

Nishkam School Trust



Concerns and Complaints Policy

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| Approved by: | Trust Board | Date: February 2018 |
| Last reviewed on: | February 2018 | |

Concerns and Complaints Policy

Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a concern or complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level, and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practice, it is fair to those concerned and it helps to promote parents' and pupils' confidence in our ability to safeguard and promote welfare. We will try to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, reviewing our systems and procedures in light of the circumstances.

Introduction

1. Circulation: This policy is addressed to the Leadership Team; to all members of the teaching and pastoral staff, including school medical staff and nursing staff; and, on request, to parents and pupils. The policy will be available on the school website.
2. Policy status: The policy provides guidelines for handling concerns and complaints. It takes account of Regulation 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.
3. Application: Separate procedures apply in the event of a child protection issue or if the School Principal/Headteacher excludes a pupil and parents seek a Governors' Review of that decision
4. Confidentiality: A written record will be kept of all complaints and of whether they are resolved at Stage One, or proceed to a Panel Hearing. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be supplied to parents on request. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by Regulation 7(k) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) 2003, as amended-, that is where access is required by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection, or under other legal authority.

This policy describes a four stage procedure:

Stage 1: Informal resolution.

Stage 2: A formal complaint in writing to the Head of School.

Stage 3: A renewed complaint in writing to the Chairman of Governors.

Stage 4: A reference to a Complaints Panel.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally within 5 working days.

If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's teacher (classroom teacher at primary and form tutor in secondary). In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway, to the parents' satisfaction. If the Classroom Teacher, or Form Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Leadership Team.

Complaints made directly to the Head of School (Primary or Secondary), or Vice Principal/Deputy Head will usually be referred to the child's teacher/form tutor unless the Principal/Head of School deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

If parents have a complaint or concern on a financial matter they should normally contact the Lead for Business Services.

The person dealing with the complaint will make sure that the Principal/Head of School is kept informed and will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be addressed within 5 working days, or in the event that a satisfactory resolution has not been reached, then parents will be advised that they may proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

A record is kept of all informal complaints

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parent/s /carer should put their complaint in writing to the Head of School/Principal, stating that they now wish to proceed to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure. The Head of School/Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head of School /Principal will communicate with the parents concerned, normally within 10 days of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

The Head of School /Principal may ask a senior member of staff, normally the Senior Vice Principal/Deputy Headteacher, to carry out further investigations.

A written record will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Head of School /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 Head of School/ Principal will also give reasons for his/her decision.

Stage 3 - Reference to the Chairman of Governors

If the complaint cannot be resolved by Stage 2 of this policy then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Chairman of Governors, containing all relevant documents and stating that they now wish to proceed to Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure.

The Chairman will arrange for the complaint to be investigated and notify the parents, in writing, of the decision and the reasons for it.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 4 of this procedure.

Stage 4 – Panel Hearing

If parents wish to proceed to Stage 4, (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), the matter will then be referred to a 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 school. Each of the panel members will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 working days. If outside of term time the scheduled hearing will take place within 28 working days.

If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint, or any related matter, are supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 3 working days prior to the hearing.

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

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

Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations which they shall complete within 10 working days of the hearing. The panel will write to the parents informing them of their 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 Head of School, members of the panel and where relevant the person about whom the complaint has been made.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Records are kept for a minimum of 3 years.

*The DfE has agreed that such a person may be the Head of another school.

Private proceeding: A hearing before the Complaints Panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to School Office who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

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| Your name: | | | |
| Pupil's name (if relevant): | | | |
| Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant): | | | |
| Address: | | | |
| Postcode: | | | |
| Telephone number: | | | |
| Mobile Number: | | | |
| Email Address: | | | |
| Please provide details of your complaint. (Please try to include dates and times, where possible) | | | |
| What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the outcome)? | | | |
| Are there any attachments to this document? If so, please give details, i.e. number of additional pages, page title, etc | | | |
| Signature: | | Date: | |
| Official use | | | |
| Date Complaint received: | | By who: | |
| Complaint referred to: | | Date: | |
| Complaint Reference Number: | | | |