Integrated Management System (IMS)
Complaints Policy

NEW DAWN
PRIVATE SCHOOL

This Document has been reviewed and approved by:

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1. Rationale

At New Dawn Private School (NDPS), the school is committed to providing a high-quality educational experience, maintaining positive relationships with learners and their families, and continually improving the services and support it provides. The school recognises that parents, carers, learners, staff and other stakeholders should have clear, accessible and appropriate channels through which to raise concerns and make complaints.

NDPS views complaints as an important source of feedback and an opportunity to reflect on practice, identify weaknesses, address misunderstandings and strengthen the quality of education and care. A fair, transparent and timely complaints process supports accountability, builds trust and demonstrates the school's commitment to listening to its community.

An effective complaints procedure enables the school to:

- Respond to concerns promptly, respectfully and proportionately, ensuring that complainants understand how their concerns will be considered and addressed.
- Promote a culture of openness, professional responsibility and constructive communication across the school.
- Identify recurring issues, service gaps, weaknesses in procedures and opportunities for improvement.
- Evaluate how effectively the school meets the needs and expectations of learners, parents, carers and other stakeholders.
- Strengthen relationships between families, staff, school leaders and the wider New Dawn community through respectful dialogue and appropriate resolution.
- Identify professional development needs, including communication, customer care, safeguarding, pastoral support and service delivery.
- Monitor complaint patterns and outcomes to inform school improvement planning, leadership oversight and the school's Integrated Management System (IMS).
- Demonstrate that concerns are handled fairly, consistently and confidentially, with decisions based on appropriate evidence and applicable requirements.
- Protect learners' welfare by ensuring that complaints involving safeguarding, discrimination, bullying, health and safety or other risks are promptly directed to the appropriate procedures.

The school recognises that a complaint may highlight a concern that requires immediate action, particularly where learner safety, safeguarding, wellbeing or legal compliance may be affected. Such matters must not be delayed while the standard complaints process is followed; they must be referred promptly through the appropriate safeguarding, health and safety, employment or regulatory procedures.

As a British international school in the UAE, NDPS promotes respectful communication, fairness, integrity, accountability and the rule of law. These principles underpin the handling of complaints, alongside respect for UAE culture, national identity, applicable legislation and regulatory requirements. All parties are expected to engage constructively and treat one another with dignity, regardless of the nature of the concern.

Through effective complaints management, NDPS aims to strengthen stakeholder confidence, improve service quality and ensure that feedback leads to meaningful action and demonstrable improvement in learners' experiences and outcomes.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Complaints Policy is to establish a clear, accessible, consistent and fair framework for receiving, recording, investigating, responding to and learning from complaints. It provides staff and school leaders with guidance on their responsibilities and ensures that complainants understand how concerns will be managed.

The policy aims to:

- **Provide clear procedures:** Establish transparent stages for raising and resolving complaints, including the appropriate route for informal concerns, formal complaints and requests for review.
- **Promote early resolution:** Encourage concerns to be raised with the relevant member of staff or leader in the first instance wherever appropriate, enabling misunderstandings and routine issues to be resolved promptly.
- **Ensure fairness and impartiality:** Consider each complaint objectively, review relevant evidence, give appropriate parties an opportunity to provide information and avoid prejudging outcomes.
- **Define responsibilities:** Clarify the roles of staff, Heads of Phase, relevant leaders, the Principal, the proprietor or governing body, and any designated review panel in managing complaints.
- **Set clear communication expectations:** Ensure complainants receive acknowledgement, information about the process, appropriate updates and a reasoned outcome within the school's published timescales, subject to any necessary extensions.

