

This Policy applies to the whole school including the EYFS.



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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INTRODUCTION

This policy is made available to the parents of all pupils and of all prospective pupils on our website; copies may also be requested from the School Office. Staff can also find the policy in the policies folder in Upper School staff room, Lower School Staff Room and Nursery Staff Room.

Newbridge Preparatory School places the highest priority on the quality of its teaching and pastoral care. Newbridge Preparatory School highly values both its pupils and parents and welcomes suggestions and comments from parents. The Headmistress and all staff encourage regular contact

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with parents, both verbal and written. We also appreciate feedback from parents when they are pleased with the School.

Newbridge Preparatory School recognises that if parents do have concerns and complaints, then they should be treated respectfully and seriously. This policy outlines the steps that parents should follow if they are unhappy about any matter and seek action by the school.

The complaints process is available to parents of children currently entered on the admissions register at Newbridge Preparatory School. The procedure does apply to past pupils but only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered. Likewise, the process does not apply to parents of prospective pupils.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response. We wish to ensure that:

- Parents wanting to make a complaint know how to do so
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way
- Parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously
- We take action where appropriate.

There are three stages to the complaints procedure:

- 1. Informal**
- 2. Formal**
- 3. Directors' Panel Committee**

RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

At each stage in the procedure, Newbridge Preparatory School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. Also, 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
- a summary 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.

PROCEDURES AND STAGES

1. Informal

“How should I complain?”

You can talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter, or telephone. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you. A written record will be made of all complaints and the date on which they were received. An initial response will be made within 24 hours.

Any member of staff will be happy to help. It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue. They may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss.

"I don't want to complain as such, but something is bothering me."

Newbridge Preparatory School is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Contact a member of staff, as described above.

"I am not sure whether to complain or not."

If as a parent you have concerns, you are entitled to complain. If in doubt, you should contact Newbridge Preparatory School as we are here to help.

“What will happen next?”

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction. Your initial contact will most often be responded to by the person most closely concerned with the issue, but a Senior Manager will have been made aware within 48 hours of the concern being raised. A Senior Manager will follow up the initial concern at the end of the process to ensure a satisfactory resolution has been found. However, if you are not satisfied, you should put your complaint in writing to the Headmistress of Newbridge Preparatory School, 51 Newbridge Crescent, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, WV6 0LH.

2. FORMAL

If you have made a complaint in writing, we will contact you within five working days to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, the Headmistress will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. Written records will be kept of these discussions.

In most cases, the Headmistress will meet the parents concerned, generally within ten days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. If a detailed exploration of the issues is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as

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possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Head and those directly involved. It is Newbridge Preparatory School’s policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside of Newbridge Preparatory School aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk, or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. You would be fully informed if this were to happen. Inspectors may also request access to correspondence statements and records of complaints under paragraph 7(K) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014.

Statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

The action which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures, as a result of complaints would be handled confidentially within Newbridge Preparatory School.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

3. DIRECTORS PANEL COMMITTEE

If the matter remains unresolved, the Headmistress will refer the matter to the Chairman of Directors who will appoint a panel committee to hear your complaint. The panel will consist of three persons (not previously directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint), one of whom is **independent** of Newbridge Preparatory School and who will chair the meeting. The panel will be convened within 14 working days of parents indicating that they are not satisfied with the Headmistress’ response.

One other person may accompany parents to the panel committee hearing, but legal representation will not usually be appropriate. The Panel will write to the parents, and where relevant, to the person being complained about, informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within five working days of the completion of the hearing. This time scale also ensures that all complaints will be dealt with within the EYFS time-frame of 28 days. Copies of such findings and recommendations will also be sent to the Head and be available on Newbridge Preparatory Schools premises for inspection by the Chairman of Directors.

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Newbridge Preparatory School recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain, and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

You can contact ISI if you think that Newbridge Preparatory School has broken the law, or acted unreasonably. Unreasonableness, in the strict legal sense, means acting in a way in which no reasonable authority could act. You should include copies of any refusal letters you have received, a copy of the appeal panel's decision, copies of any further correspondence with Newbridge Preparatory School and any relevant supporting evidence.

You can contact Ofsted if you think that Newbridge Preparatory School has not fulfilled the EYFS Requirements after you have been through all the stages including a school investigation and its outcome has been given in writing within 28 days.

WRITTEN RECORD OF COMPLAINTS

The school will keep an annual written record of complaints. Concerning these complaints, the school will record

- whether they are then resolved at that stage or proceed to a panel hearing
- the action that was taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
- provides that 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 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

A log is also kept of informal concerns, for management purposes to enable patterns of concern to be monitored.

There were no formal complaints in 2012/2013

There were no formal complaints in 2013/2014

There were no formal complaints in 2014/2015

There were no formal complaints in 2015/2016

There were no formal complaints in 2016/2017

There were no formal complaints in 2017/2018

There have been no formal complaints recorded within 2018/2019.

Written - 18/05/2013 SAF (Version 1.0: 05/2013)

Reviewed 17/01/2016 SAF (Version 1.1: 01/2016)

Reviewed 27/01/2019 SAF (Version 1.2: 01/2019)

Edited 04/02/2019 SAF (Version 2019.02)

Emailed to GB (Director) on 04/02/2019 for approval.

Appendix A:

Contact Details

Contact your local police on 101 if you think a child is at risk.
If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

Mrs S.A. Fisher
The Headmistress
Newbridge Preparatory School
51 Newbridge Crescent
Wolverhampton
WV6 0LH
01902 751088

HHJ H. Hughes
Chair of Directors
C/O Newbridge Preparatory School
51 Newbridge Crescent
Wolverhampton
WV6 0LH
01902 751088

Independent Schools Inspectorate
1st Floor, CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA
0200 7600 8849
<http://www.isi.net/complaintsschool/>

If parents believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
0300 123 1231
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-us/how-complain>

If parents believe the provider is not meeting the Department for Education (DfE) requirements:
<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/private-schools>

APPENDIX B: SCOPE OF THIS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of school facilities or services by Newbridge Preparatory School, other than complaints that are dealt with under different procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Whom to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the designated officer (DO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion of children from school 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found in the EXCLUSION POLICY.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in school who do not want to raise direct issues with their employer. Referrals can be made at www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>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.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum - content 	<p>Please contact the Headmistress</p>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example, the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the process being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

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APPENDIX C: COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to Mrs Fisher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name (if relevant):

Your relationship to the pupil (if applicable):

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening 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 paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

The complaint referred to:

Date:

APPENDIX D: 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 on 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 additional 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 held securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for Headmistress or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

Headmistress 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.

Complaints Co-ordinator (Headmistress or Chair of Directors / School Office)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, Headmistress, Chair of Directors, School Office and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
 - sharing third party information

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- additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records.

Independent Directors Panel Committee Chair

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

- both parties are asked (via the School Office) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted informally, 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 a chance 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 School Office (and complaints coordinator).

Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial and should be seen to be so
No Director may sit on the committee if they have had prior involvement in the complaint or 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

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Careful consideration of the atmosphere and procedures 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.