NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOL
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Complaints Procedure (General)

Status	**Statutory**
Responsible Governors' Committee	**Full Governing Body**
Date last approved by GB	**November 2025**
Responsible Person	**Co-Headteachers**
Review Date	**November 2026**
Last Amended Date	**October 2020**

In accordance with the Education Act 2002, New Heights School has adopted a Complaints Procedures Policy. The framework contained in this document has been designed to enable complaints to be dealt with through an open and transparent process.

Complainants who remain dissatisfied following the operation of a school's complaint procedure may refer their concern to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

New Heights School takes all concerns and complaints seriously. However, we do require every parent / guardian / stakeholder, etc. to follow the procedures contained in this document.

How to raise a general concern about your child's education

Step 1 – Informal

Please tell your child's Family Engagement Officer about your concerns. This is usually the best and quickest way to resolve any issues.

Step 2 – Informal

If you feel dissatisfied with the outcome, then it is time to make an appointment to see a member of the Senior Leadership Team and discuss your concerns. You will then be able to discuss this with the Deputy Headteacher or the Headteacher.

Step 3 – Formal – Complaint to the Headteacher

If we have not come to a resolution of your concern at this stage, please fill in the appropriate pro-forma to register your concerns formally to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will be responsible for managing the procedure, which may be delegated to the Complaints Co-ordinators (the Family Engagement Officers), but not the decision or the action to be taken.

The complaint must be registered within three months of the date on which the substance of it first arose, or where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents.

A person registering a concern outside of these time scales will be informed that their complaint is out of time.

New Heights School will investigate the complaint as quickly as possible and all information gathered under this procedure will be subject to the principles of the

Data Protection Act.

The person investigating the complaint must make sure that they:

- Establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- Interview those involved in the matter (the complainant may be accompanied by a friend, in the capacity of an observer, throughout any interviews);
- Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- Keep notes of the interview.

At each stage, New Heights School will keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. We will encourage complainant to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage.

The potential outcomes of an investigation may include that:

- The complaint is not upheld and there is no evidence to support it;
- The complaint is not upheld, however, a misunderstanding appears to have occurred, possibly because the person has not had access to the context of the matter or has not been provided with all the facts;
- The complaint is found to be malicious or vexatious;
- The complaint is upheld and requires and admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- The complaint is upheld and requires an assurance that the event complained of will not recur.

Dependent on the outcome of the investigation, the following actions to improve schools relations may be considered:

- Where a complaint is not upheld, the complainant may be invited to meet the Headteacher to receive the outcome of the investigation and the reasons why the complaint has no substance;
- Whether or not the complaint is upheld, the complainant may be invited to attend a meeting in order to improve relationships. This can only be achieved by mutual agreement.

- Where a complaint is upheld, it may be appropriate for the school to provide an apology to the complainant, an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again and an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.
- Where a complaint is not upheld and the complaint is found to be malicious or vexatious, the school should consider actions available to it to resolve the matter.

A letter should be sent to the complainant to notify them of whether or not the complaint was upheld.

APPEAL PROCEDURE

If complainants are dissatisfied with the decision of the Headteacher set against a realistic expectation of the outcome of the complaint, they may appeal to an appropriate committee of the Governing Body, in order to present their case. The committee members should be Governors who have had no prior involvement with the complaint.

The complainant must register their wish to appeal in writing to the Administration Officer within seven days of receiving the decision.

The Operations Director will convene a meeting of the Appeals Committee within three weeks of receiving the appeal, unless there are exceptional circumstances, which will lead to a date being fixed at a later time.

Copies of the full details of the complaint and the outcome of the investigation will be submitted to the Appeals Committee not less than three days before the meeting.

At the meeting of the Appeals Committee, the complainant will present their complaint to the Governors and the Headteacher will present the response. Either party may wish to call witnesses in support of their case.

The decision of the Appeals Committee, subject to the principles of confidentiality, will be provided to the complainant in writing within five working days of the meeting. The committee may:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final. A written statement outlining the decision of the committee must be sent to the complainant and Headteacher within five working days of the Appeal hearing.

Complainants will retain the right to pursue their complaints to the Secretary of State for Education.

CONFIDENTIAL

LIVERPOOL EDUCATION AUTHORITY
PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH GENERAL COMPLAINTS
FORM TO REGISTER A FORMAL COMPLAINT

Name of school: **New Heights School**

Personal Details:

Name: …….

Address: ……

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Telephone number:

Home: ……..

