



Complaints Policy and Procedure



Introduction

It is hoped that any concerns expressed by students/parents/carers/professionals can be dealt with without the need for this formal complaints procedure, since we pride ourselves on good communication and openness.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the New Reflexions Complaints Policy.

General Principles

- All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- All complaints received will be recorded in the school's complaints record. The outcome of the complaint will also be recorded, together with the reasons for the decision.
- All records of complaints and details of any investigations will be kept confidential.
- All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully and complainants will be kept informed of progress.
- Longridge school will always seek to resolve issues in the most amicable way possible.

Stage 1a – Informal Resolution – timescale 1 school week

Parents, carers, professionals or guardians should, in the first instance, make an appointment to speak to the relevant teacher about the concern. It is best to resolve issues at this point.

Guidance on informal level 1a:

- *Concerns should initially be handled informally in a manner that offers the best way of resolving issues.*
- *A teacher should offer an appointment to discuss the issue as quickly as possible, as this will give both parties time to talk about it calmly and politely without being interrupted. It will also show a commitment from both parties to resolve issues.*
- *The parties involved should be encouraged to offer their view of what would be a realistic resolution to the problem.*

Stage 1b – Informal Resolution – timescale 1 school week

Parents, carers, professionals or guardians dissatisfied with the result of the discussions with the teacher should ask for an appointment to meet with the Head teacher.

If a resolution to the issue is proving difficult to find, the head teacher can speak to the Directors about the issue who may be able to offer informal intervention.

Guidance on informal level 1b:

- *It is always best to resolve issues informally at the earliest possible time but if the person is not satisfied with the result of the discussion with the teacher then he/she can ask for an appointment to meet with the Head teacher*
- *It is in everyone's interest, particularly the child or children, for concerns and complaints to be sorted out quickly and smoothly.*
- *The aim should be that discussions end on a positive note with no bad feeling.*
- *It is good practice for the Head teacher to write a letter to parents summarising what has been agreed regarding the issue.*
- *The Head teacher may feel that a particular Director's input would be helpful in bringing about a resolution.*

It is hoped that most problems will have been resolved by now.

Stage 2 – formal complaint letter to Head teacher– timescale 2 school weeks

An issue that has not been resolved through the informal stages can become an official complaint.

Parents, carers, professionals or guardians wishing to move to stage 2 must write a formal letter of complaint to the Head teacher. The letter will need to set out clearly the issues which have previously been discussed and why the parent, carer, professional or guardian considers the issue to be unresolved.

Head teachers should consider the complaint and discuss a resolution with the complainant. The Head teacher should offer a resolution to the complainant in writing within 10 school days of receipt of the letter.

Guidance on stage 2 – formal complaint:

- *An unresolved issue can now move to a formal complaint. This is a serious step to be taken. In consideration of future home/school relationships everyone concerned will need to negotiate an agreement and concentrate on finding a resolution to the issue.*

Concerns or complaints specifically about the Head teacher.

If, the concern or complaint is specifically about the Head teacher and is unable to be resolved at the informal stage, then it will be necessary for the complainant to formally complain to the School Operations Director. The school will provide the Director's name and the complainant should write to him or her at the school address marking the envelope 'urgent, private and confidential'. The Director should acknowledge the complainant's letter in writing within 5 school days of receipt.

The decision that the Head teacher has made as a result of the complaint should not become a complaint about the Head teacher, the original issue must remain the focus.

Stage 3 – formal complaint requesting a Proprietors' Review (Appeal Process) – convened within 15 working days.

Time Scales:

Receipt of complainant's letter of appeal	Acknowledgement within 5 school days
Director reviewed information and completed their investigation.	Complaints review meeting within 15 school/working days
Appeal decision communicated to all concerned	As soon as possible but within 10 school days of meeting.

Complainants who are unhappy with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishing to move to Stage 3 of the formal complaints procedure (as an appeal) will need to write a letter to New Reflexions Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to request that a Complaints Review takes place. This formal appeal letter must be received within 10 working/school days of the last meeting with the head teacher concerning the issue. The complainant should write to the CEO at the school address marking the envelope '**urgent and confidential**'. The letter will need to set out the complaint that has previously been formally discussed with the head teacher and explain why the complainant feels that the matter is not resolved. The CEO will make provision for a hearing before a panel consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint; one external member will be appointed to the panel who is independent of the New Reflexions Care Group Ltd and therefore not involved in the management and running of the school;

Before the meeting:

- The CEO should make arrangements to acknowledge the complainant's letter in writing within 5 school days of receipt.
- The CEO will arrange to review the information within 15 working days of receipt.

It must be recognised that if the letter is received within 14 school days to the end of term it may not be possible for the CEO to investigate the complaint satisfactorily within the specified timescales. In this case the matter should be dealt with within 10 school days of the school reopening.

- The Head teacher should be given a copy of the complainant's letter and documentation should be requested from the school.

- The complainant and head teacher can be invited to attend the Appeal meeting to give a verbal statement in support of their documentation where this is required. Each of them can bring someone to support them if they wish.

It will be considered from the information submitted under stage 2 if any further information is required and if a further meeting is necessary.

At the meeting:

The complainant and Head teacher (or his/her representative) should provide a supporting statement. The investigation process at stage 2 should already be documented and provided to the CEO ahead of the meeting when requested. The CEO should clarify any points. After the complainant and Head teacher (or his/her representative) have provided all the information the meeting will be adjourned for the decision making process. Written records to be kept of the meeting and any related correspondence.

After the meeting:

The CEO will make arrangements to write to all concerned within 10 school days to explain their decision and suggest a resolution to the problem, if appropriate. The decision of the Appeal process is final. A record of the meeting must be provided to all parties.

Any actions arising as a result of the complaint, irrespective of whether the complaint was upheld, must be documented and action taken accordingly.

Anyone can complain to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he or she believes that a School or Proprietor is acting “unreasonably” or is failing to carry out its statutory duties properly.

Once a Director has heard an appeal, and it is clear that correct procedures have been followed, that specific complaint cannot be reopened. If a request is received in this respect, the Director should inform the complainant that the matter is closed.

Any complaints concerning the conduct of school staff will be handled in accordance with the school’s internal disciplinary procedures. The details of such an investigation will remain confidential.

Should the complaint be directly against the Head teacher, a Director will be identified to complete the investigation into the complaint under stage 2. If the decision is appealed The CEO will appoint a panel of three members of which at least one member will be independent of New Reflexions to hear the appeal under the procedure as set out in stage 3

<i>Last Reviewed</i>	<i>Aug 2023</i>
<i>Next Review Due</i>	<i>Aug 2024</i>
<i>Reviewed by</i>	<i>Head Teacher and Director</i>

Log of Complaints

Academic year	Complaints Made
2021 - 2022	0
2022 - 2023	0
2023 - 2024	