

# NHESC

## Complaints Policy

How we will deal with your concerns

**North Herts Education Support Centre**  
**Bancroft site – 01462 666830    Briar Patch site – 01462 487207**  
[www.northhertsesc.herts.sch.uk](http://www.northhertsesc.herts.sch.uk)

### HOW TO COMMENT OR COMPLAIN

#### We care about what you think

Each day this Centre makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the students. Your comments - either positive or negative - are helpful for future planning.

You may want to talk to us about a particular aspect of this Centre, though not actually make a complaint - you just want to get something 'off your chest'.

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 using the details listed above.

#### Our aims

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Your complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.
- If your complaint is urgent we will deal with it more quickly.
- We will keep you up to date with progress at each stage.
- You will get an apology if we have made a mistake.
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right.
- You will get a full and clear written reply to formal complaints within **28 school days (5½ weeks)**.

<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Julie Vernon-Hamilton
<b>Date:</b>	Autumn 2017
<b>Ratified by:</b>	Resources Committee
<b>Signed:</b>	Geraint Edwards
<b>Review:</b>	Annual
<b>Next Review:</b>	Autumn 2018

## North Herts Education Support Centre

Website: [www.northhertsesc.herts.sch.uk](http://www.northhertsesc.herts.sch.uk)

Email: [admin@northhertsesc.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@northhertsesc.herts.sch.uk)

Telephone: Bancroft site – 01462 666830

Briar Patch site – 01462 487207

### How to make a complaint

#### In the first instance – informal stage

If you have a concern about anything we do, or if you wish to make a complaint, you can do this by telephone, in person or in writing (by letter or email). We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally, either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation. If there is something you are not happy about, or you don't understand why we are doing something in a particular way, please come in and discuss it with the teacher or another appropriate member of staff, such as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) if it is about Special Needs.

We know that it can feel uncomfortable to question or challenge something, but if you don't tell us what is worrying you we cannot explain what we are doing or try to put it right. If the member of staff you speak to in the first instance is unable to attempt to resolve the matter, you should make an appointment with the Deputy Headteacher. You should be able to sort out your worries but sometimes this is not possible. In this case there is a next step.

#### First - formal stage

**Request a meeting with the Headteacher** who will investigate your complaint and aim to inform you of the outcome **within 10 school days (2 weeks)**.

If your first contact is with individual Members, they will advise you to take up your concerns with the appropriate member of staff or Headteacher. A Member 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 Two) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should **write to the Chair of The Management Committee**. If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you might find it helpful to talk to our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) or your child's named Special Needs Officer at the Local Authority. The SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS – formerly Parent Partnership) may also be able to help you.

#### Second - formal stage

If you remain dissatisfied following Stage 1 and wish to take your complaint further, you will be asked to complete a form or write a letter addressed to the Chair of The Management Committee. In the letter you should:

- Make it clear why you are complaining.
- Say who you have spoken to already.

- Explain what you want to happen as a result of your complaint.

The Chair of Members will arrange for your complaint to be considered and investigated under the arrangements approved by the Management Committee. This should involve a Panel of Members at a hearing where the complainant and the respondent are invited to attend. If the Chair or another Member has been involved in discussions to help settle the matter at Stage 1, s/he should arrange for another Member to take charge of the situation. Neither the Chair nor the Member in charge should sit on the Panel themselves and they should instead ensure that a Panel is convened in line with the timeframes and guidance set out in the school's complaints procedure. The Member in charge of investigating the complaint may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns. It is not advisable for a Panel to investigate and conclude matters without giving the Complainant and Respondent the opportunity to respond. Therefore a formal hearing with all in attendance is most preferable.

You should make sure that the Members' Complaint Panel is provided with any written information or evidence you intend to use in a formal hearing. You may bring a friend, representative or interpreter to any meeting if you wish. The Chair of the Panel may invite any person who may help establish the facts of the complaint. The Chair should tell you who this person is before the meeting. If any member of staff is required by the Management Committee to attend a meeting they will have the opportunity to be accompanied or represented as they wish. A member of staff named in a complaint may also choose to attend a meeting, even if not required to do so by the Members. They may be represented. If this happens, we will inform you in advance.

When the Panel has fully investigated your complaint, the Chair of the Panel or the Member in charge of the investigation will write to you to tell you the findings. These findings will be reported to the Management Committee. The Chair of The Management Committee will then write to you confirming the outcome of your complaint and any agreed actions to be taken. Our Management Committee will aim to deal with your complaint **within 28 school days (5½ weeks)**.

### Further recourse

Most complaints are resolved by this process. Should your complaint not be resolved, your further options are as follows:

- You can complain to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education:

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

In the case of complaints about **Special Educational Needs provision**, you may complain further to the Local Authority. This should be done by writing to the Children's Services Complaints Manager.

It should be noted however that if you wish to pursue this route, you must do so within **20 working days (4 weeks)** of receiving the written outcome of the hearing into your complaint. After **20 working days (4 weeks)**, neither the school nor the Local Authority is under any obligation to investigate or progress your complaint any further.

### Useful contacts

#### Advisory Centre for Education

Education Advice & Training  
72 Durnsford Road  
London  
N11 2EJ  
Web: [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)  
Phone: **0300 0115 142**

#### POhWER

Hertlands House  
Primett Road  
Stevenage  
SG1 3EE  
Web: [www.pohwer.net](http://www.pohwer.net)  
Phone: **0300 456 2370**

#### Children's Legal Centre

Riverside Office Centre  
Century House North  
North Station Road  
Colchester  
Essex  
CO1 1RE  
Web: [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)  
Phone: **0345 345 4345**

#### National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Egerton House  
Tower Road  
Birkenhead  
Wirral  
CH41 1FN  
Web: [www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)  
Phone: **0345 345 4345**

#### SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice Support Service – formerly Parent Partnership)

Registry Office Block  
CHR102  
County Hall  
Hertford  
SG13 8DF  
Web: [www.hertsdirect.org/parentpartnership](http://www.hertsdirect.org/parentpartnership)  
Email: [parent.partnership@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:parent.partnership@hertfordshire.gov.uk)  
Phone: **01992 555847**

#### Family Lives Phone: **0808 800 2222** (Formerly Parentline Plus)

15-17 The Broadway  
Hatfield  
Hertfordshire  
AL9 5HZ  
Web: [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)