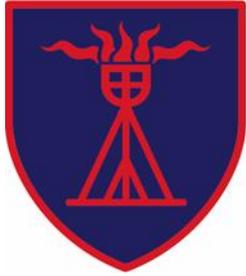


September 2021



The New Beacon

Ex Fumo • Dare • Lucem

Complaints Procedure (incorporating EYFS)

The New Beacon
Brittains Lane
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 2PB

Introduction

The School has long prided 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 in accordance with this Procedure outlined in this document. The New Beacon makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils in the school office during the school day and The New Beacon will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published on the school website or available and the form in which it is published or available.

In accordance with The Independent Schools Standards 2019 The New Beacon 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 your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.

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 son's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head of Junior/Middle/Senior School.
- Complaints made directly to Head of Junior/Middle/Senior School will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher unless the Head of Junior/Middle/Senior School deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The form 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 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 Procedure.
- If the complaint is against a specific member of staff, the Head will have the right to decide whether the member of staff's presence is appropriate at this stage.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should **put their complaint in writing (email is acceptable)** 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 or speak to the parents concerned, normally **within 5 working days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage and the parent notified within a further two working days.
- If the complaint is made against a specific member of staff, that member of staff may be present at this meeting. The Head will have the right to decide whether the member of staff's presence is appropriate at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- 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 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 an Independent Person who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. That person is currently: Ms Jane Golledge, a former New Beacon parent and practising lawyer. Correspondence should be addressed personally to her marked Private and Confidential at the School.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors on behalf of the Panel, who will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 7 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 7 days prior to the hearing.
- If the complaint is made against a member of staff, the particulars of the complaint will be made available to the member of staff, and that member of staff will have the right to speak with the Complaints Panel.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it would be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the

person about whom the parent complained. A copy of the Panel's findings will be held by the Head's PA and available for inspection by relevant parties.

- At Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing will be completed within a further 28 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

EYFS

This policy applies to the whole school from Reception (EYFS) to Year 8. In the context of EYFS, please note the following.

The Record of Complaints is kept for at least three years.

- A complaint can be made to The Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI). A Child Protection / Safeguarding concern can be reported to the West Kent Local Authority Designated Team (LADO), Email : kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk, or 03000 410888.
- Complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of the school having received the complaint. On request, the school will provide ISI with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and any subsequent action taken.

Boarding

Complaints about boarding should follow the procedure outlined above. A Boarding Concerns and Complaints record book is kept by the Housemaster. If a complaint relates to a Safeguarding concern, parents may choose to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Recording Complaints

A 'Concerns & Complaints File' is held in the office of the Head's PA which contains detail of: the concern and/or complaint; the date brought; any subsequent action taken and reference to the location of the paperwork which will include all actions and findings, including those of The Panel, where relevant. The number of complaints made for the previous academic year is available to parents via the Head's PA.

Confidentiality

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 your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you (or your child) may raise in good faith.

Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Contact Details

School number: 01732 452131

The Chairman of governors can be contacted via the school.

Headmaster, Mr. M Piercy: mp@newbeacon.org.uk

Deputy Head, Mrs Joanna Yeats-Brown – jyb@newbeacon.org.uk

Head of Junior School / Pre-Prep, Mrs C Alteirac: ca@newbeacon.org.uk

External Contact Details:

Local Authority Designated Officer team: Tel 03000 410888

ISI: CAP House, 6-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA. Tel 0207 6000 100. concerns@isi.net