



NTSSS



North Tyneside Council



Moorbridge



Specialist Support & Outreach Centre



Document Information	Complaints Procedure
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Responsible Moorbridge Manager	Karen Croskery
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Signed (by or on behalf of Governing Body)	J McCarty – Chair of Management Group/Governors
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The Management Committee and the Headteacher of NTSSS are committed to providing the best educational experience they can for all learners attending NTSSS provisions. They recognise the value to all concerned of dealing fairly, speedily and effectively with any complaint against their decisions, actions or omissions, which a pupil or parent or other aggrieved person may have. To this end, they have adopted the underlying principles and procedures set out in this document.

Framework of Principles Our complaints procedure:

- encourages resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- is easily accessible and publicised;
- is simple to understand and use;
- is impartial;
- is non-adversarial;
- allows swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- promotes a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respects people's desire for confidentiality;
- addresses the issues and provides an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- provides information to the Trust's board so that services can be improved.

Definition of complaint

A school complaint is any communication received by a person or persons with a legitimate interest in the school, but not employed at the school, which expresses dissatisfaction about the standard of teaching of members of the teaching staff, or about the conduct, actions or omissions of members of the teaching or non-teaching staff employed at the school.

A complainant is someone:

- who allegedly has been wronged; or
- whose child(ren) has been wronged (e.g. parent or carers or other person with parental responsibility); or
- representing a person in one of the above groups, for example a councillor.

Where a complainant is a pupil under the age of 18 years, the complaint may be pursued only by, or on behalf of, the child's parent or carer. Where someone other than a pupil or a parent/carer is pursuing a complaint on his or her behalf, this can be done only with the express written consent of the pupil or parent concerned.

Types of complaints

Statutory/established procedures Where there are established or statutory or other procedures for dealing with complaints, those will be followed. Areas to which this applies include:

- admissions to schools
- exclusions
- special education provision
- school re-organisation
- matters concerning the curriculum under Section 19 and 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988
- complaints by school staff or prospective staff
- child protection
- public examinations
- school records on individual pupils
- whistle-blowing

The policy for complaints not covered by established or statutory procedures is:-

Stage 1 - Informal Stage All complaints, however received, are reported to *the Key Teacher or Members of Leadership Team* (AS, TM, GT or SW). They may refer the complaint to an appropriate member of staff to resolve the matter. That member of staff will have a duty to inform the Senior Leadership Team if any issue is not resolved after review with the complainant. Parents/carers should be encouraged to settle the matter with the Leadership Team or key staff member. It is envisaged that the majority of straightforward complaints and problems is likely to be resolved at this point.

Stage 2 – Senior Leadership Team/Deputy or Assistant Headteacher - The second stage is invoked where the complainant is not satisfied with the informal response or feels it is not appropriate to contact the Leadership Team or Key Staff. They will be advised to take up the matter in writing with the Senior Leadership Team/Deputy or Assistant Headteacher. The Senior Leadership Team/Deputy or Assistant Headteacher can, if they wish to do so, refer this to Headteacher. The Senior Leadership Team/Deputy or Assistant Headteacher may also refer it back to the Leadership Team or Key Staff if they have not been involved in the complaint to date because it was referred to another member of staff at stage 1. If the Senior Leadership Team/Deputy or Assistant Headteacher undertakes the investigation at stage 2, she will be barred from sitting on any complaints committee convened to hear a complaint escalated to stage 4. The outcome at this stage may be:

- no further action, with reasons given
- action within the Deputy/Assistant Headteachers own powers
- referral to the Headteacher for consideration.

Stage 3 – Headteacher of NTSSS

The third stage is where the complainant is not satisfied with the formal response or feels it is not appropriate to contact the Senior Leadership Team/Deputy or Assistant Headteacher. The complainant will be advised to take up the matter in writing with the Headteacher. The Headteacher can, if she wishes to do so, refer this to the Management Committee. The Headteacher may also refer it back to the Senior Leadership Team/Deputy or Assistant Headteacher if she has not been involved in the complaint to date. If the Headteacher undertakes the investigation at stage 3, she will be barred from sitting on any complaints committee convened to hear a complaint escalated to stage 4. The outcome at this stage may be:

- no further action, with reasons given
- action within the CEO's own powers
- referral to the Trust's Board of Directors for consideration.

Stage 4 – Chair of Management Committee/Representative from the MC

The fourth stage will be where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the stage 3 investigation and response. S/he should be advised to put his/her concerns in writing to the clerk to the Management Committee/Chair of MC for consideration. The MC/Chair of MC seeks to meet within 15 working days of the complaint being received by the clerk. A panel of three MC members, who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint; convene to hear the complaint at a meeting attended by the complainant who can be accompanied to the hearing if s/he wishes, the CEO will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it.

For complainants who excessively contact NTSSS (Moorbridge, TRAX, SSC or Home and Hospital tuition) causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 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 banning an individual from NTSSS and settings.

Further Stages Following the Management Committee review of the complaint at Stage 4, it is open to the complainant to pursue their complaint with the Secretary of State for Education via the ESFA (Education and Schools Funding Agency). The management Committee will give full consideration to any recommendations or directions the ESFA may make. The complainant will be advised of this course of action should they remain dissatisfied with a decision made by the Management Committee.

Records

Any findings or recommendations made by a complaints panel will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher

A written record of all complaints is maintained by the Headteacher who will record if the complaint was resolved following a formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing. They will also record any action taken.

All complaints are reported to the Management Committee Safeguarding committee as part of the confidential Headteacher Report.

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