Work: ……..

Mobile: ……..

Student Details: (if applicable)

Name of student: ……

Class / Form: ……

Date incident took place: ……

Name of any witness(es): …….....

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Details of Complaint [Please state clearly the nature of the complaint] :

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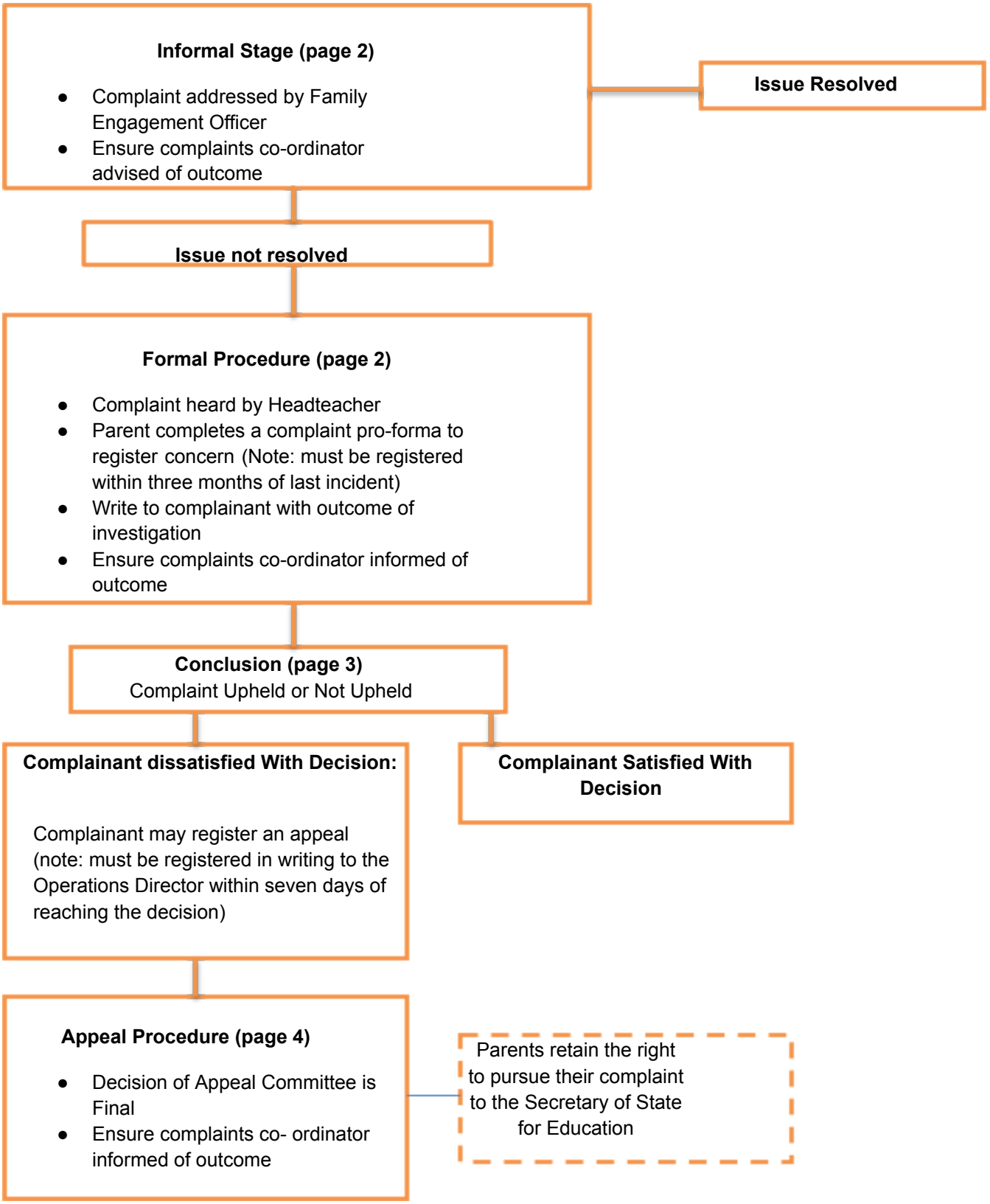
[If necessary, additional information may be included on a separate sheet, which should be signed and attached to this form]

Signed: …… **Date:** ……

*Persons making a complaint must register the complaint within 3 months of the incident.

Note This form should be returned to the Headteacher, unless the complaint is against the Headteacher, in which case it should be forwarded to the Chair of Governors

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