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Complaints Procedure

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Newcastle Preparatory School (NPS) has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school with care and in accordance with this procedure. NPS makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and on the school's website and in the school office during the school day. NPS will ensure that parents of pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available. In the case of exclusions, the procedure outlined in this policy, would be followed in the event of an appeal.

A record of complaints is kept confidentially in school. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the previous school year will be provided to parents on request by contacting the school office via telephone or email. This procedure relates to the whole school including the EYFS.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you [or your child] raises.

Stage One (Informal Stage)

If any parent should have cause for concern, in the first instance it should be brought to the attention of the child's Form Teacher or a Senior member of staff. On the same day or the following day discussion will take place with the parent so that the cause for concern can be resolved.

At NPS we encourage parents to talk with us about any concerns.

If any parent feels that their concern needs to be taken further, the Head Teacher would be available to talk through the issue. The Head Teacher always seeks to talk with parents as soon as possible and always within three days. If this timescale is not possible an Assistant Head Teacher would be available.

Complaints against the Head should be made directly to the Chair of Governors.

Stage Two: Further Action to be taken when a matter is not resolved (Formal Stage)

If any parent feels that the issue remains unresolved the concern should be put in writing to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher would further investigate so that the complaint can be resolved within 5 working days. A written record will be kept of all complaints made within the EYFS setting. A written record will be kept of all formal complaints made in the rest of the school and will note whether:

- the complaint has been resolved following a formal procedure or have proceeded to a panel hearing
- what action has been taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Stage Three (Panel Hearing)

Where the parent is not satisfied with the school's response to their concern/complaint at stage two then they would be asked to put their concerns/complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors indicating a wish to continue to stage three. For compliance purposes a panel hearing should take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further.

At this stage an appropriate panel would be organised. The panel would consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The panel would arrange a convenient date to meet in response to the letter being received by the Chair of Governors. The panel hearing should proceed notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend. If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion. The requirement for the panel to proceed does not prevent the school from accommodating parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning panel composition.

Where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one person would be independent of the management and running of the school.

The DfE gives the following guidance on the identity of an independent panel member.

"Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered."

Parents would be invited to attend the panel hearing and could be accompanied if they wish.

The final outcome would be in writing and recommendations made in order to resolve the problem. A copy of those findings and recommendations would be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complaint and, where relevant, the person complained about. It would also be available for inspection on the school premises by the chair of governors and the head teacher.

The whole process would normally take no longer than 28 working days and the written outcome of the panel hearing would be produced within 5 working days of the hearing.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints would be kept confidential, except where disclosure is required by law (such as where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them) or for legal proceedings.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint to the Chair of Governors, this can be done by contacting:

Mrs Susan Blair
The Newcastle Preparatory School Trust Limited,
6 Eslington Rd,
Jesmond,
NE2 4RH

If a parent wishes to make a complaint to Ofsted regarding the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, this can be done by contacting:

OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
General Helpline 0300 123 1231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Written complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated by the school and complainants will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint to the Independent Schools Inspectorate this can be done by contacting:

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA
Telephone 020 7600 0100
Email concerns@isi.net

A record of complaints is kept for at least seven years. Records concerning allegations of abuse will be preserved for the term of the Independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of this policy.

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