



Northbourne Park School (including EYFS)

Complaints Procedure

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Date for review: September 2024
Owned by: Headmaster
Reviewers: SMT
Approved by: Board of Governors

Northbourne Park School has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. As parents your views and ideas are highly valued and essential to the successful running of the School. We are committed to open and honest communication and discussion. Parents are encouraged to come forward and share their thoughts, ideas and feedback at anytime and with any member of the teaching or administrative staff.

However, if parents do have a specific concern or complaint, it will be dealt with by the school in accordance with this procedure, which is available to parents of pupils currently at the school, and is made available on request and on the school's website. The Complaints Procedure is for parents of current pupils unless the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered.

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements are investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days.

The school will keep records of complaints which are resolved at the informal stage for management purposes, for example to enable patterns or trends to be monitored. A formal written and/or electronic record is kept of complaints made to the school which reach the formal stage. Details will be recorded of:

- whether the complaint was resolved following the formal stage or proceeded to a panel hearing;
- action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).

A written record will be kept of all complaints and the actions taken whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing. Records are kept for at least three years. The school will provide ISI and Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and in confidence. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution:

If any parent has a complaint, they should contact their child's Form Tutor as soon as possible. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away to the parent's satisfaction. If the Form Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult a member of the senior leadership team as appropriate.

- Complaints made directly to any other individual such as the Deputy Head, Head of Pre Prep or Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor for resolution in the first instance. Complaints should not be directed to the Board of Governors at this stage.
- In all cases the Form Tutor will attempt to resolve the matter in five working days or as soon as is practicable.

Should a matter not be resolved within five working days, or in the event that the Form Tutor and the parents 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 or is of a very serious nature, then the parent will be asked to put their complaint **in writing** to the Headmaster, who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate action to take.
- In most cases and if possible, the Headmaster will speak to the parents concerned within forty-eight hours of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations, or delegate such investigations to an investigating officer. These will be completed in seven days or as soon as is practicable in relation to the nature of the case.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will give reasons for the decision.
- The written decision will be issued within ten working days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the Headmaster will write to the parents within the ten-day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons he is unable to issue any decision and informing the parent when he will do so, which will be within twenty-eight days of receipt of the complaint.

If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they may take the opportunity to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing:

Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents seek to invoke Stage 3 of this procedure, they should write to the Headmaster informing him of their decision to do so within 5 working days, whereupon the matter will be referred to a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Chair of Governors.

- The panel will consist of at least two persons who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and will usually be selected from the Board of Governors. One additional person who is independent of the management and running of the school will join the panel.
- The complaint will be acknowledged on behalf of the panel and a hearing scheduled to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.
- It is possible that there may be a delay in recruiting a panel and agreeing a mutually convenient date for the hearing. In this case, the timescale may need to be altered. If the school has made a reasonable attempt to find a date for a hearing and parents have been unable to agree, or do not co-operate, ISI advises that the panel hearing should go ahead anyway.
- If the panel members deem it necessary, they may require (in writing) that further particulars of the complaint or any other related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five days before the hearing. Any such further particulars received within five days before the hearing may be disregarded and inadmissible at the discretion of the panel.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person, such as a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

- If possible, the panel will resolve the parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However, should the panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required, the panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded. The panel will reconvene and, after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, will reach a decision and may make recommendations.
- This procedure will be completed within fourteen days of the first hearing wherever possible but within twenty-eight days unless otherwise agreed with the parents. The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision together with the reasons. The decision of the panel will be final.
- The panel's findings together with any recommendations will be sent in writing to the Headmaster, Chair of Governors and, where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual.

Specific Complaints

In the event that the complaint involves or relates to a teacher, then the teacher will be kept fully informed of the management of the complaint. The teacher will have the right to make representation to the panel. It may be deemed necessary for the panel to refer to the Job Performance and Capability Procedure or Disciplinary Procedure.

If the complaint concerns a matter relating to the **actions of the Headmaster** and this cannot be resolved informally, then the parent should address their complaint to the Chairman of Governors. He will then appoint an appropriate individual to undertake the actions that would otherwise have been taken by the Headmaster in accordance with this policy.

Early Years Foundation Stage Complaints

If parents wish to make a complaint in respect of the school's Early Years Foundation Stage Provision (Nursery and Reception Classes), they may do so by contacting Ofsted and/or ISI (Independent Schools' Inspectorate) as follows:

Ofsted – Telephone: 0300 1234 4666 (open 8 am – 6 pm) / www.ofsted.gov.uk

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ISI – Telephone: 020 7776 8830 / www.isi.net

A record of any complaint in respect of the school's EYFS provision will be kept for at least three years.

No formal complaints were recorded and/or resolved in the last academic year, 2022-2023.