



Complaints Policy

Approved by: Lisa Robertson

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Next review due: 03/2027

Objective

At New You Hair Academy, we are committed to meeting our legal obligations when addressing concerns and complaints raised by parents and associated individuals. To ensure a comprehensive and distinct approach, we have outlined the following principles:

Impartiality and Non-Adversarial Approach:

Maintaining objectivity and fairness is paramount throughout our complaint resolution process.

Independent Investigation:

We conduct thorough and unbiased investigations when necessary.

Effective and Prompt Response:

We commit to addressing all raised points promptly and comprehensively.

Confidentiality:

Respecting the complainant's preference for confidentiality is a key aspect of our approach.

Respect and Courtesy:

Treating complainants with respect, empathy, and courtesy is integral to our values.

Compliance with Administrative Law Principles:

All decisions adhere to administrative law principles, ensuring legality, rationality, reasonableness, fairness, and proportionality.

Transparent Communication:

We keep complainants informed about the progress of the complaint resolution process.

Contribution to Provision Improvement:

We actively consider how complaints can contribute to the evaluation and enhancement of our educational programs. We prioritise resolving concerns and complaints informally but, if necessary, follow formal procedures to ensure a fair investigation. Additionally, we promote awareness of this policy by publicising its existence and accessibility on the academy's official website.

Statutory Framework:

This policy is written in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Part 7), which require a clear, fair and transparent complaints procedure.

The provision will ensure that complaints are handled in line with principles of natural justice, fairness and proportionality.

Definitions and Scope:

Clarification of Terms:

- Concern: An expression of apprehension or uncertainty, addressed through regular communication.
- Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction, whether formal or informal, regarding actions taken or a lack thereof.

Comprehensive Scope:

We commit to resolving complaints informally whenever possible. This policy excludes procedures for admissions, statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN), safeguarding concerns, exclusion issues, whistle-blowing disclosures, staff grievances, and staff disciplinary matters. Specific policies address these areas.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Responsibilities of the Complainant:

- Familiarise themselves with the outlined procedures.
- Cooperate promptly throughout the process.
- Treat all involved parties with respect and maintain professionalism.
- Refrain from discussing the complaint on social media.

Responsibilities of the Investigator:

- Conduct thorough interviews and reviews.
- Prepare a comprehensive report for review.

By defining and understanding these roles, New You Hair Academy ensures a comprehensive and impartial approach to handling complaints.

Principles for Investigation:

Our primary objective in investigations is clarity regarding events, individuals involved, and desired outcomes. Timeframes are adhered to, allowing a fair and efficient process that upholds accountability, transparency, and mutual respect.

Stages of Complaint (excluding complaints against the Head of Centre or members of the Governing Body):

Stage 1: Informal Resolution:

To initiate an informal complaint, the complainant should contact the relevant staff member or the Head of Centre, either in person, through a letter, telephone call, or email. If unsure about whom to contact or how to reach them, the complainant can reach out via phone/email at 07598112497 or Lisa@NYHA.co.uk

Within two working days, the Alternative provision will acknowledge receipt of the informal complaint and initiate an investigation. The investigation will aim to provide a response within ten working days.

If the complaint remains unresolved at this stage, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint:

Formal complaints may be submitted through various means, including letter, email, phone call, in-person communication, or by a third party acting on behalf of the complainant. When raising a formal complaint, the complainant should provide specific details such as relevant dates, times, names of witnesses, copies of pertinent documents, and their proposed resolution for the complaint.

If complainants require assistance in submitting a formal complaint, they can contact via phone/email at 07598112497 or Lisa@NYHA.co.uk

The Head of Centre will arrange a meeting to discuss and clarify the concerns raised in the formal complaint, aiming to reach a resolution. The complainant may choose to be accompanied at this meeting and should inform the provision of their companion's identity in advance.

In certain circumstances, the alternative provision may need to refuse a specific individual's attendance at the meeting due to conflicts of interest. If such a situation arises, the provision will promptly notify the complainant, allowing them to arrange alternative accompaniment if desired.

Following the meeting, the Head of Centre or an appointed representative will conduct an independent investigation. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within ten working days. If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they must inform the governing board within ten working days.

Escalating a Complaint:

To escalate a complaint, individuals can contact the governing board through various channels, including letter, email, phone call, in-person communication, or through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant.

Contact can be made via email - Harvey@nyha.co.uk

The governing body representative will require details of the complaint, as mentioned previously, along with an explanation of how the previous stage of the procedure failed to adequately address the complaint and the complainant's proposed resolution.

The written conclusion of the escalated investigation will be sent to the complainant within ten working days. If the complainant wishes to proceed further, they must provide a written request

to the governing board within ten working days. Exceptions to this timeframe will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The governing body will acknowledge receipt of the request within three working days.

Stage 3: Review Panel:

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response to their complaint after the formal stage, the complaint will be escalated to a review panel.

The review panel, appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor, consists of at least three individuals who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. It is mandatory to include at least one panel member who is independent of the provision's management and running. The panel cannot solely consist of governing board members as they are not independent of the provision's management and running.

The review panel will have access to the existing records of the complaint's progress, as outlined in section 'Record Keeping'.

Reasonable notice of the review panel's meeting date will be given to the complainant; however, the panel reserves the right to schedule the meeting based on their convenience. Both the complainant and representatives from the provision will have the opportunity to present written or oral submissions before the meeting. The complainant may attend the panel hearing and be accompanied if desired.

During the meeting, each party will have the chance to present statements, evidence, and call witnesses as necessary. The panel, the complainant, and the provision representative(s) will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide responses. Once both parties have presented their cases, they will be asked to leave, and the panel will deliberate on the evidence presented.

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The panel will compile its findings and recommendations from the case, preparing minutes of the hearing, findings, and recommendations. The panel's findings and recommendations will be made available to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy of the findings and recommendations will also be available for inspection by the proprietor and the Head of Centre.

The provision will communicate the decision in writing to those involved within five working days.

Complaints against the Head of provision, a governor or the governing board

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

If a complaint is made against the Head of provision or any member of the governing board, the complainant should initially direct their concerns to HRSchofield1@gmail.com

In cases where the complaint specifically involves the Head of centre or a member of the governing board, including the chair or vice-chair, an impartial and suitably skilled governor will undertake the steps outlined in Stage 1, as detailed in the section above.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

If the complaint jointly involves the chair and vice-chair, the entire governing board, or the majority of the governing board, an independent investigator will be appointed to carry out the steps outlined in Stage 2, as described in the section above. The investigator will be selected by the governing board and will provide a formal response at the conclusion of their investigation.

Stage 3: Review Panel

In cases where the complaint jointly involves the chair and vice-chair, the entire governing board, or the majority of the governing board, a committee comprising independent governors will convene to address the complaint. These governors will be sourced from local provisions or the local authority and will follow the procedures outlined in Stage 3, as outlined in the section above.

Referring complaints on completion of the provision's procedure

Upon completing the provision's internal complaints procedure, if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they have the option to refer their complaint.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the completion of the internal complaints procedure, they may refer the complaint to:

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- Ofsted (if applicable under registration requirements), or
- The Local Authority or commissioning body responsible for the placement.

For additional information or to initiate the referral process for a complaint, please visit the following webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

Persistent complaints

Unreasonably Persistent Complaints

While we treat most complaints seriously, it is essential to address situations where a complaint becomes unreasonably persistent. The following circumstances may indicate an unreasonably persistent complaint:

- The complainant has previously raised the same complaint, and it has already been resolved following the alternative provisions complaints procedure.
- The complaint demonstrates characteristics of being obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory, or repetitive.
- The complainant knowingly provides false information.
- The complaint is unfounded or falls outside the scope of the complaints procedure.
- The complainant pursues a valid complaint in an unreasonable manner, such as refusing to articulate the complaint, failing to cooperate with the complaints procedure, or demanding approaches that are incompatible with the established procedure and time frames.
- The basis of the complaint changes throughout the investigation.
- The complaint appears to be designed to cause disruption, annoyance, or excessive demands on alternative provisions time.
- The complainant seeks unrealistic outcomes or proposes solutions lacking any serious purpose or value.

Steps Taken to Address Unreasonably Persistent Complaints

We are committed to addressing the complainant's concerns while maintaining our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process. We will follow our complaints procedure as outlined above whenever possible.

In cases where the complainant continues to engage with the alternative provision in a disruptive manner, we may implement communication strategies to manage the situation. These strategies may include:

- Providing the complainant with a single point of contact through an assigned email address.
- Limiting the number of times the complainant can initiate contact, such as setting a fixed number of interactions per term.
- Requesting that the complainant engage a third party, such as Citizens Advice, to act on their behalf.
- Implementing any other necessary strategies to address the situation appropriately.

Cessation of Response:

In extreme cases, response cessation may occur after reasonable steps have been taken and options presented.

The decision to cease correspondence will be made by the Head of Centre or Governing Body and confirmed in writing to the complainant, explaining the reasons and advising of their right to refer the matter externally.

Duplicate Complaints:

Duplicate complaints are assessed, informing complainants of previous resolution or initiating a new procedure if new aspects arise.

Complaint Campaigns:

Responses to multiple complaints on the same topic are streamlined for efficiency.

Record Keeping:

Records of all complaints, including whether resolved at informal, formal or panel stage, and any action taken, will be kept securely for a minimum of six years. These records will be made available for inspection by the proprietor and, where requested, by regulatory bodies.

Learning Lessons:

Reviews are conducted to identify areas for improvement, ensuring continuous enhancement.

Monitoring Arrangements:

The governing board actively monitors and assesses complaints, identifying patterns and recurring issues.

Policy Review:

The policy undergoes a thorough annual review, aligning with evolving best practices and regulations. This comprehensive and transparent approach ensures that New You Hair Academy addresses concerns effectively while upholding the highest standards of professionalism and compliance.