

Management of Serial and Unreasonable Complaints / Parental and Carer Expectations Policy

Last Review Date:	Sept 2026
Next Review Date:	Sept 2027
Reviewed By:	Mr Lee Murley (Headteacher / Chief Executive Officer)

1) Introduction:

New Horizons Seaside Primary is committed to dealing with all complaints and issues raised by parents / carers fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain in line with our Complaints Policy. We will not normally limit the contact parents / carers (complainants) have with our school.

However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including behaviour which is abusive, aggressive, threatening, demanding or that which constitutes harassment of a member of our staff.

Parents / carers posting allegations or complaints about any members of our staff on social media is also unacceptable behaviour. If the allegations call into question any member of our staff's professionalism and ultimately prove to be factually inaccurate, this will be viewed as defamation and parents / carers could face a defamation lawsuit. Screenshots taken of posted comments are regularly used as evidence in such cases.

Finally, we understand that if your child tells you they have been treated in a way that you do not deem to be acceptable, you may initially feel angry or upset about what your child has told you. We ask only for you to remember that while you are waiting for us to fully investigate the complaint, what your child has told you is first and foremost their perception of what happened and how it happened. Your child's recount may be partly or wholly factually inaccurate, for a variety of different reasons. Please allow us time and trust us to get to the bottom of what really happened.

2) Definition of Unreasonable Behaviour:

New Horizons Seaside Primary defines unreasonable behaviour as that which:

- a) hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, in person, by phone or by email;
- b) ignores the outcomes of a previous investigation into the issue by the school or the outcomes of a complaint that has been dealt with in line with our Complaints Policy.
- c) refuses to accept the school's professional view on a child's specific needs in the school environment, based on the school's professional observations of that child and evidence gathered over time.

Examples of this type of behaviour include if the parent / carer (complainant):

- refuses to articulate the outcomes sought by raising the complaint;
- refuses to cooperate with the complaints investigation process;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint or issue being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be considered and commented on;
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists that they are fully answered, often immediately or to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint or the issue as the investigation proceeds;
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into a complaint where the New Horizons Seaside Primary's complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic or disproportionate outcome – one which fails to take into account the fact that their child is one of thirty in a class or one which fails to take into account the impact of their desired outcome on a member of staff's time and workload when the said member of staff has already ensured all reasonable provision is in place;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint or the issue in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with;
- uses threats to intimidate;
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence;
- uses a passive-aggressive tone in correspondence to undermine the work of a member of staff;
- knowingly provides falsified information;
- refuses to accept the school's professional view on a child's specific needs in the school environment, based on the school's professional observations of that child over time;
- refuses to acknowledge the boundary between the school's sphere of influence in a child's life and where parental responsibility lies;
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other forums.

3) Complainants should limit their communication with the school which relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone or email), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

4) Whenever possible, the Chief Executive Officer or Chair of Local Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

5) If the behaviour continues, the Chief Executive Officer will write to the parent (complainant) explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact New Horizons Seaside Primary causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

6) The Chief Executive Officer or a member of the SLT have the right to sit in on meetings with parents if staff have raised concerns about the behaviour of said parents in previous meetings or correspondence.

7) Where parents cannot agree to disagree with the way in which the school has investigated and handled a particular issue, meetings will be brought to a close and parents will be offered the chance to follow the Complaints Policy if they wish to take the matter further.

8) In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from New Horizons Seaside Primary.

Please note the three appendices regarding:

- a) the management of parental expectations relating to issues of online bullying outside school hours
- b) the management of parental expectations relating to the nature and level of SEND support the school will provide for specific pupils.
- c) overview of support that can be accessed to support presenting needs.

Appendix A

Management of parental expectations relating to issues of online bullying outside school hours.

Please see our Online Safeguarding and Acceptable Use Policy.

At New Horizons Seaside Primary, we are fully committed to:

- ensuring that pupils are systematically educated in matters of e-safety at an age appropriate level throughout their time at New Horizons Seaside Primary.
- updating annually an E-Safety Long Term Plan for all year groups showing where e-safety is to be taught in Computing across New Horizons Seaside Primary and to monitor through planning and work checks that this plan is being implemented
- ensuring that e-safety issues are addressed in other areas of the curriculum and other activities where appropriate i.e. pupils should be taught in all lessons to be critically aware of the materials / content they access on-line and be guided to validate the accuracy of information.
- overseeing the active implementation and reinforcement of the Pupil Acceptable Use Policy by teachers at New Horizons Seaside Primary, regarding pupils' use of ICT in and out of school.
- monitoring that pupils understand and follow the Pupil Acceptable Use Policy.

Key Points Regarding Parental Expectations

1) Pupils' access to online devices outside of school, including mobile phones, for the purposes of social media, is wholly the responsibility of parents and carers.

