ROUNDWOOD PARK
MAPLE WALK
PREP SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

In this policy the following members of staff are referred to:

TITLE	NAME
Head Teacher	Mia Santa-Humfrey
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Deborah Livsey

INTRODUCTION AND PRINCIPLES

This policy is for the parents or guardians of children at the School including those parents or guardians of children who are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The School will make this policy available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School website, a printed hard copy is also available from the school office on request. The policy includes the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. The School will also provide, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of this policy and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Although this procedure is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them; it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the School. The only exception to this is if the complaint is a review of a decision taken by the Head Teacher to exclude or require the removal of a pupil in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions. Any request for a review of a decision to exclude will be dealt with under Stage 3 of this Complaints Policy and should be made in writing to the CEO of The New Model School Company Limited by no later than five working days from the date of the decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil.

The School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and the pastoral care provided to its pupils. For that reason, we encourage all parents with any concerns to discuss these with teachers or other staff at the School at the earliest opportunity, in the expectation that problems can and will be solved before they develop into serious issues which then become the subject of complaints.

However, if parents do at any stage believe that they have a complaint, they should know that they are entitled to make one. In order to enable this and to provide a platform for a complaint, the School makes this policy available to all parents of pupils via the School's website. With the School following this policy and procedure, parents can expect their complaint to be treated by the School with care and consideration at whatever stage they may complain.

The School also sets out our procedures in instances where pupils may be disciplined or excluded from school, to which parents are referred. This is located in the **Discipline and Exclusions Policy**, which is available from the School or from the School's website.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this policy is to identify the basis and process of filing, investigating and where possible and appropriate, resolving complaints. The policy therefore identifies:

1. How a complaint is defined and how it is made
2. The time that will be taken to acknowledge and then investigate a complaint
3. The records which will be kept
4. The three stages of the procedure
5. The particular framework attaching to complaints at the Early Years Foundation Stage
6. Complaints lodged

WHAT CONSTITUTES A COMPLAINT?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem that the parent or the child has experienced at the School. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department, or about an individual member of staff; and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School, is within the scope of this procedure.

A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done, or it has acted unfairly.

To be treated as a formal complaint, the complaint should be put in writing and identify as many specifics of persons, instances and other data as can be furnished, in order to enable the School to properly investigate and resolve the complaint(s) involved.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The School is here for its children and parents can be assured that their child will not be penalised for a complaint that they or their child raise in good faith.

THE THREE STAGE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

There are three possible stages for a complaint:

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's class teacher. In many cases, the matter may be resolved straightaway to the parents' satisfaction by this means. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Head Teacher.
- Complaints made directly to the Head Teacher will usually be referred down to the relevant class teacher first, unless the Head Teacher deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
- The class teacher will make a written record of complaints and the date on which they were received.
- On occasion, complaints may be dealt with by a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team (including the Head Teacher) but still be resolved informally and successfully.
- If, however, the complaint is against the Head Teacher, parents should make their complaint directly to the NMS Chief Executive Officer (see below) whose contact details are available from the Central Office on request.
- Any query relating to fees or charges for other administrative matters should initially be raised with the Bursar.
- An informal complaint provided in writing will be acknowledged by telephone, email or letter within two working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays. A matter raised orally will not necessarily be acknowledged in writing but will be recorded centrally by the person dealing with the complaint. A note is also made when a satisfactory outcome is made with the parent.
- The School aims to investigate and resolve complaints at Stage 1. Depending on the nature of the complaint, this will be within ten working days. Should the matter not be resolved within this time frame, or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this policy.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher, making it clear that they were not satisfied with the result of their initial enquiry and that they wish to make a formal complaint. If a teacher or other member of staff receives written notification that a parent wishes to make a formal complaint, then this should be passed on to the Head Teacher.
- The Head Teacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head Teacher will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint if received during term-time, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Head Teacher will keep confidential written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to all complaints reaching stage 2.
- Once the Head Teacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head Teacher will also give reasons for their decision, within 15 days working days of the complaint being put in writing.
- If, however, the complaint concerns the Head Teacher, parents should make their complaint directly to the NMS Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Who can be contacted on 020 8965 7374 or by email using the address given by a member of staff obtainable via that number. The CEO will call for a full report from the Head Teacher

and for all the relevant documents. They may also call for a briefing from members of staff. They will, in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the CEO is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The CEO will give reasons for their decision.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision received either from the Head Teacher or in the case of a written complaint against the Head Teacher, the decision from the CEO, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they must lodge an appeal within 10 working days of the conclusion of Stage 2, establishing their complaint(s) and outlining the basis on which they wish to make their appeal. Any supporting evidence which the parents wish to rely on should also be provided with their grounds for appeal. They should address this to the CEO, who will arrange to appoint a Panel and Panel Chairman. Unless invited to do so by the Panel Chairman or the parents, the CEO will not participate themselves in the hearing.

- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. The Panel Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint, within 5 working days of being appointed and schedule a hearing to take place within a target of 20 working days.

- The Panel will review all correspondence regarding the complaint and the minutes of any interviews or meetings conducted in-house, together with a copy of the independent report prepared under Stage 2 of the process. If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing or further investigation be carried out. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties no later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.

- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation would not be appropriate. The panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.

- The remit of the Panel shall be at the discretion of the CEO of NMS and the manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.

- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

- After due consideration of the merits of the complaint and all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and decide whether to :

    1. Dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part
    2. Uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part
    3. Make recommendations.

The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within 5 working days of the hearing (although additional time maybe required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the Panel will be final.

A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, to the person(s) complained about, as well as to the CEO and the Head Teacher.

A hard copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be made available for inspection on the School premises by the CEO and Head Teacher.

Any complaint of a decision taken by the Head Teacher to exclude or require the removal of the pupil under the School's Terms and Conditions will be governed by this Stage 3 of the School's Complaints Procedure. In such circumstances, the Panel may only uphold the complaint and ask the Head Teacher to reconsider their decision if they consider, having regard to the process followed by the Head Teacher, that the Head Teacher's decision to exclude / require the removal of the pupil was not a reasonable decision for the Head to have taken.

TIMEFRAME FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

All complaints received will be handled seriously and sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the School's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 20 working days.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel hearing, which is triggered if there is an appeal, will be completed within a target of a further 25 working days of the appeal.

Please note that for purposes of this procedure "working days" refer to weekdays (Monday to Friday), excluding Bank Holidays, during term time. This means that during School holidays it may take longer to resolve a complaint although the School will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid undue delay. It may also take longer to resolve a complaint during periods of significant disruption to School life or as a consequence of unavoidable staff absence, however deviation from the normal timescale for resolving a complaint during term time will only be permitted on an exceptional basis, and the School will take all reasonable steps to limit any such delay.

RECORDING COMPLAINTS

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal complaints received and whether they are resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

At the School's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)

- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Notes of the hearing
- The Panel's written decision

This may include 'special category personal data' (as detailed in the School's Privacy Notice, but potentially including sensitive data such as information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice but in most cases for a period of at least seven years after the pupil leaves the School.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

PERSISTENT CORRESPONDENCE AND UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS

There may be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant seeks to reopen the same issues that have already been considered, the NMS CEO will inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. If the complainant writes again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be recognised as vexatious and there will be no obligation on the part of the School to respond.

Should, however, a complainant raise an entirely new, separate complaint, it will be responded to in accordance with the complaints procedure.

RECORD OF COMPLAINTS

Over the course of the last academic year (2025/26) there was 2 complaints recorded which required formal resolution.

WRITTEN COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The School will provide Ofsted and ISI, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period of attendance at an Early Years Foundation Stage setting, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least seven years.

COMPLAINTS TO OFSTED AND ISI REGARDING EYFS SERVICE PROVIDERS:

Parents may also complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they wish.

Ofsted may be contacted as follows:

Tel: 0300 123 4666
email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

ISI may be contacted as follows:

Tel: 020 7600 0100
email at **concerns@isi.net**.
ISI, Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

DATA PROTECTION COMPLAINTS ROUTE

Complaints regarding how the School has handled your personal data or if you consider that the School has not acted in accordance with data protection law. You should email the head teacher with details of your complaint at head@maplewalkschool.co.uk. The School will acknowledge your complaint within 30 days of receipt and will investigate and inform you of the outcome of your complaint without undue delay (keeping you informed of progress as necessary). If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, or if you feel the School has not handled it appropriately, you have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Please note that this route does not preclude parents from using the usual complaints procedure as outlined in this policy.

Mia Santa-Humfrey

Head Teacher

September 2026

Review approved by Deborah Livsey CEO

New Model School Company Limited

September 2026

This policy will be reviewed in August 2027