

# COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT POLICY

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*NAIROBI WALDORF SCHOOL TRUST*

**ABSTRACT** Compliments, complaints, and other forms of feedback provide valuable information on levels of client satisfaction and provide NWST with an opportunity to improve upon all aspects of service. Feedback is to be taken seriously and seen as an opportunity for improvement. As a result, the NWST community, neighbors, and government are allowed to complain when faced with challenges.

Resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity to respect and value the person's feedback can be one of the most critical factors in recovering the person's confidence about a service. It can also help prevent further escalation of the complaint. A responsive, efficient, effective, and fair complaint management system can assist a school in achieving this.

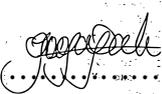
**This Policy is issued on the authority of the Board of Trustees, Nairobi Waldorf School Trust.**

Effective Date of the Policy: **14th July 2022**

Execution Date of the Policy: ..... 7th May 2025 .....

**Chairperson, Board of Trustees**

Name: Pooja Patel .....

Signature:  .....

Date: 7th May 2025 .....

**POLICY AMENDMENTS**

Serial No.	Amendment	Date of Amendment	Nature of Change	Name and designation of the authorized person	Signature of the authorizing person

# Complaint Management Policy

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## *Nairobi Waldorf School Trust*

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

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The Nairobi Waldorf School is committed to managing parent concerns and complaints. Our key principle for handling concerns and complaints are that they are:

- 1.1.1. Received positively.
- 1.1.2. Handled with confidentiality and sensitivity
- 1.1.3. Taken seriously
- 1.1.4. Dealt promptly with ongoing communication about its progress
- 1.1.5. Resolved using Restorative practices, where possible, for conflict resolution

## 2. OBJECTIVES

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2.1 The objectives of this Policy are to ensure:

- Information about how to make a complaint is clear and readily available.
- Students will not receive adverse treatment because their parents have raised concerns.
- The School environment is a safe and fair place to work and study.
- An active approach to promote the development of positive and respectful relationships.
- Minimize the incidence of conflict that might otherwise give rise to a complaint.
- There is a fair and effective way to resolve parent complaints.
- Support parents to have their complaints listened to, taken seriously, in good faith, addressed, and resolved fairly, reasonably, and expeditiously.
- All parents and staff receive the appropriate information, instruction, training, and supervision to understand the Policy.
- The fair and equitable management of all complaints.
- All parents, students, and staff are treated respectfully.

2.2 To achieve the objectives of the Policy, the NWST will develop a framework for the implementation of the Policy.

2.3 This Policy does not address staff complaints relating to their employment matters.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

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3.1 In this document unless otherwise stated:

Board	The governing body of the NWST responsible for the governance of the Nairobi Waldorf School
Pedagogical Team	Collegiate Leadership Group oversees the reliable delivery of the curriculum.
Complaint	It expresses dissatisfaction with an actual or perceived situation or outcome. Also referred to as a concern or grievance.
NWST	Nairobi Waldorf School Trust
Parent	The biological or legal guardian of the student.
School Manager	Person in charge of handling complaints and overall management of the NWST.
Staff	A person who carries out work in any capacity for the Nairobi Waldorf School.

### 4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

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#### 4.1 NWST Board

- 4.1.1 Generally, the Chair of the NWST Board and board members are not directly involved in the first instance with the receipt, investigation, or resolution of complaints other than complaints arising within or about the NWST Board itself.
- 4.1.2 In instances where a complaint is about the Manager, a person may lodge a formal complaint with the board's Chair if they feel the matter cannot otherwise be resolved or feels it is appropriate to do so. In turn, and consultation with the complainant, the board's Chair will take all reasonable steps to have the complaint thoroughly investigated and facilitate a resolution.
- 4.1.3 In other exceptional circumstances, a parent may directly approach the Chair of NWST Board to bring to their attention a matter of concern, formally complain, or refer a complaint where the resolution processes within the NWST have failed or are otherwise inappropriate. In such instances, the Chair of the Board will take advice from appropriate persons and decide how the complaint should be dealt with effectively.

## 4.2 Class Teachers/Guardians

- 4.2.1 Class teachers or Guardians are also part of NWST officials since they are responsible for the pastoral care of a group of students in a particular year.
- 4.2.2 Informal concerns can be brought directly to the Class Teacher or Guardian.

## 4.3 Management

- 4.3.1 The Manager oversees the management of all formal complaints, all complaints regarding staff, and any other complaints unresolved with the Human Resource Department.
- 4.3.2 The Pedagogical team chair will handle curriculum and student behavior complaints and any complaints unresolved with the Class Teacher/Guardian.

## 4.4 Parents

- 4.4.1. Parents are entitled to lodge an original complaint with the NWST. This means that complaints should be lodged in good faith and without frivolous, malicious, or vexatious intent.
- 4.4.2. The NWST and its representatives will make every reasonable effort to ensure that a parent who lodges a complaint or anyone dealing with or involved in the complaint will not be maltreated, victimized, coerced, or intimidated.
- 4.4.3 Communication and resolution processes should always be based on the parties acting in good faith, exercising sound judgment, being honest and open, and focusing on the issue and not the person(s).
- 4.4.4 Each complaint must be dealt with on its particular circumstances and merits. Any settlements reached, or determinations made through the resolution process will not necessarily constitute any binding precedent for future or similar cases.
- 4.4.5. In responding to a complaint, informally or formally, every reasonable effort shall ensure natural justice and procedural fairness are afforded to all parties. This means, in practical terms, that:
  - a) All parties are entitled to be treated with respect and heard.
  - b) All parties should participate fully in the resolution process to achieve a realistic and reasonable outcome.
  - c) The subject of a complaint should be informed of the substance and given a full opportunity to present their perspective.
  - d) All parties have a right to seek advice and support.
  - e) Investigations and proceedings must be conducted fairly, thoroughly, and without bias or undue delay.

- f) Parties should provide all relevant, material, complete, and factual information, documents, or other evidence relating to the complaint.

If a parent chooses to make a complaint without disclosing their identity, this will limit the proper and thorough investigation and resolution options. It also raises issues concerning procedural fairness for those who have a complaint made about them as they have a right to know the particulars of the complaint and respond. Therefore, NWST cannot guarantee that anonymous complaints can or will be dealt with. Complainants are always encouraged to identify themselves; however, the NWST will respect the request of the complainant not to be identified.

To lodge a formal complaint, a Parent should use the form available from the Front Offices of each NWST campus or found in Appendix 1 of this document.

#### 4.5 Internal Cases Involving the Staff

- 4.5.1. Many complaints may be minor or readily resolved and often arise from genuine misunderstandings or issues relating to communication. In most cases, these can be satisfactorily resolved informally directly with staff.
- 4.5.2. The NWST encourages and supports complainants, wherever possible and as soon as practicable after a matter becomes of concern, to seek to resolve a complaint informally and amicably. This is best done through direct communication/discussion by and between the parties themselves (e.g., a parent and teacher)
- 4.5.3 Formal procedures for resolving complaints should only be invoked when a matter is severe or cannot be resolved through informal means.

### 5. FORMAL COMPLAINTS

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5.1 Complaints that cannot be resolved under 4.2 and 4.4 above informally may be referred to or should be lodged formally and in writing with the appropriate staff in the following categories:

- Class Teacher/Guardian
- PT Lead
- PT Chair
- School Manager

5.2 In such instances, a parent may also seek advice or clarification from any of the staff mentioned above about the appropriate person(s) to whom the concern or complaint might best be directed within NWST.

5.3 As soon as practicable after a formal written complaint has been lodged, the NWST will put a process to investigate the complaint.

5.4 The investigative process concerning a formal complaint will include but not necessarily be limited to gathering relevant and material information relating to the complaint, meetings convened of the parties to discuss the complaint, and seeking a resolution. If a resolution can't be found, the NWST will decide, based on thorough investigation, as to whether or not to uphold the complaint.

5.5 If the complaint is substantiated, the evidence is inconclusive, or if the complaint is found not to be substantiated, all parties will be formally advised accordingly, along with any follow-up counseling or other actions as the parties agree or the NWST deems appropriate and necessary.

5.6 As far as possible and appropriate, discretion will be respected and maintained by all parties throughout the resolution process, save where persons are required to be informed on a 'need to know basis or where investigative, statutory, or legal requirements stipulate that matters be disclosed, reported or discussed. Therefore, there can be no overriding legal obligation or right for confidentiality.

