



Kindness Empathy Respect Responsibility Honesty Resilience

## HHELC Complaints Policy

How we will deal with your concerns and complaints

**Sherwood Education Base**  
**Perry Road**  
**Sherwood**  
**Nottingham**  
**NG5 3AE**  
**0115 9153862**

<https://hhe.nottingham.sch.uk>

Each day this school makes many decisions and strives to do the best for all the children. Your comments, either positive or negative, will help our strategic planning. We require that all communication with the school be respectful and courteous. Any contravention to this will result in the removal of communication channels with school staff.

You may want to talk to us about a concern, though not actually make a complaint.

If you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel free to contact us.

### **We will ensure that:-**

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence;
- Your complaint will be investigated thoroughly and fairly;
- If your complaint is urgent we will prioritise;
- We will provide you with an update at each stage;
- We will accept responsibility and apologise if we have made a mistake;
- You will be informed what we are going to do to put things right;
- You will receive a clear written reply to formal complaints within **28 school days**.

### **How to raise a concern in the first instance – the informal stage**

Should you have any concerns, please raise them, you can do this:-

- by telephone;
- in person;
- in writing, by letter or email.

#### Concerns - Stage 1

We endeavour to resolve concerns quickly and informally. Please discuss this with the class teacher or another appropriate member of staff, such as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator if it is about Special Needs.

#### Concerns – Stage 2 (optional)

If the member of staff you speak to in the first instance is unable to resolve the matter, please make an appointment with the relevant person, for example the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Head of Year or School Business Manager.

### **How to make a complaint - the formal process:-**

#### Complaints - Stage 1

**Request a meeting with the Headteacher** who will investigate your complaint and aim to inform you of the outcome **within 10 school days**.

Please note that governors should not be made aware of a potential complaint as they may be required to sit on a Panel in the event of a formal hearing (Stage 2) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, please **write directly to the Chair of Governors**.

#### Complaints - Stage 2

Should you be dissatisfied with the outcome following Stage 1 and wish to escalate your complaint further, please write a letter to the Chair of Governors and include the following:-

- A clear explanation of your complaint;
- Identify the process you have followed to date and state who you have spoken to, including dates/times and why you are dissatisfied;
- A clear explanation of what you recognise to be a successful outcome as a result of your complaint.

The Chair of Governors will arrange for:-

1. The complaint to be investigated and the complainant will be provided with a copy of the investigation outcome. Any evidence the complainant wishes to have considered must be provided to the investigating officer. The investigating officer may be any member of the governing body with no conflict of interest or through an external provider. Should the complainant then wish, the report will be received by;
2. A panel of governors. The panel should consist of three governors with no prior knowledge of the complaint. The decision of the panel is the final stage in school

Following the investigation the Chair of the Panel will write to inform you of the outcome of your complaint and any agreed actions to be taken.

The Governing Body will aim to deal with your complaint **within 28 school days**.

***\* Please note complaint panels/appeal panels may include governors from other schools within Nottingham Schools Trust.***

### **Further Recourse**

Most complaints are resolved by this process. Should your complaint not be resolved, you should refer your complaint to:-

The Secretary of State.  
Department for Education,  
Sanctuary Buildings,  
Great Smith Street,  
London.  
SW1P 3BT.  
Website: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 0370 000 2288

### Unreasonable Complainants

We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. Although we do not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school, 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.

This school defines unreasonable complainants as *'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'*.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

- 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 while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or 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, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:-

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the 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 request this be addressed. For complainants who excessively contact the school 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, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include a formal ban prohibiting an individual from the school.

**APPENDIX A**

**Complaint letter template. Please complete and return to the Chair of the Governing Body who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.**

<p><b>Your name:</b></p> <p><b>Pupil's name:</b></p> <p><b>Your relationship to the pupil:</b></p> <p><b>Address:</b></p> <p><b>Telephone number(s):</b></p>
<p><b>Details of the complaint</b></p>
<p><b>What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint</b></p>
<p><b>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</b></p>
<p><b>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.</b></p>
<p><b>Signature:</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b></p>

**APPENDIX B**

**Publicising of complaints procedure**

There is a legal requirement for the Complaints Procedures to be publicised. At this school the details of the Complaints Procedures are held on the school website

## APPENDIX C

### **Information for Parents**

We want pupils to be healthy, happy, safe, and do well. Co-operation between parents, staff and governors leads to a shared sense of purpose and good atmosphere in school.

### **I have something I would like to discuss with the school...**

Remember that there is usually more than one view about a situation. Make sure that what you want to discuss is clear in your mind. A good tip is to write down the main points so that you don't forget anything. First consider asking to see the teacher or head of year to discuss the issue. They will be willing to offer an appointment as quickly as possible, which will give you both time to talk about it politely and calmly without being interrupted. Think about what you hope will happen as a result of your discussion and let the teacher or head of year know this.

### **What should I do if I still feel unhappy about the issue?**

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the discussions you can ask for an appointment to see the Headteacher or, in larger schools, this could be a member of the leadership team, Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher. It is in everyone's interests, particularly those of your child or children, for issues to be sorted out smoothly. It will be best to end on a positive note with no bad feeling even if it is not possible for all your requests to be met. If a solution is proving difficult the Headteacher can speak to a governor who may be willing to offer some input to help resolve the issue, but there is no obligation for any governor to become involved at this time. If you are both finding it difficult to resolve the issue then the relevant Local Authority representative may be able to offer information or support. The person to contact will depend on the issue that is the focus of the discussions. This help and advice is designed to help resolve the issue. The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher should know who to ring, if not, you can ring the Governors' Team on 0115 8764589 or e-mail: rachael.harvey@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

### **Most problems will have been sorted out by now**

However, if the issue has not been resolved it can become a formal complaint. This is a serious step to take and it is important that you have thought things through carefully. If you wish to follow the process for making a complaint, you must ask the school for a copy of their complaints procedure and write a formal letter of complaint to the Headteacher.

### **What happens if I have a concern specifically about the Headteacher?**

If you have a concern specifically about the Headteacher (not the Headteacher's decision) you should write to 'The Chair of Governors' at the school address, marking the envelope 'urgent, private and confidential', setting out your concern.

### **What happens if my concern relates to admissions, curriculum or special educational needs?**

Some issues regarding these areas are covered by statutory regulations. The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher can give you information about these issues.

### **Weblinks and other useful contact details:**

- Nottingham City Council [www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk)
- Kidscape Hotline advice on bullying issues Tel: 08451 205 204 [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- Parentline Plus Free helpline offering support for parents Tel: 0808 800 2222 [www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)
- Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) Ltd 0808 800 0327 or at [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk).
- Parent Partnership Tel: 0115 948 2888 or 01623 422223.
- Race Equality Council on 0115 958 6515
- Nottingham Black Families in Education on Tel: 0115 841 3896
- Childline free national helpline for children and young people Tel: 0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- The Children's Legal Centre National Education Law and Advisory Unit
- free education law advice Tel: 08088 020 008 [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com).

