Northstar New School

Complaints Policy and Procedure 2025-2026

This policy was reviewed on:	This policy was ratified/reviewed by Governors on:
Date: September 2025	**Date:** September 2025
By: Euan Macdonald	
Policy will be reviewed on: August 2026	**Frequency of review:** Annually

‘Take all complaints seriously. Don’t let small concerns become big ones.’

NAHT Handbook for School Leaders

Note: This document uses the most current Government information and guidance at the time of writing. It may change according to Government policy.

1 Our Values

Our values, insofar as they affect this policy are:

- Our school is a collaborative learning community where we seek to use every member's creativity and resources and where everyone feels they belong;
- Diversity of views, experiences, ideas and skills among pupils, staff, parents/carers and in the curriculum are strengths to be celebrated. We promote awareness of and respect for cultural, individual and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, philosophical orientation and socioeconomic status. We challenge views and actions that lack respect for others or promote notions of superiority and inferiority between people;
- Only through a system which encourages openness and transparency can we best safeguard children, young people and staff we encourage our pupils, parents/carers, staff and Local Authority clients to complain about any aspect of our service that could be improved on. We are vigilant about keeping our pupils safe and we ensure they are aware of how to keep themselves safe;
- We want to improve and welcome all opportunities so to do. We are a learning community and seek to learn from our partners, internal colleagues and consultants and external inspectors and others with expertise to share. Our staff are committed to Continuing Professional Development (CPD);
- Mistakes may be made by all members of our learning community from time to time. These are our opportunities for learning and change. We work with hope for a better tomorrow when today has been hard.

2 Introduction

As our values, set out above, make clear, we recognize that everyone makes mistakes. What is important, however, is that when mistakes are made there is a clear and fair approach to putting things right again. The aim of this Comments, Complaints & Compliments Policy and Procedure is to ensure that every parent/carer and pupil involved in Northstar New School understands our policy and has access to an ***informal*** and ***formal*** procedure that supports and enables them to raise concerns or complain about any aspect of our school and service.

In addition to making a complaint, parents/carers or pupils may wish to make a comment on an aspect of school life, or a suggestion on a matter of school policy. It is also good to know what we do well, and we welcome any compliments which parents/ carers or pupil may wish to make.

It is important to stress that this policy and procedure is in place for all parents/carers and pupils in our school. Staff who have concerns or complaints are expected to raise these through the school staff grievance policy and procedure.

3 Comments & Compliments

The school encourages comments and compliments, as these can help to improve the quality of education and care that is offered to our pupils. If you have enjoyed a performance, a piece of work, or an event, for example, please let us know. If we know something is appreciated, it helps us in our planning of further works and events.

Please pass any compliments or comments to the Head teacher, using the Comments & Compliments leaflet available at the school.

4 Complaints

Initial Concerns:

At the outset of any concern being raised staff must be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints. The underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. The requirement to have a complaints procedure should not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. In most cases the class teacher or the individual delivering the service will receive the first approach.

It would be helpful for everyone if staff are able to resolve issues on the spot, including apologising where appropriate.

Formal Procedures:

The formal procedures will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

The Head Teacher is the school's nominated member of staff with responsibility for the operation and management of the school complaints procedure.

NASEN sets out the importance of developing a constructive and collaborative partnership with parents that is informed by a clearly articulated set of principles. Key among these principles is:

- Parity in Partnership: i.e. mutuality of respect, complementary expectations and a willingness to learn from each other. The fact that parents are experts on their child and can influence attitudes and attainment needs to be recognised, respected and acted upon. In best partnership practice, the process of decision making is most effective when professionals acknowledge and incorporate parental perspectives and seek constructive ways of reconciling different viewpoints.

5 Framework of Principles:

The Northstar New School Comments, Complaints & Compliments Policy and Procedure will:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- be easily accessible and publicised;
- be simple to understand and use;
- be impartial;
- be non-adversarial;
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate

redress, where necessary;

- provide information to Northstar New School so that services can be improved.

6 Complaints Policy and Procedure

We want everyone involved in Northstar New School to be able to tell us if they think we are doing something wrong or acting unfairly in any way. Our policy is that, when concerns are raised or complaints are made, we will do everything in our power to put things right as quickly as possible. Our first action will always be to ensure, from the outset, that everyone involved with the Northstar New School is given a copy of the 'Complaints Leaflet' and has the procedure fully explained to them.

