
Complaints Policy 2025/26



Kindness



Focus



Creativity



Responsibility



Collaboration

Introduction

Governing bodies are required by law to have and to publicise a procedure to deal with complaints relating to their school or the provision of community facilities or services at the school.

We refer to any person wishing to make a complaint as a complainant. This policy sets out the procedure followed by the New Wave Federation.

The procedure aims to ensure that complaints are dealt with efficiently, fairly and sympathetically and at the appropriate level.

We would never wish for a complainant to feel that a complaint would not be taken seriously, or that, in making a complaint, there would be a negative effect on their child. To this end, we will resolve all complaints in a transparent manner and guarantee to treat these seriously and confidentially, whether raised informally or formally.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is for parents and carers of children registered at our school. It can also be used by any person, including members of the public, to make a complaint about the facilities or services that we provide. Some complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions) rather than this procedure.

The difference between a complaint and a concern

A **complaint** may be defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’.

A **concern** may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

It is in everyone’s interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Resolving the issue informally

Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. New Wave Federation takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or headteacher.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff please contact **Mrs Lisa Langley** llangley@newwavefederation.co.uk who will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be.

The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally you may wish to make a formal complaint. In such cases we will use this procedure.

How to make a formal complaint

Please use the complaint form at the end of this procedure to do so. If you require help in completing the form, please contact Lisa at [Lisa Langley](#) or 02088024051.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 3 of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the executive/ headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the headteacher. Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher should be sent to Christopher Howard (the Chair of Governors complaints@newwavefederation.co.uk

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to David Laird- clerk@newwavefederation.co.uk

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Executive headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will only consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received during school holidays

We will consider complaints made during school holidays to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision or services by New Wave Federation, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Hackney Council: https://hackney.gov.uk/complaints
• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). E-mail: MASH@hackney.gov.uk Telephone: 020 8356 5500 Website: https://hackney.gov.uk/child-protection
• Exclusion of a child from school	Further information about raising concerns about an exclusion can be found here <i>Note that complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i>
• Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.
• Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain directly to the local authority (LA) or the Department for Education (www.education.gov.uk/contactus), depending on the substance of your complaint.
• Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.

	Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, New Wave Federation wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint An apology.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the headteacher (unless they are about the executive/headteacher), must be done in writing on the Complaint Form.

The headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within **3 school days**. Within this response, the headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The headteacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: Whilst the Headteacher may delegate investigation of the complaint to another member of the school's senior leadership team, they will still be responsible for the decision regarding the outcome of the investigation.

During the investigation, the headteacher (or investigator) will:

- If necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of,

allowing them to be accompanied if they wish

- Keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the headteacher will provide a formal written response within **15 school days** of the date of receipt of the complaint.

It is recognised that where a case is complex, it may prove difficult to meet this timeline. If this is the case, the headteacher will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The written response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions New Wave Federation will take to resolve the complaint.

The formal **Stage 1** response will also advise the complainant that if s/he is not satisfied with the response and wishes to take the matter further, s/he should write to the Chair of the Governing Body within 15 school days of receiving the outcome letter. The outcome letter will set out the name of the Chair of the Governing Body and the address to which the complainant can send the letter.

Complaints about the executive headteacher/headteacher/ or member of the governing body

If the complaint is about the executive or headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about the headteacher or member of the governing body must be made to Clerk Governors

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- The entire governing body or
- The majority of the governing body

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Stage 2

Complaints investigated by the Executive Headteacher

A request for a complaint to be heard by the Executive Headteacher must be made in writing within 10 school days of the date of the Federation's decision made at Stage 1. This request should be made to llangley@newwavefederation.co.uk, PA to the Executive Headteacher including a copy of the original written complaint form and also indicating which matters remain unresolved. No new complaint may be included. Upon receipt of

the written complaint it will be forwarded to the Executive Headteacher.

Where a stage 2 complaint is received, the PA to the Executive Headteacher will acknowledge, in writing, receipt of the complaint and inform the complainant of the steps involved in the process. The PA to the Executive Headteacher will be the contact point for the complainant throughout the duration of this stage.

The Executive Headteacher will meet with the complainant, and, depending on the nature of the complaint, may:

- Review the investigation carried out at Stage 1 by the headteacher or Investigation Officer
- Offer mediation between the complainant and the school
- Reinvestigate the complaint

The Executive Headteacher can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- Offer an apology
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint and/or
- Recommend changes to the Federation's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The Executive Headteacher will aim to meet with the complainant as soon as possible, normally no later than 15 school days after receipt of the Stage 1 complaint. The final decision should be communicated no later than 15 school days after the meeting has taken place, so that the total time between the submission of a Stage 3 complaint and communication of the Executive Headteacher's findings is no more than 30 school days.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 3 – a meeting with members of the governing body's complaints committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, governors available. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to Clerk Governors within 15 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 15 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's

absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from New Wave Federation available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through their LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 3

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs. If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 10 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- Confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- Request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least **3** school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and New Wave Federation with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 15 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by New Wave Federation. If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- The entire governing body or
- The majority of the governing body

Stage 3 will be heard by a committee of independent governors.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions New Wave Federation will take to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 3.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by New Wave Federation. They will consider whether New Wave Federation has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to: Department for Education Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD

Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

New Wave Federation is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

New Wave Federation defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- Raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome
- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- Uses threats to intimidate Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- Knowingly provides falsified information
- Publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the executive/headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact New Wave Federation causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from attending New Wave Federation school sites.

Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- Explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- Co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- Respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- Refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- Providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
- Sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
- Interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint Consideration of records and other relevant information
- Analysing information
- Liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- Conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- Keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- Ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal

- Be mindful of the timescales to respond
- Prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.
- The headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Clerk to the Governing Body

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:

- Ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- Collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- Record the proceedings Circulate the minutes of the meeting
- Notify all parties of the committee's decision.

Committee Chair

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- Both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- The meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- Complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- The remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- Written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.
- If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting
- Both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- The issues are addressed Key findings of fact are made
- The committee is open-minded and acts independently

- No member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- The meeting is minuted
- They liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one)..

Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- The meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so
- No governor may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- The aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant
- We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.
- Many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting
- Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting
- Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.
- The committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
- If the child/young person is the complainant, the committee should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint.
- Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.
- However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.
- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

If you have tried unsuccessfully to resolve your complaint and wish to take the matter further, please complete the form below and return to llangle@newwavefederation.co.uk who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.



School Name:

Your name:

Pupil's name (if relevant):

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any supporting information? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: