



COMPLAINTS

POLICY

**First written: March 2015
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 We strive to provide a good education for all our children. The headteacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers. However, it is important that the school has procedures in place through which parents, carers or visitors to our school can exercise their right to complain about aspects of the school's policy or practice, if they have concerns which have not been resolved through the normal channels of communication. This policy sets out the procedures which the school follows in such cases.
- 1.2 We would always encourage people to raise any concerns they may have with the member of staff concerned in the first instance. Most issues can be resolved through discussion between the relevant people at this stage. However, there may be occasions where this is not possible and a complaint procedure will be needed to resolve this issue.
- 1.3 We deal with all formal complaints in accordance with procedures laid down for Academies by the EFA.
- 1.4 Please note that if a complaint is made against a member of staff which may lead to a disciplinary action, this would be conducted under statutory procedures which are confidential. The complainant will be informed that appropriate action is being taken but may not know what the outcome of that action is.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue to reach a mutual understanding. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.
- 2.2 North West London Jewish Day School offers a number of services in addition to the general education of our pupils and we strive to provide a high level of service in all aspects of our work. There may be occasions when this falls below our usual quality or when an incident occurs which would prompt a complaint from a parent, carer or member of the community.
- 2.3 The aims of this policy are to:
 - assure members of the school community that we will consider all complaints seriously;
 - set out how we will manage the complaints process, including the timescales;
 - make clear the roles and responsibilities of staff in responding to any complaints;
 - provide information to anyone who wishes to make a complaint about any aspect of the school.

3 The complaints process

3.1 Informal Stage.

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we provide, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. In our experience, most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

Should there be a concern about an extra curricular activity or club, please speak with the person concerned in the first instance.

For complaints about school meal provision, please raise this with the School Secretary.

Administrative problems should be raised with the School Administrator.

Concerns about school policies and procedures should be made in writing and addressed to the Head Teacher who will arrange a convenient time to discuss this with you.

Complaints from people other than families of the pupils will be addressed under the same general process and timescales.

In the majority of cases the concern will be resolved through discussion at this level and, as a staff team, we are keen to ensure that any such issues are managed promptly.

3.2 Stage 1.

If you feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the relevant member of staff, or that the concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, please put it in writing and address it to the headteacher who will acknowledge receipt within 2 school days. The headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously, investigates each case thoroughly and a written response will be provided once the issue has been fully investigated. The investigation might involve asking you to discuss the matter further by phone or in person. Most complaints are normally resolved by this stage.

3.3 Members of the governing body who are approached informally with a complaint about the school will always refer the complainant back to the headteacher or an appropriate member of the school staff until Stage 1 has been followed through.

3.4 Stage 2.

If a complaint at stage 1 fails to resolve the matter, or if the complaint is about the headteacher, a formal complaint should be made to the governing body. This must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and any actions that have been taken so far within 10 school days of the headteacher's response (or the incident which prompts a complaint about the headteacher). *A complaint form is*

attached for this purpose. The complaint should be sent to the Chair of Governors, in a sealed envelope marked 'Private and Confidential', at the school address.

- 3.5 The Chair of Governors or another nominated governor will investigate the issue to ensure that stage 1 of the process has been followed and that the school has responded properly to the complaint at the informal stage.
- 3.6 The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the written complaint within 3 working days and will consider all such complaints within three school weeks.

3.7 **Stage 3.**

If the issue cannot be resolved through this investigation, the Chair (or investigating governor) will ask the Clerk to arrange for a panel of three people to consider the complaint. The panel will comprise two serving members of the governing body and a third person who is independent of the management of the school. The meeting will be set up within 15 school days and all relevant paperwork will be circulated in advance of the meeting. The complainant may take a friend, representative or interpreter with them to the meeting if they so wish.

- 3.8 During the hearing the panel will consider the investigation report and all of the available evidence. They may ask questions of the complainant or the investigating governor to clarify any issues. They may also hear from the headteacher with regard to the school's position and may question him/her about this. *Appendix B gives an outline procedure for a complaint hearing.*
- 3.9 The panel will then consider their decision and inform the complainant and the headteacher about the decision, with any recommendations, in writing without delay. The governors will do all they can at this stage to find a mutually satisfactory resolution to the complaint. The panel's decision is final.

3.10 **Stage 4.**

If the complainant is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Education Funding Agency using their on-line reporting form. <http://bit.ly/1EebO59>

The EFA will consider complaints

- where there is undue delay or the academy did not comply with its own complaints procedure when considering a complaint
- where the academy is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State
- where an academy has failed to comply with any other legal obligation

Ofsted may also consider complaints about a school if they concern the whole school or a specific group of pupils, but they would not normally investigate complaints concerning individual pupils.

4 Monitoring and review

- 4.1 The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all Stage 1 complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.
- 4.2 Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, carers and members of the community through the school web-site so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.
- 4.3 This policy will be shared with all staff on an annual basis.
- 4.4 The policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if necessary in response to local or national guidance.

5. Reporting

If there is a serious issue relation to a staff member in relation to safeguarding then the LADO should be informed immediately.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix A: Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher (complaints co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name (if relevant):

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):

Address:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

E-mail address:

(Please indicate your preferred means of communication)

Please give details of your complaint.

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

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

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

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom

Complaint referred to panel? Date:

Appendix B - Checklist for a panel hearing

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- The investigating governor may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The investigating governor is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the investigating governor and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The investigating governor is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The Chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale. This may include further time for the panel to seek additional information and guidance.
- The outcome and all relevant related documents will be given in writing to all relevant parties and will be held on record and will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or an investigating body (under section 109 of the 2008 Act) requests access to them.