was reached.
- Should a parent or guardian have a complaint about the Principal, an approach should first be made to the Proprietor whose contact details are: Till Gins, OISE House, 38 Binsey Lane, Oxford, OX2 0EY Telephone: 01865 258300 Email: administration@oise.com. This should include the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The Proprietor will investigate the matter within 10 working days and will do everything possible to resolve the issue at Stage 2 through a dialogue with the school and the complainant.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure

Stage 3 – Complaints Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) or due to the nature of the complaint they do not wish to follow Stages 1 and 2 of this procedure, they will be referred to the Complaints Panel.
- The Panel will consist of at least three people not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school, comprising of OISE Board Members. The independent panel member will be selected on the basis of his or her ability to analyse evidence and put forward a balanced argument e.g. business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of other schools, people with a legal background, retired members of the Police Force.
- A Panel Convenor will be appointed by the Panel, and should agree with all parties the date of the Appeal Meeting within 5 school days of receipt of the written referral of the complaint. The meeting itself should be held within 15 school days of the receipt of the referral. If the complainant or Principal wishes to submit information in writing to the Panel, this should be sent to the Panel Convenor at least 5 days before the date of the hearing.
- 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 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- The complainant, who could be parents or guardians, may be accompanied to the panel by a relative or friend.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Complaints Panel will decide how it should be carried out and the timescale – up to 10 working days. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Complaints Panel will reach a decision and may make findings and recommendations, which it shall complete within 5 working days of the Hearing.
- A copy of the Panel's findings, and/or any recommendation and the reasons for them will be:

- sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
- available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Principal.

As far as possible, the meeting should not be delayed if the referral comes at the end of term, especially at the end of the Summer Term. Since the aim of the procedure is to resolve the issue and effect reconciliation if necessary, it will be best if the matter can come to the Panel as quickly as possible, especially if the complainant will already have been engaged over a longer period in attempts to put things right.

Role of the Panel Convenor is:

- to confirm to all parties in writing the date, time and venue of the hearing;
- to receive and distribute any documentation to be read before the hearing;
- to meet and welcome all parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- to record the proceedings and
- to notify all parties of the Panel's decision.

The wording of any letters will be agreed with the Chair of the Panel.

The role of the Chair of the Panel is to ensure that:

- procedure is properly followed;
- the procedure for the hearing of the complaint is explained to all parties and that they have the opportunity to put their case without undue interruption;
- the issues are addressed;
- all parties are put at ease, especially those who are unfamiliar with such a hearing;
- proceedings are kept as informal as possible and that everyone treats each other with respect and courtesy;
- the Panel operates in an open-minded and independent way and
- time is given for all parties to consider 'new' evidence.

The order of the Proceedings for hearing of the complaint:

1. Welcome, introductions and explanation of the proceedings by the Chair. Notes will be taken during the meeting and correspondence and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or the inspectorate requests access to them.
2. The complainant is invited to explain the complaint.
3. The Principal may question the complainant.
4. The Panel may question the complainant.
5. If there are any witnesses for the complainant, each one is invited to the hearing in turn and in each case the witness is invited to speak. The Principal may then question them, followed by the Panel. In each case the witness may leave after their evidence has been given.
6. The Principal is invited to explain the school's actions.
7. If there are any witnesses for the school, they are treated in exactly the same way as the witnesses for the complainant.
8. When the Chair is sure that all parties have asked all they need to, the complainant is invited to sum up their complaint.
9. The Principal is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
10. The Chair explains that both parties will hear from the Panel within 3 school days following the day of the hearing.
11. Both parties leave together whilst the panel decides on the issues.

Options open to the Panel:

The Panel may:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;

- decide on an appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint or
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not re-occur.

After the Hearing:

The Chair of the Panel agrees with the Convenor the wording of the letter to be sent to both parties.

The Panel Convenor will:

- ensure that the letter is sent out in accordance with the agreed time scales and procedure as stated in Stage 3 of this policy;
- ensure the notes are written-up and agreed by the panel;
- ensure that any recommendation to change school policies or procedures is put on the agenda for the next meeting with the Proprietor.

The number of formal complaints, received in an academic year, is made available to parents (published at the end of the Complaints Policy)

Confidentiality

All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Such correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except;

- where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them; or
- where any other legal obligation prevails

Record keeping for the Whole School

A written record of all complaints and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage, or proceed to a panel hearing, is kept by the Principal for a minimum of five years. The record includes: the person making the complaint, the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, any action taken and the outcome of the complaint. A written record will also be kept of when a final outcome was reached. The Proprietor examines this written record on a termly basis..

Any complaints that involve a child protection issue must be reported immediately to the DSL/Principal. Refer to our Child Protection Policy for details of the procedure.

As a residential school the Principal will ensure that this complaints procedure also complies with Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools

Signed:

Date: 01/09/18

**Till Gins
Proprietor**



**Jon Crocker
Principal**

COMPLAINTS TREE

Procedure for complaints by Parents or Members of Staff