We recognise that it is essential to be open to criticism or complaint from any source and that only by being open to criticism or complaints can we hope to improve our service and the attainment of the pupils we teach. Therefore, we welcome concerns and complaints.

Concerns and complaints are often caused by simple mistakes or misunderstandings, or thoughts and feelings that have not been aired or acknowledged. We would anticipate that these and other issues can be quickly and informally resolved through improved communication and immediate response. At other times, or if an informal complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, it may be necessary to use the formal complaints procedure. It is important that this choice is always available.

We believe that by being open and welcoming concerns and complaints we are ensuring our pupils are enabled to achieve the 5 outcomes of ECM

- **Being Healthy** – have access to regular exercise, know about and make healthy lifestyle choices, understand sexual health risks and the dangers of smoking and substance abuse are encouraged to eat and drink healthily, recognize the signs of personal stress and have available strategies to deal with it.

- **Staying Safe** – display concern for others, refrain from intimidating and anti-social behaviour; feel safe from bullying and discrimination; feel confident to report bullying and racist incidents; act responsibly in high risk situations

- **Enjoying and achieving** – have positive attitudes to education, behave well and have a good attendance record

- **Making a positive contribution** – understand their legal and civil rights and responsibilities; show social responsibility, and refrain from bullying and discrimination; express their views at school and are confident their views and 'voice' will be heard; initiate and manage a range of organized activities in school and community organizations

- **Achieving economic and social well-being** – develop basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT; develop their self-confidence and team working skills; become enterprising, able to handle change, take initiative and calculate risk when making decisions; become financially literate and gain an understanding of business and the economy and of their career options; develop knowledge and skills when they are older, related to workplace situations

In particular this policy will enable pupils to stay safe and make a positive contribution.

Standards

The following standards set out clearly the responsibilities of managers and staff for responding to and resolving concerns and complaints when they are first raised, unless they are of a very serious nature or are about the Head Teacher in which case the matter will be dealt with as a formal complaint under the procedure set out below.

Staff responding to Concerns and/or Complaints in an informal manner

When a concern or complaint is first raised all staff should keep in mind ways in which it could be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the concern or complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

All concerns or complaints must be written up and reported to the Head Teacher with a clear explanation of what the concern or complaint was, what was done about it and whether the complainant was satisfied with the response.

If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved or the complainant is not satisfied the matter should be referred to the Head Teacher for investigation and the complainant informed that this action has been taken.

The Head Teacher must ensure, when they investigate complaints, that they:

- establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;

- ➔ clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- ➔ meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary)
- ➔ clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- ➔ interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- ➔ conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- ➔ Keep notes of the interview.

Complainants will be encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage during the resolution of the complaint.

This procedure should identify areas of agreement between the parties and clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred to ensure that a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues will be created.

7 Formal Complaints Procedure

We expect that most concerns and complaints will be dealt with in the manner set out above.

- ➔ In most cases any concern or complaint, regardless of whose attention it is initially brought to, should be discussed informally (stage1) before being submitted at any of the following consecutive formal stages. However, occasionally there will be circumstances under which it is unsuitable for complaints to be dealt with in this way.
- ➔ In all cases where the complaint concerns the school's Head Teacher directly, the complaint will go to (stage 3) of the formal complaints procedure.

In some cases, it may be deemed inappropriate for individuals to discuss their concerns informally.

- ➔ In such cases, complainants must be directed to contact the Head Teacher directly. Complainants may choose to contact the Head Teacher directly of their own accord. (Stage 2)

In these cases, it will be at the discretion of the Head Teacher as to whether or not it is appropriate for the complainant to discuss the matter informally (return to stage 1).

Who is allowed to complain?

This policy may be used by anyone who has a concern or complaint about any aspect of the school. In the main this will mean the pupils, or the parents or carers of the school's pupils, but may include the Local Authority, partner agencies, neighbours of the school, or any other member of the local community.

Aims and objectives

This complaints policy aims to:

- ➔ Encourage the resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- ➔ Ensure that concerns are dealt with quickly, fully and fairly and within clearly defined time limits
- ➔ Provide effective responses and appropriate redress;
- ➔ Maintain good working relationships between all people involved with the school.

Monitoring complaints

At all formal stages of the complaints procedure, the following information will be recorded:

- ➔ The name of the complainant;
- ➔ The date and time at which complaint was made;
- ➔ The details of the complaint
- ➔ The desired outcome of the complainant;
- ➔ How the complaint is investigated (including written records of interviews held);
- ➔ Results and conclusions of investigations;
- ➔ Any action taken;
- ➔ The complainant's response (satisfaction or further pursuit of complaint).

The Head Teacher will act as the 'complaints coordinator' and will have the responsibility for the operation and management of the school complaints policy and will be responsible for monitoring complaints. Records will be retained for the periods specified in the procedure guidance. The only instance where the Head Teacher will NOT act as the 'complaints coordinator' will be where the complaint is made against the Head Teacher and has reached the Formal stage. In this instance the Northstar New School Proprietor will take on the 'complaints coordinator' role and the complaint will go straight to Stage 3.

Upholding or not upholding complaints

At each stage of the complaints procedure, the conclusion will be either:

- That the complaint is upheld (in part or in full) and, where appropriate, some form of action is taken. Or
- That the complaint is not upheld and reasons for this are clearly given.

In the first instance, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following: an apology;

- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

In the second instance, the complainant may either choose to take no further action or to take their complaint to the next relevant stage.

Publicity and communication

It is a legal requirement to publicise our complaints procedures.

This policy will be included within the School's information in a number of ways: information about the policy will be included in the school prospectus

- information will be given to new parents when their child joins the school
- information will be given to pupils at the school within a week of their admission
- home school bulletins and/or newsletters will remind parents/carers about the policy

All staff and members of Northstar New School management will be made aware of the complaints procedure and the various stages involved. At all stages of the complaints procedure, everybody involved will be clear about what is happening and what their responsibilities are. Written records will be kept as evidence of procedures followed. In addition, the complainant will be told how to proceed to the next stage of the procedure if and when their complaint is not upheld.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is vital. All conversations and correspondence will be treated with discretion. Complainants have the right to know what use will be made of personal information and accordingly, personal information will only be shared between staff on a 'need to know' basis.

(The exception to this is the requirement of the school to provide parents and other interested parties with information about the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding year, and to inspectors conducting inspections under section

162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, or to the Secretary of State, should they ask for such records.)

Equal access, accompaniment and representation

Steps will be taken to ensure that any individual has the opportunity to raise their concerns or submit a formal complaint. ***This includes the right to be accompanied or represented by a friend or relative*** at discussions and hearings and/or to submit formal complaints which have been written by another individual on their behalf. Should any meeting need to be held where any parties would have difficulties in terms of access, Northstar New School will assist with providing an appropriate venue.

It is an expectation that equal respect will be granted to each person involved within the process and that differences between people will be respected and understood.

Time between stages

Although each of the stages within the procedure should occur consecutively, it is not necessary for each stage to immediately follow the last. Complainants may need some time to decide whether or not they wish to pursue the matter any further.

After each stage, the complainant and the individual who is dealing with their complaint at that time should agree an appropriate time limit within which the next stage should be accessed, if at all. If the complaint is not submitted to the next stage within this agreed time limit it will be considered as closed.

Changes to time limits and deadlines

In general, the time limits and deadlines contained within this policy should be adhered to.

However, in certain circumstances it may be deemed inappropriate or impossible to guarantee that this is possible. Where a complaint leads to criminal proceedings this will always be the case.

If and when it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines set out within this policy, the complainant should be told and given an explanation as to why this has been the case.

Appeals

If at any stage, as the result of a complaint, a decision or course of action is taken with regards to an individual (apart from the complainant) which they feel is ungrounded, unjustified or incorrect they have the right to appeal. The school's appeal procedures will facilitate this.

The Steps in the Complaints Process are outlined below in detail:

1. When a complaint is made, whether formally or informally, it must always be recorded in the 'Complaints File', to show the date and time of the complaint being made; the name of the person making it; the nature of their complaint; any response required/given; and the name of the person(s) dealing with it. Details of any complaint must always be carefully recorded, along with any supporting information such as to whom the complaint was made or evidence in support of the complaint.

2. Information about any complaint made must be passed immediately to a senior manager in the school, for them to make an initial assessment as to its seriousness and to monitor how complaints are being handled.

3. A decision must also be made at this stage as to how and when to inform any third party (ies) who may be the subject of the complaint.

4. The person making the complaint must be given the opportunity for their complaint to be dealt with informally in the first instance, (stage 1) with the assurance that their complaint will be taken seriously. They must also be assured that if they are not satisfied with the response they are given, they have the right to make their complaint formal. A copy of the 'Complaints leaflet' should be given to them.

5. When a formal complaint is made, it must be recorded in the 'Complaints File' and given a reference number based upon the date the complaint is received, the name of the person dealing with it, and the initials of the person making the complaint. (Stage 2) For example: Complaint reference number - 30.9.21 / (EM) / (RD)

6. The reference number and name of person dealing with the complaint must be given to the person making the complaint within 24 HOURS or 1 WORKING DAY of the complaint being received.

7. The matter should then be looked into and responded to, if not in full, within 3 WORKING DAYS, providing written details of how the matter has been dealt with or the timescale during which it will be investigated and fully addressed.

8. A written record will be kept throughout of all communication and actions planned or taken, so that the progress of any investigation can be monitored. The records will indicate whether the complaint was resolved satisfactorily at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing.

9. The person assigned to investigate the matter must be independent of the substance of the complaint. If necessary, a senior member of staff from another site may be asked to undertake the investigation.

10. If the complaint cannot for any reason be investigated and responded to fully within 3 WORKING DAYS, the complainant should receive a written and verbal explanation

stating what steps have been taken and the time frame for completion. The process of investigation and response should not exceed 10 WORKING DAYS, except in rare and exceptional circumstances. If this does occur it is vital that the Complainant is informed as to when they may expect a full response. It is essential throughout that the Complainant is kept fully informed of the progress of their complaint.

11. In response to any formal complaint, a written report must be prepared for the Head Teacher, who will consider the investigator's report and make a formal response. Should the matter then remain unresolved to the Complainant's satisfaction, he or she has the right to appeal the outcome, within 20 WORKING DAYS or 4 WEEKS of the Head Teacher's report being received.

12. Where the Complainant wishes to appeal against the response provided, the School Proprietor will arrange an Appeal hearing. A panel of at least 3 people, who have not previously been involved in the Complaint, will hear the appeal. The Local Education Authority will nominate at least one panel member, to be fully independent of Northstar New School.

13. The complainant may attend the panel meeting and may also be accompanied by a friend.

14. The Appeal hearing will be arranged and an Appeals panel convened by the School Proprietor within 15 working days, with at least three working days' notice given.

15. Panel members will be asked to consider the substance of the original complaint and the response provided to this complaint by the Head Teacher. They will then be free to make their own findings and recommendations.

16. The outcome of any Appeal hearing will be formally recorded and copies of the findings and recommendations distributed within 5 working days to the Complainant, the Head Teacher, Northstar New School, LEA and, where possible, any person(s) about whom the complaint has been made.

8 Summary

This policy sets out the procedures which Northstar New School will follow whenever it receives a complaint.

A summary of the various stages is given below:

Primary Responsibility:

- ➔ Informal discussion and resolution Informal Stage - School Staff
- ➔ Investigation by head teacher Formal Stage – Head Teacher

- ➔ Complaints committee - Northstar New School
- ➔ Local Education Authority investigations - LEA

Each of these stages will usually occur in order and there will usually be no return to previous stages (exceptions to this are noted within the procedure).

It is stressed that the majority of complaints are resolved on an informal basis (stage 1).

Circumstances under which this procedure should not be used:

- ➔ Complaints about the national curriculum
- ➔ Collective worship
- ➔ Religious education
- ➔ Non-approved external qualifications or syllabuses
- ➔ Temporary withdrawal of pupils from all or part of the national curriculum
- ➔ Pupil admissions
- ➔ Pupil exclusions

Issues related to child protection, criminal investigations and employee grievances will be handled separately from this policy.

This complaints policy is distinct from formal staff disciplinary proceedings, and this should be made clear to all concerned. There may be occasions where a complaint gives rise to disciplinary procedures which put the complaints process on hold. If and when this occurs, the complainant should be informed. Any non-disciplinary aspects of the complaint should continue to be dealt with through the usual complaints procedures. If another policy is more appropriate than this complaints policy for any given situation then it should be used in preference to it.

Who to speak to informally

Individuals may decide to raise their concerns with a member of the school administrative staff, class teacher, senior teacher or head teacher depending on their wishes and the type of issues they want to discuss.

Monitoring

A brief note of all such issues should be kept.

Time scales

There are no specific time scales for dealing with concerns at this stage. However, as at all

stages, issues should be considered and dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible.

Response

The individual who raised the issue should be informed of any action to be taken to resolve the issue. If appropriate, this might be confirmed in writing.

Options for complainant

If the individual is dissatisfied with the response they have been given and would like to take their complaint further, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure and accompanying public guidance leaflet and told how to move on to the next stage.

9 Referral to the Complaints Coordinator

Introduction

This is Stage 1 of the formal complaints process and, as a result, all communications between parties need to be carefully recorded and monitored as set out in the 'monitoring complaints' section of this document.

Informal discussion with Head Teacher

Before proceeding with a formal investigation, the Head Teacher will meet with the individual and discuss their concerns and wishes. It may still be appropriate and satisfactory to reach an informal resolution at this point. If not, the head teacher will decide whether the individual's complaint will be dealt with by this policy or another statutory procedure and advise them on what they will need to do.

Submitting a formal complaint

By this stage it must be clear that the concern is a definite complaint which will be dealt with according to this policy and should be formally submitted in writing to the head teacher. As indicated within the 'equal access, accompaniment and representation' section of this policy, all complainants have the right to submit formal complaints, at this or any stage, which have been written by another individual on their behalf.

Acknowledgement and time scales

The head teacher should formally acknowledge the complaint within 3 school days of receiving it and begin an investigation.

The investigation

The head teacher will need to investigate the complaint and review any relevant documentation and information. If necessary, the head teacher will interview witnesses and

take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil will also usually be interviewed. As indicated within the 'equal access, accompaniment and representation' section of this document, all individuals have the right, at this or any other stages, to be accompanied or represented by a friend or relative at discussions and hearings. This includes the right of teachers to be accompanied by a representative from their Trade Union. When pupils are interviewed, an additional member of staff should always attend.

Response

The head teacher will provide the complainant with a full written response within 10 school days of acknowledging it. This response will determine whether or not the complaint has been upheld, the reasons why, and what action (if any) will be taken.

Options for complainant

If the individual is dissatisfied with the response they have been given and would like to take their complaint further, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure and accompanying public guidance leaflet and told how to move on to the next stage.

10 Review -Northstar New School management

Introduction

Complaints only rarely reach this formal level, but it is important that senior managers are prepared to deal with them (Stage 3). Upon receiving a formally submitted complaint at this stage the company operations manager will usually choose to deal with it by holding a complaints committee hearing. However, in some cases, it may be possible and appropriate for the company practice manager to resolve the issue with the complainant by other means without the need for a complaints committee review. The complaints committee must be clerked; the clerk may be a member of the school staff.

The committee

Northstar New School will nominate three people to the complaints committee who have not previously been involved with dealing with the complaint. One of the complaints committee will be nominated by the LEA as independent of the management and running of the school. The committee should elect its own chair.

Submitting a formal complaint

The complainant must submit a written request to Northstar New School Proprietor for their complaint to be considered by a complaints committee.

Acknowledgement and time scales

The operations manager should acknowledge receipt of this letter within 5 school days if possible but no more than ten at most by writing to the complainant. This letter will inform them that their complaint will be heard by a complaints committee within 15 school days of the date of this letter.

Preparation

The proprietor will then contact the administrator and ask him or her to begin making preparatory arrangements. The administrator will convene and clerk a meeting of the complaints committee. The membership of the complaints committee will be confirmed, a date and time will be arranged for a hearing and all existing relevant documentation will be given to the three appointed members. The clerk should then formally write to the complainant, the head teacher and any other relevant staff or witnesses and inform them:

- ➔ Of the date, time and venue of the hearing
- ➔ Of the aims and objectives of the hearing and how it will be conducted
- ➔ That any documentation they wish the committee to consider must be returned to the Clerk no later than 5 school days before the hearing takes place
- ➔ Of the rights of equal access, accompaniment and representation as set out within this document;
- ➔ How and when the committee will reach their decision.

It is the responsibility of the clerk to ensure that all parties receive all relevant documents at least 3 school days before the date of the hearing so as to allow individuals to familiarise themselves with them.

The hearing

The hearing should allow each party involved to explain their understanding or interpretation of events and for other parties to question them. The hearing will, therefore, usually operate according to the following format:

- ➔ The chair will introduce all parties to one another and explain the principles, objectives and format of the hearing

- ➔ The complainant will be given the opportunity to explain their complaint. Following this the head teacher and the complaints committee will be allowed to ask the complainant questions.
- ➔ The head teacher will then be given an opportunity to explain the school's official response, interpretation or view about the complaint. Following this the complainant and committee will be allowed to question the head teacher.
- ➔ Every party will be given the opportunity to call witnesses and question witnesses called by other parties.
- ➔ The head teacher and the complainant will both be given the chance to give final statements.
- ➔ The hearing will be concluded by the chair who should explain that the committee will consider its decision and write to both parties within 5 school days informing them of the outcome.

After the hearing

The committee will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and:

- ➔ Reach a unanimous, or at least a majority decision, on the complaint;
- ➔ Decide upon the appropriate action (if any) to be taken;
- ➔ Where appropriate, suggest changes to, or request a review of, the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

This information will be included in both the letters to the head teacher and the complainant.

Options for complainant

If the individual is dissatisfied with the response they have been given and would like to take their complaint further, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure and accompanying public guidance leaflet and told how to move on to the next stage.

Disability Equality Scheme

In reviewing this policy we have taken into account consideration of any potential implications of the Disability Equality Scheme.

11 Pupil Procedure

It is the aim of Northstar New School to ensure that all of the pupils who attend the school have access to and understand the policy and procedures relating to the Complaints Policy.

The aim of this Complaints Policy and Procedure is to ensure that every parent and pupil involved in the Northstar New School has access to an **informal** and **formal** process in which to complaint about any aspect of school which affects their educational development.

Pupil Concerns and Complaints

Pupils will be encouraged to take full advantage of the procedures involved in this policy if they want to make a complaint using the process, informally or formally.

A member of staff that the pupil is comfortable with can help the pupil complete the complaints form by writing the words for him/her, or by giving moral support whilst the pupil is discussing their complaint with the teacher or other person in the early stages of the process.

All pupils will be encouraged to ask for support in either of the above ways to ensure they feel confident and secure in making a complaint following the recommended procedures in this policy.

Provision of Complaints forms to each pupil and their parents/carers

It is vital that all pupils and their parents/carers are given a complaints format as soon as the School makes contact with them at the referral stage.

12 Guidance and Sources

Introduction

This policy has been developed after consulting:

The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 Standard 7(a – l)
DfE School Complaints Toolkit 2014;
The best practice of County Councils;
'Running a Complaints System' (The Local Government Ombudsman); ⊠ Advisory Centre for Education; DfE School Government Team 2

The key principles of the policy - Legal context
From September 2003, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, it is stated that schools must have in place a procedure to deal with complaints.

Web link: http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/20032

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides an additional function to establish and publish procedures for dealing with complaints relating to the school, other than those covered by legislation and formal procedures elsewhere.

Web link: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/1998031.htm

The policy should be read in conjunction with the following Northstar New School policies:
Safeguarding
Positive Behaviour Management and Promoting Good Behaviour
Diversity and Equal Opportunities
Online-safety
Teaching and Learning

13 Ongoing Feedback

Staff are invited to comment on this policy and to suggest ways in which it may be improved, by contacting the Head Teacher who will discuss this with the SLT.

14 Review of Policy

This policy was formally adopted by Northstar New School in September 2024 and replaces all previous policies, procedures and guidelines in use within the organisation.

It will be further developed by staff and pupil review and discussion and given a formal review annually.

Reviewer: *Euan Macdonald*