



Nancy Reuben Primary School

Complaints Policy and Procedure

June 2019



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1. INTRODUCTION

At Nancy Reuben Primary School, we aim for outstanding customer service at all times and for this reason members of the Senior Leadership Team including the Head Teacher are available in the playground at the start and end of each school day. Whilst this might not be the best place to resolve complex issues or concerns, it does nevertheless provide an opportunity to touch base and agree a further course of action enabling swift resolution to any concerns raised.

Nancy Reuben Primary School is an accredited member of the Independent Schools Association (ISA). ISA support Heads and their schools, offering a range of services to help them lead excellent schools. Heads are bound by ISA Articles of Association and ISA accredit schools on the basis of the quality of education that they provide.

If a parent wishes to complain about a school, they should first contact the Head and try to resolve the issues amicably. ISA Heads are always keen to help and so parents should not be concerned at contacting them directly. Often this is preferable to contacting other members of the school community, though a Class Teacher or Deputy Head may be another person who can help in the first instance. Such an approach tends to resolve most problems, but if this initial dialogue does not result in satisfaction, please follow this complaints policy required under Part 6 of the Independent Schools Standards Regulations.

Parents are strongly encouraged to follow the stages outlined in the school's complaints policy, as this is designed to engineer a mutually agreed solution. If parents feel that their complaint has not been handled correctly and to their satisfaction, they may then complain to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI, who inspect the vast majority of our schools). Details of how to go about this are detailed below.

In the ISA's experience, following the published policy brings a result in the vast majority of cases. With any complaint, ISA believes that dialogue is best and ISA Heads are always happy to talk to any parent who may feel dissatisfied. In such a way, ISA Members' schools retain their extremely high parental satisfaction figures and reputation in their communities.

This policy is published on the school's website <http://www.nrps.co.uk/key-information/school-policies>

2. GUIDANCE

- If any concerns are raised with the School, this guidance should be followed.
- Concerns should be raised with the School as soon as possible so that they can be investigated properly. When problems or concerns arise there should be informal communication to resolve the issues.
- A formal complaints procedure is only used when the Complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome and wants further steps taken.

- Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State, Ofsted or any other body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.
- The School will respect the views of a person who indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a matter with a particular member of staff.
- Similarly, if a member of staff directly involved feels compromised, then the matter may be referred to another member of staff to deal with it.

3. THE ARRANGEMENTS

The arrangements for dealing with complaints are summarised as follows:

- Criticisms and concerns are handled informally by school staff and/or the Headteacher (where appropriate), in the first instance, i.e. not as formal complaints (See Stage 1 below).
- For complaints that are not resolved informally, a formal, written complaint may be made (See Stage 2 below). A Complaints Form will be available for the Complainant's use, but if he/she prefers to make the written complaint in another way this will be respected.
- Formal complaints must be made in writing.
- Formal complaints will be looked into as swiftly as possible and the Complainant kept fully informed throughout all stages, preferably in writing. If requested, the Complainant will receive a formal response, in writing, once the investigation is complete.
- The School will keep a log book of all complaints that reach Stage 2 of the complaints process, listing the name of the Complainant, date received, who dealt with it, date of response, the stage at which the complaint was resolved and action taken.

4. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage 1 –Informal Resolution

If a parent/carer has a concern or problem, the parent/carer should usually contact the Class Teacher. This is, more often than not, likely to resolve most problems. If the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a senior member of staff.

Complaints made directly to the Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant member of teaching staff unless the Headteacher deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

If the complaint is against the Headteacher, the parent/carer should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors.

In the case of informal complaints:

- A signed record of any meetings and any agreed action to resolve the concern will be kept on file by the Class Teacher and/or the Headteacher.
- Depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint, a copy may be kept on the main pupil file and given to any other interested parties, e.g. SENCO, member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If the problem is resolved, no further action is necessary.