2) Any misuse of social media at home by pupils at Seaside Primary should be dealt with in the first instance by parents and carers through contact with the offender's parents and carers.

3) Serious incidences of online bullying should not be deleted from the child's phone and should be taken to the police.

4) If the instances of online bullying at home have an impact on pupils' behaviour at school, this behaviour will be dealt with in line with the school behaviour policy. Parents will be notified accordingly and the school expectation will be on parents to resolve the online issues – see point 2.

Appendix B: Management of parental expectations relating to the nature and level of SEND provision for specific pupils.

Please see our SEND Policy and Inclusion Policy.

At New Horizons Seaside Primary School, we are fully committed to:

- Promoting the inclusion of all children.
- Believing that all children have a right to be educated with their peer group
- All children feeling celebrated and valued, regardless of their abilities, behaviours, gender, religion or ethnic background
- Supporting all children to learn and reach their full potential.
- Believing that all teachers are teachers of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Ensuring all children access a broad and balanced curriculum matched to meet each individual's needs.

1) Our Assistant Head for Inclusion leads the class teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that all SEND needs of pupils, as identified by the school or by external agencies, are met through carefully planned interventions in the classroom or in specific intervention groups. The impact of these interventions is robustly monitored on the school provision map at key points throughout the year and interventions are adjusted as and when pupils have met school or agency-related targets.

2) Our SEND provision is highly transparent. Communication with parents is always timely and informative and focuses on how the pupils' needs are being met. All school paperwork relating to outside agencies is completed to a very high standard within the necessary time frames. Appointments can be made with the Assistant Head for Inclusion at both our formal parents' evenings and additional appointments can be made at other times of the year, should parents wish to discuss the SEND provision for their child.

3) See the table below for an overview of the support the Assistant Head for Inclusion can access for children depending on the needs being presented (see appendix A below)

Key Points Regarding Parental Expectations

1) When completing paperwork for external agencies, the Assistant Head for Inclusion can only comment on what the school professionals observe of the child's behaviour and needs at school. These might not match the parents' perceptions of the child's needs at home or what the parents feel the child's needs are in school.

2) What a child tells parents about how they have felt over the course of their school day might not match teacher observations made of that child or how that child has presented over the course of the day.

3) Parents should always be aware that their child is one of thirty in most classes. All SEND needs as identified by the school or an external agency will be met daily by all reasonable methods. However, any parental expectations or requests which exceed the implemented provision, need to be wholly realistic, and above all else, need to have the child's best interests at heart.

Appendix C: Overview of support that can be accessed to support presenting needs

Children often present differently in a range of settings. This may be as a result of a number of reasons. Sometimes, the behaviour of a child can be extremely challenging at home but there is no evidence of the same behaviour at school. If this is the case, parents and carers can access a range of support directly.

Name of Agency	Description of Support	Contact Details/Further Information
Enabling Families	This service, accessed through the Children and Family Centre, allows parents to speak with a professional regarding concerns of behaviour <u>at home</u>. Usually, the family will be offered a meeting with a <u>Family Support Worker</u> to further discuss the concerns (this will sometimes be offered in the family home).	https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/social-care-and-health-information-for-professionals/children/early-help/early-help-services/ https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/find-a-children-and-family-centre/adur-area/ https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/social-care-and-health-information-for-professionals/children/early-help/support-for-5-11-year-olds/ https://www.triplep-parenting.uk.net/uk-en/find-help/triple-p-online/toddlers-to-tweens/ https://westsussex.local-offer.org/
Early Help Plan (EHP) and allocation of a <u>Family Support Worker</u>	Sometimes, school or professionals may feel it is suitable to open an Early Help Plan to offer integrated support into the family home. If successful, families will be allocated a <u>Family Support Worker</u> who will be able to work closely with the family and school to provide support for the family.	
Triple P Parenting Course (Positive Parenting Progress)	Parents and carers can access a range of parenting support online. The Family Centres (above) will also be able to advise on parenting styles and courses.	
Extended Observations of a Pupil	In order to ensure that the school is fully supporting the family with behaviour at home, it may be useful for an extended observation of the child to take place. This will mean that members of the inclusion team will observe the child regularly throughout the day in order to ensure that behaviours are correctly observed. At the end of the observation, the parents will be contacted and the observations will be discussed and will be used to form the basis of any reports or evidence requested by the parents/carers.	

Sometimes, a school will also see some of the behaviours that are being presented at home. If this is the case, the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion will arrange a meeting with the parent to discuss the concerns and explore further options.		
Name of Agency	Description of Support	Contact Details/Further Information
Learning and Behaviour or Social Communication Advisory Teams	A school can make a referral to either of these professional agencies to discuss concerns raised by school or home. Most frequently, the Assistant Head will meet with the advisory teacher in school and discuss strategies that have been tried. Sometimes, with parental permission, the advisory teacher may observe the child and make recommendations of strategies for school or home to implement. If this is the case, a report will be written and shared with the family.	The school will refer the child if they believe it is appropriate. More details can be found below: https://westsussex.local-offer.org/information_pages/91-learning-and-advisory-behaviour-team-lbat *Please note, these meetings are arranged with the school on a termly basis and so there may be a wait of up to 12 weeks before advice can be sought.
School Nursing Team	The School Nursing Team can offer support with anxiety, sleeping concerns, toileting, audiology and a range of other medical issues. They can be accessed by either the family directly or by the school. Usually, the family will be contacted by the team and a consultation will be arranged.	https://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/downloads/services/west-sussex-school-nursing/west-sussex-school-nursing-leaflet.pdf https://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/services/servicedetails.htm?directoryID=22897 *Please note, once the school has completed the referral, there may be a waiting list which the school has no control over.
Child Development Centre (CDC - Worthing Hospital)	Sometimes, it may be appropriate to seek advice from the health professionals at the CDC. <i>**Whilst a parent can visit their GP and request a referral to be made, school can only do so if they observe the behaviours reported by the parents of carers within the school setting. The CDC does not accept referrals which suggest the concerns are regarding behaviour at home.</i>	https://staging.local-offer.org/information_pages/206-child-disability-centres-cdc *Please note, if the referral is accepted, there is often a waiting time of 18 weeks for an appointment to be made. The school has no control over this.

Concerns may be raised regarding the Speech and Language development of a child. If this is the case, a parent/carer or the school can make a referral to the Speech and Language team.

Name of Agency	Description of Support	Contact Details/Further Information
Speech and Language Therapy West Sussex	The trained Speech and Language therapists will often come into school to conduct an assessment on the child. If it is identified that support is required, the therapists will issue an intervention record which the school will implement. Parents and Carers will be updated via the Speech and Language therapists directly. However, the school will also be able to give updates to the family.	https://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/services/servicedetails.htm?directoryID=16363 *Please note, once the school has completed the referral, there may be a wait of up to 18 weeks. The school has no control over this waiting time.

Concerns may be raised regarding the physical abilities of the child (this includes sensory processing preferences). If this is the case, the school can refer to the Occupational Therapists.

Name of Agency	Description of Support	Contact Details/Further Information
Occupational Therapy Service	The school may complete a referral to this service if they feel that the child is struggling with their physical or sensory needs. If the referral is accepted. Usually the initial outcome would be for the parents and school to attend a workshop. This useful training gives a range of practical strategies to help support the child both in school and at home.	https://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/services/servicedetails.htm?directoryID=16287 *Please note, once the school has completed the referral, there may a waiting list which the school has no control over. There is an expectation that the parents will accept the invite to training otherwise the episode of care may be closed.

If both parents/carers and the school observe behaviours that they feel are impacting on the mental health of a child, a consultation may be held with a Primary Mental Health Worker.

Name of Agency	Description of Support	Contact Details/Further Information
Primary Mental Health Workers West Sussex	Schools can access a consultation line for support and strategies when there is a concern regarding the mental health and well-being of a child. Permission will always be sought from the parents/carers and any reports will be shared as necessary.	https://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/service-primary-mental-health-work *Please note, this service offers a consultation only. This does not mean that your child has been referred to CAMHS. A referral to CAMHS is completed by medical professionals only.

In rare circumstances, the level of support required by the school exceeds the standard limit. If the school is offering in excess of 20 hours of additional support, they may apply for an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). If this is the case, the AHT will arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss the process.

Name of Agency	Description of Support	Contact Details/Further Information
Educational Psychology Service	The school can request a consultation with an Educational Psychologist at any time (although there is often a long waiting list for this). Alternatively, an annual review is scheduled between the school and the psychologist. If the school feel it is appropriate to discuss your child during this meeting, permission will be sought.	https://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/132-west-sussex-educational-psychology-service

Parents/Carers or teachers may raise a concern regarding a child's development in reading and spelling. If this is the case, appropriate observations will be carried out and an assessment to indicate levels of need may be conducted.

Name of Agency	Description of Support	Contact Details/Further Information
Dyslexia Screening	A screening tool called 'Nessy' may be used to indicate levels of need. It is not appropriate to screen children younger than Y3 as their reading and spelling abilities are still developing. If concerns are raised, the assessment tool will be used when appropriate and with parental permission.	https://www.nessy.com/uk/product/dyslexia-screening/ *Please note, this screening tool does not diagnose children as having Dyslexia. It only gives indicators to suggest level of need. If parents/carers wish to seek a diagnosis, they must do so privately.