- **Protect confidentiality:** Handle complaints and associated records sensitively, sharing information only with those who need it to investigate, resolve or oversee the matter, in accordance with applicable requirements.
- **Protect learners and vulnerable individuals:** Ensure complaints relating to safeguarding, child protection, bullying, discrimination, health and safety or immediate risks are escalated promptly through the relevant procedures.
- **Promote inclusion and accessibility:** Ensure the process is accessible to parents, carers and other complainants, taking reasonable steps to support communication needs and participation where appropriate.
- **Promote dignity and respect:** Require staff, complainants and other parties to communicate professionally, respectfully and without intimidation, harassment or retaliation.
- **Support equality and fair treatment:** Ensure complaints involving unfair treatment, discriminatory conduct or concerns about protected characteristics are taken seriously and considered in accordance with applicable UAE law and regulatory requirements.
- **Provide appropriate escalation and review:** Explain how a complainant may request further consideration where they remain dissatisfied, including the relevant independent or governing-body review arrangements and any applicable external regulatory routes.
- **Support staff development:** Identify training needs arising from complaint trends, communication difficulties, procedural weaknesses or service concerns.
- **Analyse complaints and outcomes:** Monitor the number, nature, stages, response times, outcomes and recurring themes of complaints to identify systemic issues and evaluate the effectiveness of corrective actions.
- **Drive continuous improvement:** Use complaints data to inform the school's strategic priorities, quality assurance activities and IMS processes, including the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle and Corrective and Preventive Action (CAPA), where applicable.
- **Meet regulatory requirements:** Ensure the complaints process complies with applicable UAE legislation, KHDA requirements, other relevant regulatory obligations and the school's approved governance arrangements.

3. Scope

This manual applies to the handling of customers' complaints and feedback and resolving them internally within the school. The stated policies and principles apply to all staff and management involved or participates in the process.

4. Terms and Definitions

Term/Acronym	Definition
CS	Customer Satisfaction
Complainant	Person, organisation or its representative, making a complaint
Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected
Customer	An organisation or person that receives the school services
Customer satisfaction	Customer's perception of the degree to which the Customer's requirements have been fulfilled.
Customer service	interaction of the school with the customer throughout the life cycle of a service or product
Feedback	opinions, comments and expressions of interest in the service/ products or the complaints-handling process
interested party	person or group having an interest in the performance or success of the school

5. Responsibilities

Board of Governors (BOG)

The Board will be responsible to:

- Ensure that the Complaints Policy and procedures are reviewed and approved regularly in line with KHDA requirements and best practices.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the complaints-handling system through reports provided by SLT.
- Ensure that complaints handling is embedded within the school's overall customer care approach.
- Ensure that complaints are used as a tool for continuous improvement and service enhancement.

- Make informed strategic decisions. to improve school performance based on trends and outcomes of complaints.

Quality Assurance Representative

The Quality Management Representative is responsible for:

- Ensure that the Complaints Policy and procedures are controlled, standardised, and clearly documented
- Ensure that the complaints-handling process is aligned with quality assurance standards and regulatory requirements.
- Monitor the implementation and consistency of complaints procedures across all phases.
- Review complaints data to identify trends, gaps, and areas for improvement.
- Ensure that corrective and preventive actions (CAPA) are implemented and followed up effectively.
- Promote awareness of complaints handling as part of the school's quality and customer care systems
- Ensure that staff are trained on complaints procedures and expectations.
- Report findings, trends, and impact to BOG and SLT.
- Ensure the application of the PDCA cycle (Plan–Do–Check–Act) in complaints handling processes.

Senior Leadership Team:

Senior Leadership Team members are responsible for ensuring that assessment practices are effectively implemented, monitored, and continuously improved. This includes:

- Ensure effective implementation and consistent application of the complaints-handling procedures across the school.
- Maintain accurate records of complaints, actions taken, and outcomes.
- Analyse complaints to identify recurring issues and opportunities for improvement.
- Ensure timely, fair, and transparent resolution of complaints.

- Promote a positive culture where complaints are valued as feedback for improvement
- Ensure that complaints are not treated in isolation but linked to overall school improvement.
- Provide regular reports to the BOG on complaints trends, actions, and impact.
- Allocate appropriate resources and empower staff to resolve complaints effectively.
- Hold staff accountable for accurate assessment practices and student progress and attainment

5.4 Middle Leaders (Heads of Department / Supervisors)

Middle Leaders are responsible for:

• Implementing the complaints-handling procedures within their areas of responsibility.
• Promoting awareness of complaints procedures and ensuring accessibility to all stakeholders.
• Supporting staff in resolving complaints promptly and professionally.
• Monitoring complaints within their departments and maintaining accurate records.
• Taking corrective actions to address issues and prevent recurrence.
• Reporting complaints data and actions to SLT.

5.6 Teachers:

Teachers are responsible for:

- Adhering to the complaint's procedures and handling complaints in line with school expectations.
- Demonstrating professionalism, courtesy, and ethical conduct when dealing with complaints.
- Responding to concerns promptly and escalating issues where necessary.
- Maintaining accurate records of complaints and actions taken.
- Contributing to a positive school culture that values feedback and continuous improvement.

