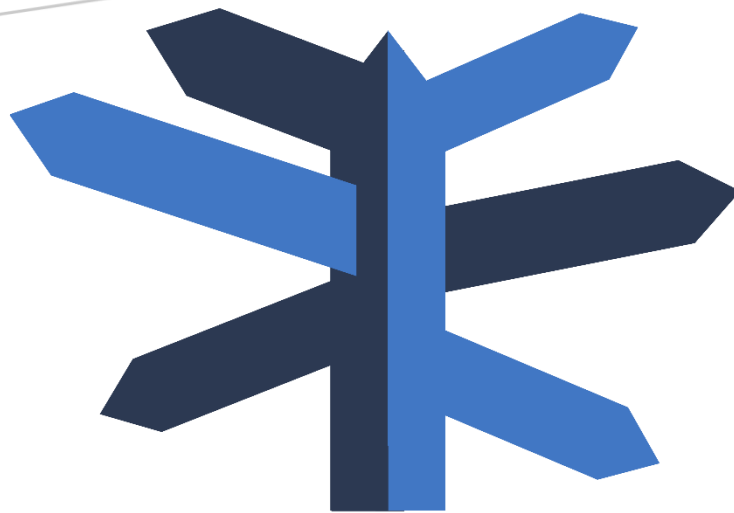




NESSS

NORTH EAST SURREY
SHORT STAY SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

APRIL 2025 – APRIL 2026

Document Control Information

Version	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1	5/5/2021	New Policy
2	28/04/2025	Review and rebrand
3		
4		
5		

Last Review	28/04/2025
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Contents

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Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to North East Surrey Short Stay School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as *‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’*.

A complaint may be defined as *‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’*.

It is in everyone’s interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. North East Surrey Short Stay School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, you will be referred to an appropriate alternative staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, you will be referred to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, North East Surrey Short Stay School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern can be raised in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of the person with the concern, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. Concerns should be raised with either the Class Teacher or Headteacher.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint, using the Complaint form (Appendix B). If you require assistance with completing the form, please

contact the school office. You can also ask a third-party organisation such as the Citizens Advice to help you.

Complainants should not approach individual members of the Management Committee to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at a later stage of the procedure.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of the Management Committee, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Timescale for making a complaint

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame only if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Audio or video evidence

Complainants should make sure they obtain informed consent from all parties present before recording conversations or meetings. In line with DfE guidance, we do not normally accept electronic recordings as evidence when we are asked to consider a complaint. Unless exceptional circumstances apply, we will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without informed consent of all parties being recorded.

Deviation from the procedure

There may be occasions when it's necessary or reasonable to deviate from the published complaints procedure. In these cases, the complainant will be kept informed and reasons for the deviation given.

Scope of this complaints procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by North East Surrey Short Stay School, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with the relevant local authority.
• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) on 0300 470 9100.
• Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions. <i>*complaints about the application of the Behaviour Policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i>
• Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistle-blowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
• Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's

	internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. 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.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

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 procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against North East Surrey Short Stay School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, North East Surrey Short Stay School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, 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 about will not recur
- an explanation 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.

In addition, mediation can provide a helpful mechanism for discussion when a complaint is raised and can help to rebuild the relationship between parties once all of the investigative stages of the complaints procedure have been complete.

Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Concerns and informal complaints

