

The New School Butterstone Complaints Policy

The New School – Complaints Policy

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POLICY STATEMENT

At The New School Butterstone ('the School'), we undertake to provide a friendly and safe environment in which young people will be supported to achieve their potential, both academically and socially. It is recognised that the School should have a mechanism for considering situations when students, parents and others using our services believe that we have fallen short of the standards that we aim to achieve or wish to express dissatisfaction with a particular aspect of our service or any decision that we may have taken. We also recognise that complaints represent an important source of feedback that can be of benefit in enhancing our levels of service.

In considering issues that are raised the School will not, in compliance with the Equality Act 2010, unlawfully discriminate against individuals because of their sex or marital or civil partnership status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender, gender reassignment or because their religious beliefs.

The purpose of this policy is to set out our arrangements for dealing with complaints and to detail the steps we will take to try to put things right.

AIM OF THE POLICY

The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

- We deal fairly and effectively with anyone who wants to complain about any of our decisions or activities;
- All complaints are dealt with within reasonable timescales and where possible, to the satisfaction of both the complainant and the School;
- All complaints made about our services are considered and where appropriate acted upon, with appropriate feedback being given to the person making the complaint where this is requested;
- We actively use any complaint in a positive way to help improve the services that we provide.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

Complaints may be made by anyone who receives or requests a service from us, or who is involved in providing services to the School. This includes the following groups of people:

- Students at the School
- Parents, carers or guardians
- Local Authorities
- Any other person or group of persons who has used or has enquired about the School or its services
- Consultants, contractors, service providers and suppliers involved with the School

We will always try to deal with complaints constructively and fairly, but there will be some issues where it will not be possible to provide any or full information to the person making the complaint.

When appropriate and practical, we will seek to maintain the confidentiality of the person making the complaint. We will advise the complainant where this would limit the action that we can take to tackle the complaint. As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a complaint is up to the complainant. However, we have a duty to protect in particular our students and staff and may pursue the matter independently if, in all the circumstances, we consider it appropriate to do so.

It should be noted that the School will not normally consider complaints made more than one year after the incident/situation complained of.

RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

INFORMAL COMPLAINT

Most complaints/issues can be resolved informally and quickly by discussion with the School employee concerned or the Head Teacher. Alternatively communication can be made in writing or by email to the employee/ Head Teacher outlining the issue clearly along with what it is hoped the preferred outcome should be.

In each case we will try to deal with the complaint as quickly as possible. Where necessary, we will indicate how long it will take for us to investigate the matter.

Informal complaints will normally be those that can be acted on and where possible resolved without the need for detailed investigation or any other delay.

FORMAL COMPLAINT

There are two formal stages:

Process 1 – Formal Complaint

If the matter is not resolved through the informal process, or it is not appropriate to follow the informal process, the person concerned can refer the matter to the Head Teacher by means of a formal complaint. Formal complaints should be submitted in writing clearly detailing the complaint or issue along with what it is hoped the preferred outcome should be.

The Head Teacher or designated member of the Senior Management Team will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and if required and appropriate a meeting will be convened to hear further about the complaint at a mutually convenient time. A response will be given in writing to advise on the outcome of the complaint, normally within a period of 20 working days of having received the complaint or within 20 working days following any meeting. If for any reason the School is unable to do this we will advise the person concerned in writing of the reason as well as indicate when we will be able to reach a decision on the complaint. If the issue is complex, the Head Teacher may need to speak to other employees and/or young people as required to investigate further the complaint; also, where appropriate, matters may be referred to the Board of Governors. Under these circumstances the Head Teacher or designated officer, will keep the complainant informed of the proposed timescale for when the investigation will be completed.

If the complaint involves an issue directly relating to the Head Teacher then Process 2 should be followed.

Process 2 – Formal complaint regarding Head Teacher

If the complaint involves an issue directly relating to the Head Teacher then the complaint can be referred to the Board of Governors. Complaints should be submitted in writing addressed to the Chairman of the Board of Governors at the School's address, clearly detailing the complaint along with what it is hoped the preferred outcome should be.

The complaint will be considered at the earliest opportunity by a committee comprising a Chair and two further Governors appointed by the Chairman. (The Panel).

The Chairman or other nominated Governor of the School will strive to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days. The Panel may appoint a further Governor to act as investigating officer who will provide a detailed report on his/her investigations. It is important that the investigating officer is seen as impartial so whilst the investigating officer is another Governor, they cannot be a member of the decision making panel. If required by The Panel, the complainant, witnesses and relevant staff may be invited to attend a meeting with The Panel, or provide information as required in order for The Panel to reach a decision.

Once The Panel has met to consider and decide upon the complaint, the Chair of The Panel or other nominated Governor will strive to write within 5 working days after the meeting to advise of the outcome.

Depending on the nature of the complaint the complainant may wish to make direct contact with the Care Inspectorate, who regulate Care Services in Scotland. Their contact details are: Care Inspectorate, Central East Region, Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY. www.careinspectorate.com

MONITORING AND REVIEW

All formal complaints will be recorded in the School's Complaints Register and will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Senior Management Team and reviewed annually by the Chairman. In addition the Care Inspectorate will review complaints lodged, as part of the inspection process.