6. Procedures

Stage One: Informal Resolution

Aim: to resolve concerns quickly and constructively.

3.1. The parent or complainant should initially contact the relevant class teacher, member of staff or department responsible for the matter.

3.2. The complainant should explain the concern clearly, including relevant dates, events, individuals involved and the outcome they are seeking, where known.

3.3. The member of staff should listen carefully, acknowledge the concern and seek to clarify the facts. They should respond professionally and avoid making assumptions before the matter has been understood.

3.4. The member of staff should seek to resolve the concern directly where it is appropriate and within their authority. This may include providing an explanation, correcting a misunderstanding, agreeing an action or arranging a meeting.

3.5. Where the concern cannot be resolved by the member of staff, or where it concerns that member of staff, it should be referred to the relevant Head of Key Stage, department leader or another appropriate senior leader.

3.6. The school should aim to acknowledge and respond to an informal concern within five school days. Where further investigation is required, the complainant should be informed of the expected timescale.

3.7. A brief record should be kept of the concern, action taken and outcome where the matter is significant, repeated or requires follow-up.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, or the concern is too serious or complex for informal resolution, they may proceed to Stage Two.

Stage Two: Formal Complaint to the Principal

Aim: to investigate the complaint impartially and provide a reasoned written response.

4.1. A formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Principal. It should include, where possible:

- The complainant's name and contact details.
- The nature of the complaint.
- Relevant dates, events and individuals involved.
- Steps already taken to resolve the concern.
- Any supporting evidence or documentation.
- The outcome or resolution being sought.

4.2. The school should acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint within three school days and confirm who will manage the investigation and the anticipated response date.

4.3. The Principal, or a suitably authorised senior leader who has not been directly involved in the matter, will review the complaint and determine the appropriate investigation.

4.4. The investigation may include:

- Reviewing relevant policies, records, communications and evidence.
- Meeting with the complainant and relevant staff members.
- Seeking statements from individuals with relevant information.
- Reviewing relevant learner records where access is lawful and necessary.
- Consulting appropriate school leaders or external professionals where required.

4.5. All parties must be treated fairly. The school will not presume that a complaint is either justified or unfounded before considering the available evidence.

4.6. The investigation must respect privacy and confidentiality. Information will only be shared with individuals who need it to investigate, respond to or manage the complaint, subject to legal and safeguarding requirements.

4.7. The Principal should aim to issue a written outcome within ten school days of acknowledging the formal complaint. If the matter is complex or cannot reasonably be concluded within this period, the complainant must be informed of the reason for the delay and given a revised timescale.

4.8. The written response should include:

- A summary of the complaint.
- The steps taken to investigate it.
- The findings and decision, expressed clearly.

- Any appropriate action the school will take.
- Information about how to request a review if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

4.9. The school may uphold the complaint in full or in part, or not uphold it, depending on the evidence. Where appropriate, actions may include an explanation, an apology, a correction to a process, additional staff training, a review of practice or other proportionate improvement measures.

4.10. The school will not disclose confidential employment information, personal information about another learner or other restricted information as part of its response.

Stage Three: Review by the Proprietor or Governing Representative

Aim: to provide an independent review within the school's governance structure.

5.1. If the complainant remains dissatisfied after Stage Two, they may submit a written request for review to the Proprietor or an appropriately authorised governing representative.

5.2. The request should explain why the complainant considers the Stage Two response unsatisfactory and identify any relevant information or procedural concerns that they believe have not been addressed.

5.3. The request should normally be submitted within ten school days of the Stage Two outcome. The school may consider a later request where there is a reasonable explanation.

5.4. The reviewer must not have been directly involved in the original decision or investigation. Where a conflict of interest exists, another suitable and impartial representative must be appointed.

5.5. The review will consider whether:

- The complaint was investigated fairly and appropriately.
- Relevant evidence was considered.
- The school followed its policies and procedures.
- The outcome was reasonable and supported by the findings.
- Appropriate actions were identified and, where applicable, implemented.

5.6. The reviewer may uphold the original decision, vary the outcome, require further investigation or recommend appropriate corrective action.