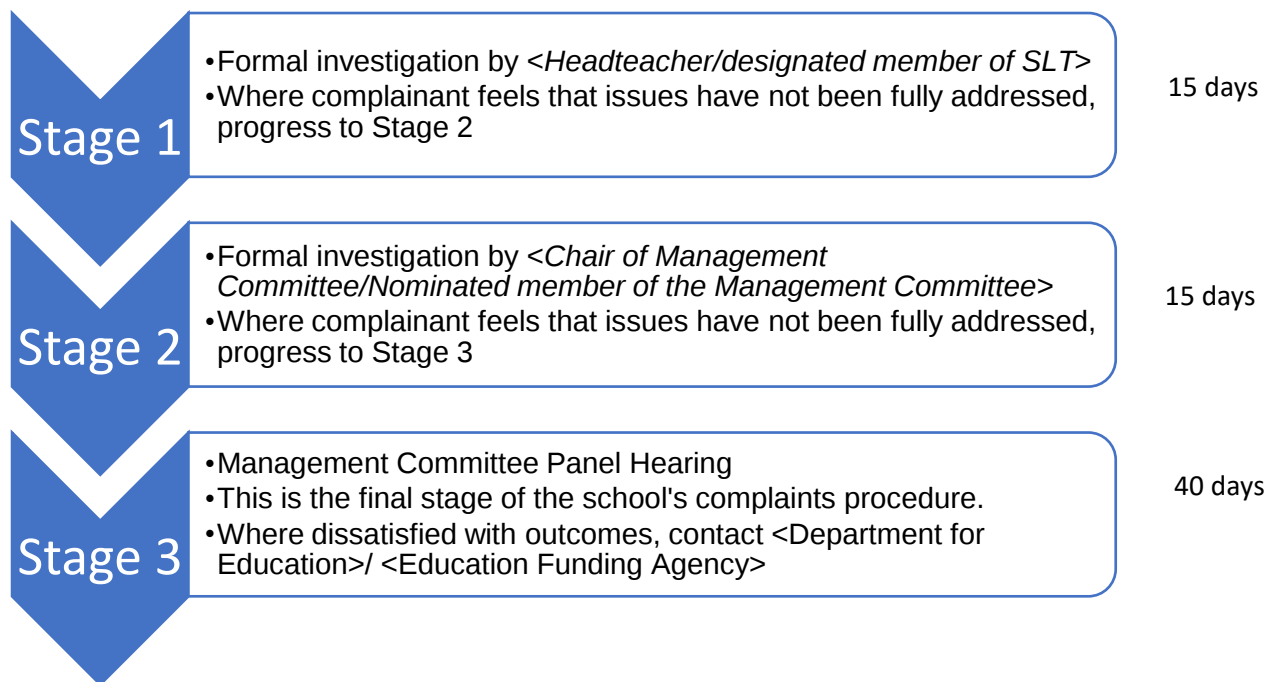
It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and resolved on an informal basis, within 10 school working days.

Concerns should be raised with either the Class Teacher, Year Head/Subject Head or Headteacher. Complainants should not approach individual members of the Management Committee to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at a later stage of the procedure.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Formal complaints

Summary of timeline for formal complaints



Stage 1 Headteacher Investigation

- Acknowledgement of receipt of complaint to be sent within 3 days of receipt of the complaint.
- Complaint to be investigated and written response to be received by complainant within 15 days of receipt of the formal complaint.

Stage 2 Management Committee Investigation

- If the complainant believes that their complaint has not been fully addressed at stage 1, they may request to move to stage 2. This request must be made within 10 days of the receipt of the outcome letter at stage 1.
- Acknowledgement of receipt of complaint to be sent within 3 days of receipt of the complaint.
- Complaint to be investigated and written response to be received by complainant within 15 days of receipt of the stage 2 formal complaint.

Stage 3 Management Committee Panel Hearing

- If the complainant believes that their complaint has not been fully addressed at stage 2, they may request to move to stage 3. This request must be made within 10 days of the receipt of the outcome letter at stage 2.
- Acknowledgement of receipt of request to escalate complaint to stage 3 to be sent within 5 days.
- Hearing to be held within 30 days of receipt of request to go to stage 3.
- Paperwork for Stage 3 hearing to be received from all parties at least 10 days before the hearing.
- Paperwork for Stage 3 hearing to be sent to all parties at least 5 days before the hearing.
- Outcome letter from panel to be received by complainant within 10 days of the hearing.

Note: In all cases, timescales refer to school days so exclude weekends, school holidays and INSET days.