



## 2023- 2024 Newton College Complaints Policy

Newton College aims to work collaboratively in partnership with parents. However, it is recognized that there are times when there will be issues that are not resolved to the satisfaction of parents and that they will wish to make a complaint. If parents or pupils do have a complaint, the school will treat it in accordance with the policy and procedures detailed below. Responding to complaints will be given the highest priority by the school and will be dealt with comprehensively.

### Stage 1 – Informal resolution

- We hope that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved immediately by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Head of Area (Primary/Secondary)/Key Stage Coordinator.
- Complaints made directly to the Head of Area will usually be referred to the relevant Form teacher and Key Stage coordinator unless the Head of Area deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The form teacher/Key Stage Coordinator will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved immediately, receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 3 days and a response provided within 5 working days. If a response cannot be provided within that time, 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.

### Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head or Deputy Head. The Head or Deputy Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head or Deputy Head will meet with the Head of Area and the parents concerned, normally within two days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head or Deputy Head to carry out further investigations, in which case a definitive answer will be given within 10 further working days.

- The Head or Deputy Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head or Deputy 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 or Deputy Head will also give reasons for his/her 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 the Chief Executive of International Schools Partnership, who will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of the Chief Executive Officer of International Schools Partnership, or his nominated representative, who will be a Director of ISP, the Head of the school and an independent panel member not involved in the management or running of the school, who may be a Head of another school within the Partnership.
- If the Head of the school has already been involved in the handling of the complaint at stages 1 or 2, an appropriate alternative person will be appointed to the Panel for the purposes of hearing that complaint.
- The Chief Executive, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 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 three days prior to the hearing.
- 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 should proceed.
- After due consideration of all facts considered relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 14 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it.
- The Panel's findings and recommendation will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head and, where relevant, the person regarding whom the complaint was made. Recording of Complaints
- All complaints, and the outcome of the individual complaint, are duly recorded in the Complaints Register. The stage at which the complaint is concluded, whether at the preliminary stage or the final stage of a Panel Hearing, is appropriately noted.
- Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulation 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's Inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.