5.7. The school should acknowledge the review request within three school days and aim to provide a written review outcome within ten school days. If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed of the reason and revised timescale.

5.8. The review outcome will normally conclude the school's internal complaints procedure, subject to any further review or escalation route available under applicable UAE law or KHDA requirements.

Complaints Involving the Principal, Proprietor or Senior Leaders

6.1. Where a complaint concerns the Principal, it must not be investigated or decided by the Principal. It should be referred to the Proprietor or an appropriately authorised representative who is independent of the matter.

6.2. Where a complaint concerns the Proprietor or the person normally responsible for Stage Three, the school must identify an appropriate alternative route that avoids a conflict of interest and complies with applicable regulatory requirements.

6.3. Where a complaint concerns several senior leaders, or the independence of the internal process may reasonably be questioned, the school should consider appointing an impartial external investigator or reviewer where appropriate.

6.4. Where a complaint alleges abuse, a safeguarding failure, serious misconduct or an immediate risk to a learner, the relevant safeguarding or reporting procedure must be followed alongside any appropriate complaints process. The school must refer the matter to the competent UAE authority where required.

Complaints About Staff Conduct

7.1. Complaints about a member of staff will be handled sensitively and fairly, with due regard for the rights and privacy of the complainant, the learner and the staff member concerned.

7.2. The school will distinguish between a service-related complaint, a concern about professional practice, a disciplinary matter and a safeguarding allegation. The appropriate procedure will be followed for each.

7.3. Where a complaint may constitute a safeguarding allegation, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the appropriate senior authority must be informed promptly in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

7.4. The school will not promise a complainant a particular employment consequence or disclose confidential disciplinary outcomes. It will, however, communicate the outcome of the complaint to the extent that it is appropriate and lawful to do so.

7.5. Staff members must not investigate complaints about their own conduct or attempt to influence witnesses or the complainant.

Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Other Urgent Complaints

8.1. Complaints involving suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying that presents a safeguarding risk, serious online harm, discrimination involving a risk to safety, or an immediate health and safety concern must be escalated without delay.

8.2. The receiving member of staff must record the concern factually and refer it to the DSL, Principal or appropriate responsible leader in line with the relevant policy. Staff must not conduct their own safeguarding investigation unless formally authorised to do so.

8.3. Where the complaint concerns the DSL or Principal, the school's alternative reporting route must be used.

8.4. Immediate protective action must be taken where necessary to safeguard learners or others. Relevant UAE authorities must be contacted where required by law or regulatory procedure.

8.5. The complaints process must not delay emergency action, safeguarding referrals, statutory reporting or the preservation of relevant evidence.

Confidentiality, Records and Data Protection

9.1. The school will maintain a central complaints register managed by an authorised member of the leadership or administration team.

9.2. The register should record:

- Date received and name of the complainant.
- Category and summary of the complaint.
- Stage at which the complaint was handled.
- Person responsible for managing the matter.
- Investigation steps and evidence considered.
- Dates of acknowledgement and responses.
- Findings, decisions and agreed actions.

- Whether actions were completed and their impact.
- Any review or external referral, where applicable.

9.3. Records must be factual, professional, securely stored and accessible only to authorised personnel.

9.4. Information will be retained in line with applicable UAE legal and regulatory requirements and the school's approved records-retention arrangements.

9.5. Complaints data will be reviewed to identify recurring themes, patterns, risks and opportunities for improvement. Any reporting to leaders, the Proprietor or governors should protect personal and confidential information.

9.6. The school will not guarantee absolute confidentiality. Information may need to be shared where required for safeguarding, legal compliance, regulatory reporting or a fair investigation.

Unreasonable, Repetitive or Persistent Complaints

10.1. The school recognises that a complainant may be upset or dissatisfied. Strong feelings or persistent follow-up do not, by themselves, make a complaint unreasonable.

10.2. Where contact becomes excessive, repetitive, abusive or prevents the school from carrying out its responsibilities, the Principal or appropriate senior leader may establish reasonable communication arrangements.

10.3. Such arrangements may include identifying one named contact, agreeing appropriate communication channels, setting reasonable response times or consolidating repeated correspondence into one response.

10.4. Any decision to restrict communication must be proportionate, explained in writing and reviewed where circumstances change.

10.5. No restriction may prevent a person from reporting a safeguarding concern, contacting an appropriate UAE authority or exercising a legal or regulatory right.

