NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOL
Focus · Learn · Achieve

Complaints Procedure (Parents/Carers & Public)

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	**November 2025**

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how New Heights School deals with concerns and complaints from parents, carers and members of the public in accordance with **Section 29(1) of the Education Act 2002**.

The aim is to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, transparently, and in a timely manner, while promoting positive relationships between the school, pupils, parents and the wider community.

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2. Scope

This procedure applies to:

- Any complaint about the **school's provision, decisions, or administration**; and
- Any complaint by a parent or carer **about the conduct or actions of a member of staff**.

It does **not** cover:

- Staff employment matters (dealt with under the **Dignity at Work and Grievance Policy**);
- Matters subject to separate statutory processes (e.g. admissions, exclusions, SEND, safeguarding, whistleblowing).

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3. Guiding Principles

- Every complaint will be handled **confidentially**, **without prejudice**, and **within reasonable timescales**.
- Complaints should be raised **within three months** of the incident or last of a series of incidents.
- All records will be kept securely and retained in line with data-protection legislation.

4. Stages of the Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- **Contact point:** The parent or carer should first raise their concern with the relevant **Family Engagement Officer**.

- If unresolved, the matter may be discussed with a **member of the Senior Leadership Team** or the **Deputy Headteacher / Headteacher**.

- Most concerns are expected to be resolved at this stage.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint to the Headteacher

- If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant should complete the **Formal Complaint Form** (Appendix 1) and submit it to the **Headteacher** within three months.

- The Headteacher will investigate or delegate investigation to an appropriate member of staff but will retain overall responsibility for the decision.

- A written response will normally be issued within **15 school days**.

Stage 3 – Appeal to the Governing Body

- If dissatisfied, the complainant may appeal in writing to the **Operations Director** within **seven days** of receiving the Stage 2 outcome.

- The Operations Director will convene a **Complaints Appeals Committee** (three Governors with no prior involvement).

- The complainant and Headteacher will each present their case; both may be accompanied by a friend or representative.

- The Committee will consider the complaint and issue its **written decision within five working days**.

- The Committee may:
    - Dismiss the complaint in whole or part;
    - Uphold the complaint in whole or part;
    - Recommend actions to improve procedures or relationships.
- The Committee's decision is **final** within the school.

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5. Next Steps

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the Appeals Committee decision, they may refer the matter to the **Secretary of State for Education**, who will consider whether the school has acted reasonably in following its procedures.

Contact:
Department for Education
School Complaints Unit
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
Website: www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

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6. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body will review complaints and outcomes annually to identify patterns or learning points. The policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

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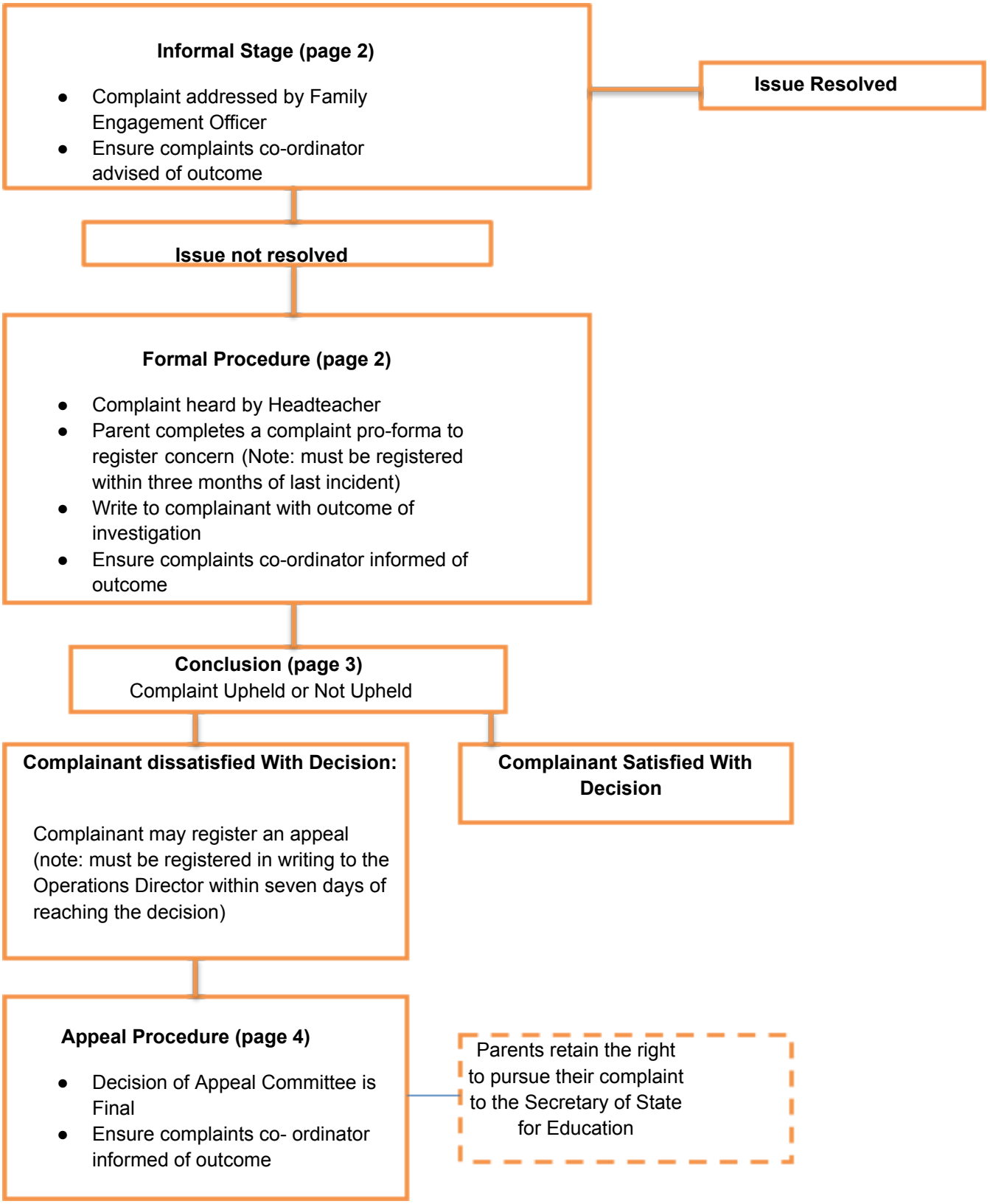
[If necessary, additional information may be included on a separate sheet, which should be signed and attached to this form]

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

FLOWCHART OF PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH GENERAL COMPLAINTS