

Impact North West Schools
Complaints Policy and Procedure
September 2023

Date approved:	September 2023
Approved by:	Impact North West Schools Proprietor Board
Frequency of review:	Annual
Next review due:	September 2024

Complaints Procedure

At Impact North West Schools, we pride ourselves on multi agency collaboration and effective inter agency working in order for our students to benefit from our alternative education programmes. It is vital that you refer to our other policies highlighted on our website which may also outline the relevant complaints process depending on the nature of the complaint. For example, there is a separate complaints policy relating to safeguarding concerns.

However, if for any reason you are unhappy with the services delivered, then the following staged process will be adhered to when dealing with complaints:

Stage 1 – Informal Complaint

Your concern should be verbalised to a member of the Impact North West School's staff and/or management team.

At this point, the class teacher will aim to address your concern and feedback on the outcome of the complaint. This may be in consultation with the Headteacher depending on the nature of the complaint.

Stage 2 – Written Complaint

If you are still unhappy with the response/outcome of the complaint, then a formal written complaint is requested to be directed to the Headteacher. All complaints will be acknowledged within 48 hours. If necessary, an investigation will be directed by the Headteacher and will respond to you in writing with the outcome of the investigation.

The Headteacher is Jayne Jones.

Address: Unit 1, Tower House, Tower Road, Birkenhead, CH41 1FF

Email address: jayne@impactnorthwestschools.org.uk

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Stage 3 – Formal Directors Complaint

If you are still unhappy with the outcome of the complaint, then your complaint, to be sent to the Business Manager, will then be passed directly to the proprietary Body/Board of directors for review and they will deal with the complaint. They will aim to respond to you within a further 48 hours of notification of complaint at stage 3 and will respond in writing.

The Business Manager is Joanna Smith

Address: Unit 1, Tower House, Tower Road, Birkenhead, CH41 1FF

Email address: jo@impactnorthwestschools.org.uk

If you have completed these procedures but believe your complaint has still not been dealt with, your complaint can be reviewed by a panel of 3 or more people, appointed by the Board of Directors, who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and containing at least one member who is independent of the leadership and management of Impact North West Schools.

Parents/Carers are able to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish.

On receipt of the request for an appeal, the board of directors will agree a panel date hearing within the required 28 days, with the complainant and the participants.

The Complainant will be notified in writing at least ten days before the hearing of the time, venue, date and names and status of the panel members and be invited to attend.

The Complainant will be informed that they may be accompanied at the hearing by a friend or representative. If their representative is a solicitor or barrister, then no fees or expenses incurred by the representative will be paid by Impact North West Schools LTD.

Some individuals and particularly children, may wish to be accompanied by an advocate and if these require a fee the Director must consider the matter of such payments.

The complainant and his/her representative will be provided with copies of those papers being made available to the panel members. The Director responding to the complaint will decide which papers go to the panel, with the exception of those papers provided by a third party who does not agree to their disclosure.

Staff members including the investigating officer, and independent person will usually be required to attend panel hearings. It is, however, for the Director to decide who should attend. They may be accompanied by either a line manager or union representative. Where parents/carers, staff members or other persons are to be Diversity Inclusion Opportunity accompanied at the appeal hearing, they should, at least five days prior to the hearing, inform the board of directors.

The panel recommendations will be recorded in writing within 24 hours of the meeting and sent to the complainant, his/her representative, the Headteacher and Board of Directors and the independent persons and other interested parties.

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Recording of Complaints

Records of all formal complaints, responses, meetings, and action taken regardless of whether they are upheld or resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a Panel Hearing, will be kept by Impact North West Schools LTD.

Documents will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

A further record of the number of 'formal complaints' received in the preceding school year will be available on request.

Withdrawal of Complaints

The parent/carer or his/her representative, provided the parent/carer agrees, may at any stage, withdraw the complaint.

Withdrawal should be in writing to the principals.

Withdrawal of a complaint is not necessarily the signal for the Impact North West Schools LTD to cease its enquiries. Where matters of a serious nature were part of the original complaint, Impact North West Schools may be obliged to pursue the matter.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures

The safety of children is the first priority of Impact North West Schools LTD and must take preference over all other considerations. Therefore, the child protection procedures may run in conjunction with the complaints procedure

Confidentiality

Complaints will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of any complaint, all correspondence, statements and records of complaints are kept confidential and information will be shared only on a need to know basis and with those directly involved.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen very rarely where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or because it was necessary to refer matters to the police or as required by Independent Schools Standards 2019 whereby disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or if any other legal obligation prevails

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Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED)

The above organisation has regulatory responsibility for all schools. If a member of staff or a young person has a complaint which they feel has not properly been dealt with then they can contact OFSTED for further advice.

This can be done through the OFSTED website <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school> or by telephone: Helpline: 0300 123 1231

Alternatively, if the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by a school. They will consider whether a school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to: Department for Education Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD

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