- If the parent/carer remains dissatisfied they will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- When a problem has not been resolved informally at Stage 1 , the parent/carer may then make a formal complaint to the Headteacher, in writing. (The Complainant should obtain a Formal Complaint Form from the School Office. See Appendix 1)
- In most cases a meeting will be held with the parent/carer as soon as possible and no later than within five school days of receipt of the complaint, where practicable.
- It may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Headteacher will keep written records of any meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headteacher 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, and within 10 school days of receipt of the complaint, where possible. The Headteacher will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If the complaint is about the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will ask the Headteacher for a full report and for all the relevant documents. The Chair of Governors will investigate the complaint following the process set out above.
- If the complaint is resolved, no further action is necessary. If the parent/carer is still not satisfied, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Complaint Panel Hearing

If the parent/carer (“Complainant”) is still not satisfied, they will be asked to put the complaint in writing formally to the Governing Body (for the attention of the Clerk) and for consideration by a Complaints Panel. The Clerk will acknowledge the complaint.

The Clerk to the Governors will be responsible for convening the Complaints Panel and for making the arrangements for any hearing.

The Panel

- The Panel will consist of three persons – none of whom will have had any prior involvement with the complaint and at least one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The Panel will elect its own Chair.
- The Complaints Panel will convene within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint, or as soon as practicable thereafter.

Procedure for Formal Complaint Panel Hearing

- Any particulars of the complaint will be circulated to both parties and members of the Panel at least five school days before the hearing.

- At the hearing, the Complainant may be accompanied, if they so wish, by a friend.
- Each party may call witnesses who can be questioned by the other side and members of the Panel.
- The Complainant, his/her Representative and the Headteacher shall appear before the Panel at the same time and must be present for the whole of the proceedings, except when the Panel wishes to confer or consider its decision.
- The Hearing will be clerked by the Clerk to the Governing Body, or an independent mediator appointed by the Clerk.
- The Procedure at the Hearing will be as follows.
 1. Introductions by the Chair of the Panel, as well as an explanation of the procedure and the remit of the Panel.
 2. The Complainant, or his/her Representative, makes statement of complaint and background, and calls witnesses if required.
 3. Questions to the Complainant, or his/her Representative, by the Headteacher/Chair of Governors and the Panel.
 4. The Headteacher makes statement and calls witnesses if required.
 5. Questions to the Headteacher by the Complainant, or his/her Representative, and the Panel.
 6. The Headteacher makes final statement.
 7. The Complainant, or his/her Representative, makes final statement.
 8. The Chair of the Panel sums up.

The Panel's decision

- Interested parties will be asked to withdraw whilst the Panel reaches a decision.
- If the Panel is unable to make an immediate decision because, for example, they require further information or legal advice, they must let the parties know immediately and confirm the position in writing within three school days.
- When making their decision on the complaint, the Panel will apply the following test:
 1. Is there a genuine complaint?
 2. In all the circumstances, should the complaint be upheld?
If yes:
 3. What should the Panel do to effectively remedy the complaint and give the Complainant redress?
 4. The decision will be made by a simple majority of the Panel.

The remit of the Complaints Panel is to:

- dismiss the complaint in whole, or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole, or in part;
- make recommendations or decide, where it has appropriate remit, to take the appropriate action to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the School's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The Panel's findings and recommendations will be provided to the Complainant, and, where relevant, the person complained about, no later than five school days after the hearing, including measures or directions to the School where it is culpable in any way to take remedial measures.

The Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by Governing Body and the Headteacher.

Persistent Complaints

If a Complainant attempts to reopen an issue or a closely related issue that has already been dealt with under this Complaints Procedure, the Chair of Governors may write to the Complainant to inform him/her that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter closed. Further that continued correspondence is vexatious and the School will not respond to any further correspondence on this issue or a closely related issue.

The Independent School Inspectorate (ISI)

Guidance on how to raise a concern to the Independent School Inspectorate (ISI) can be found on their website here.

<https://www.isi.net/parents-and-pupils/concerns-about-a-school>

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Appendix 1



Nancy Reuben Primary School

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher; They will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Address:.....

.....

.....

Postcode:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Email address:

If applicable, name of child(ren) at school:

Please give details of your complaint:

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What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?

(Who did you speak to and what was the response?)

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Your relationship to the school, e.g. parent, carer, neighbour, member of public:

.....
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:

Date of acknowledgement sent:

By Whom:

Complaint referred to:

