



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

September 2026

This ***Complaints procedure*** applies equally to all pupils regardless of sex or gender including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). All written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation in 28 days. This procedure applies to complaints made by parents or carers of pupils and prospective pupils. Other concerns will be handled at the School's discretion

Introduction

The Newcastle School prides 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 ***Complaints procedure***. The Newcastle School makes its ***Complaints procedure*** available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website and in the school office during the school day. The School will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1) (b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, **The Newcastle School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, details of the *Complaints procedure* and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.**

What constitutes a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

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 they will not be penalised for a complaint that you or they raises in good faith.

The three-stage complaints procedure

Stage 1 - informal resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their child's form tutor or class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form tutor or class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them/her to consult a more senior member of staff.

Complaints made directly to a subject leader or co-ordinator, an Assistant Head, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Head will usually be referred to the relevant form tutor or class teacher unless the subject leader or co-ordinator, Assistant Head, member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Head deems it appropriate for them/her to deal with the matter personally.

The form tutor or class teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved **within 5 working days** or in the event that the form tutor or class teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this ***Complaints procedure***.

If, however, the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors.

Stage 2 - formal resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head will meet and/or speak with the parents concerned **within 5 working days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Head to conduct further investigations. The Head will aim to complete any such further investigations within **10 working days**. Should more time be required to allow the Head complete the investigations, parents and any other relevant parties will be kept informed and given an indication of the revised timeframe.

The Head will **keep written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Head 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. The Head will also give reasons for his decision.

If the complaint is against the Head, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Chairman may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will, in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chairman is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chairman will give reasons for his decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 - panel hearing

If parents seek to invoke stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Bursar/Clerk to the Governors who has been appointed by the governors to call hearings of the complaints panel.

The matter will then be referred to the complaints panel for consideration. The panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. The Bursar/Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place **within 10 working days**.

If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties **not later than 5 working days** prior to the hearing.

The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible, the panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, **the panel will make findings and may make recommendations.**

The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, **within 5 working days of the hearing** (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the panel will be final. **A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by e-mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Head. A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Head.**

Timeframe for dealing with complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible. The School's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure **within 20 working days**, subject to any additional time required for the Head to complete the necessary further investigations. Stage 3, the appeal panel hearing, will be completed **within a further 15 working days**.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, 'working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time excluding bank holidays.

Recording complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at the informal stage, formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the School's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including e-mails and records of phone conversations)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

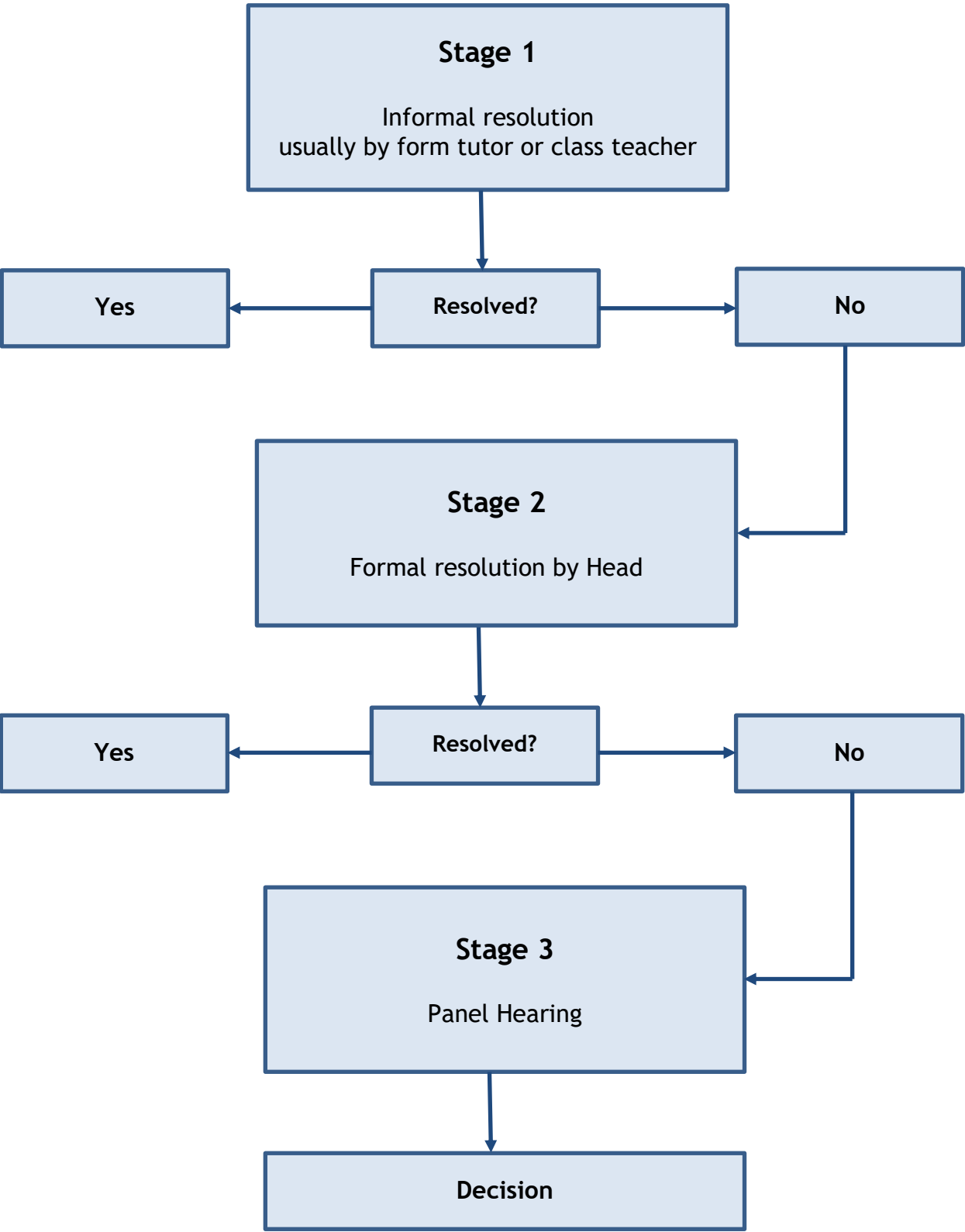
The Newcastle School will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for 25 years.

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to the ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting EYFS requirements.

Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 1234 234 or by e-mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net

Complaints procedure flowchart



POLICY CONTROL - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Status & Review

Statutory policy or document	Yes
Publish on school website	Yes
Review frequency	Every three years
Approval date	September 2026
Review date	September 2029

Version Control

Author	Creation / Revision Date	Version	Status
Head (GH)	November 2025	1.0	Final approved version for publication. Routine review. Replaced terms: Headmaster with Head; son with child
Executive Assistant (TA)	September 2026	2.0	Changed school name to The Newcastle School.