External Escalation

11.1. If a complainant remains dissatisfied after completing the school's internal procedure, they may seek advice or escalate the matter through the appropriate external route available under current UAE law and KHDA requirements.

11.2. The school will provide accurate information about the applicable external route where it is able to do so. It will not discourage a parent or complainant from contacting a competent authority where they are legally entitled to do so.

11.3. Matters involving safeguarding, criminal conduct, serious health and safety risks or other issues requiring immediate regulatory or legal attention must be referred promptly where required, rather than waiting for the internal process to conclude.

Monitoring, Accountability and Continuous Improvement

12.1. The Principal and leadership team will review complaints regularly to identify patterns relating to teaching and learning, behaviour, inclusion, communication, transport, safeguarding, facilities and other areas of school provision.

12.2. Significant complaints and recurring themes will be reported to the Proprietor or relevant governance body, with due regard for confidentiality.

12.3. Where a complaint identifies a weakness, the school will determine appropriate corrective and preventative actions. These may include staff development, policy revision, improved communication, changes to procedures or additional monitoring.

12.4. Actions will be assigned to a named person with a clear completion date. Leaders will check whether the actions have been completed and whether they have improved practice and learner outcomes.

12.5. The school will use the cycle **Concern → Investigation → Action → Evidence → Impact → Improvement** to demonstrate that complaints contribute to meaningful improvement.

12.6. The Complaints Policy and Procedures will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner where required by changes in UAE law, KHDA requirements, BSO expectations or the school's experience of managing complaints.

Responsibilities

All staff

- Listen respectfully and respond professionally to concerns.
- Resolve matters within their authority where appropriate.
- Record and refer concerns requiring further action.
- Escalate safeguarding and urgent risks without delay.

Heads of Key Stage and department leaders

- Support informal resolution.
- Investigate concerns referred to them within their authority.
- Keep accurate records and monitor agreed actions.
- Escalate unresolved or serious matters appropriately.

Principal

- Oversee the implementation of the procedures.
- Investigate formal complaints unless conflicted or directly involved.
- Ensure responses are fair, timely and evidence-based.
- Analyse complaint trends and implement improvements.

Proprietor or authorised governance representative

- Review complaints about the Principal where appropriate.
- Provide an impartial Stage Three review.
- Monitor significant themes, risks and actions.
- Ensure an alternative route is available where a conflict of interest exists.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Ensure safeguarding-related complaints are referred and managed through the safeguarding procedures.
- Maintain appropriate safeguarding records and make referrals to competent authorities where required.
- Ensure the complaints process does not delay protective action.

Proposed Timescale Summary

Stage	Action	Target timescale
Stage One	Informal response	Within 5 school days
Stage Two	Acknowledge formal complaint	Within 3 school days
Stage Two	Written investigation outcome	Within 10 school days of acknowledgement
Stage Three	Acknowledge review request	Within 3 school days
Stage Three	Written review outcome	Within 10 school days of acknowledgement

7. Accountability:

Accountability for assessment at New Dawn Private School (NDPS) is clearly defined across all levels to ensure effective implementation, consistency of practice, and continuous improvement in student outcomes.

- **Board of Governors (BOG):** Hold overall strategic accountability for the effectiveness of the assessment system and its alignment with KHDA and MOE requirements.
- **Quality Assurance Manager (QMR):** Provides independent oversight of assessment practices, ensuring compliance with policy, consistency across the school, and effective implementation of quality assurance processes.
- **Senior Leadership Team (SLT):** Oversee the implementation of the assessment policy, monitor its effectiveness, and ensure high-quality assessment practices across all phases.
- **Assessment Lead:** Ensures consistency in assessment practices, oversees implementation, and supports the effective use of assessment data to inform teaching and learning.
- **Teachers:** Conduct assessments, maintain accurate records, use data to inform teaching, and provide timely feedback to support student progress.
- **Principal and Assessment Lead:** Are fully accountable for the overall quality of assessment practices and the effective use of data to drive instructional decisions.

8. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it aligns with the school's goals and the evolving needs of our students. Adjustments will be made as necessary to continuously improve the assessment process.

a. Related forms and documents:

- EYFS Assessment Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy.
- Curriculum Policy.
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Parent Handbook
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Assessment profile
- Assessment Policy Forms