## 6.0 COMPLIMENT AND COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

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The compliment and complaint management process can be simplified into five steps:

1. **Receive**
2. **Record**
3. **Acknowledge**
4. **Resolve**
5. **Communicate Resolution.**

### 6.1. Receive

- Listen – openly to the concerns being raised by the complainant.
- Ask – the complainant what outcome they are seeking.
- Inform – the complainant clearly of the complaint process, the time the process takes, and set realistic expectations.
- Accountable – be empathic towards the affected person and action all commitments made.
- Assess – create a prioritization framework to identify an immediate threat or dangerous situation or require a specialized response.

***Refer to the Compliment and complaint form template to assist in recording critical information at the time of first contact.***

### 6.2. Record

- Record – all information relevant to the compliment or complaint, in its original and simplest form.
- Store – in a compliment or complaint management system that allows for data analysis.
- Protect – use a system that restricts access to parents involved in managing the compliment or complaint. The complaints will be serialized and recorded, and the human resource will brief the board quotient.

***The complaint should be recorded the same day it is received***

### 6.3. Acknowledge

- Acknowledge – receipt of the complaint early to build a relationship of trust and confidence with the person who raised the complaint.
- Anonymity – a person may request to remain anonymous in their lodgement, and therefore, contact may not be possible or expected.
- Desired outcomes – provide realistic expectations and refer the matter to other departments identified as more suitable to handle.
- Conflict of interest – avoid this by appointing a person unrelated to the matter as an investigator.
- Timeframes and expectations – provide these to the complainant where possible.

***The acknowledgment should be sent to the complainant on the same day***

### 6.4. Resolve

- Involve the complainant – keep them informed of the progress of the complaint and discuss any disparities identified in the information held.
- Additional information – request when required but apply a timeframe that limits when to be provided.
- Extensions in time – consider only where necessary and always communicate any additional time requirements to the complainant to explain the need.
- Record – continue to record all decisions or actions of the complaint investigation in the compliment and complaint management system.
- Focus – when investigating, focus on the identified complaint matters only. A complaint is not an opportunity to review the whole case.

***The staff should strive to resolve issues within 48 hours failure to which the matter should be escalated, and management informed. At the same time, external support may be brought in to sort complaints.***

### 6.5. Communicate resolution

- Outcome – Where possible, discuss the outcome verbally with the complainant before providing written advice and allow them the opportunity to make further contact following receipt of the written advice.
- Recourse – include what further action may be available to the complainant after the complaint investigation. A recourse action may escalate the matter further with the management or pedagogical team further review within the School.
- Further reviews – providing a minimum of one further review will enable the first investigation to be reviewed for soundness and allow additional information not available in the first complaint to be included.
- Opportunities – develop a mechanism or process by which complaint outcomes can be relayed to the affected department within the NWST for action to improve service delivery.
- Feedback – develop a process that allows for a review of the complainant's experience of the complaints process by encouraging and enabling feedback on how the process by which their complaint was dealt with.

***The NWST will try to resolve all matters within 48 hours as per the policy.***

- Support – is available from the management and pedagogical team in training, advice, and resources to support receiving and managing compliments and complaints. Refer to the Listing of organizations for additional support.

***Communication should be done in reference to the NWST communication policy.***

## 7.0 MONITOR

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7.1 The effectiveness of this Policy will be monitored by:

- a) All complaints and their resolution are recorded and kept on file by the Human Resource department
- b) Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the NWST policies and procedures are undertaken by the pedagogical team And the management team.

## 8.0 INFORMATION/INSTRUCTION

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8.1 All Staff will be informed of the requirements of the Managing Parent Complaints Policy during induction. When this Policy is reviewed and amended, existing staff will be informed.

8.2 All parents will be informed of this Policy at enrolment, and current parents notified of any changes.

8.3 The Managing Parent Complaints Policy will be available online via the NWST website [www.nairobiwaldorfschool.ac.ke](http://www.nairobiwaldorfschool.ac.ke) as per the Special Conditions Schedule 1 of the Funding Deed.

8.4 Parents should be periodically educated on the available feedback channels. This will control parents from going to the board members to launch complaints that the management can handle.

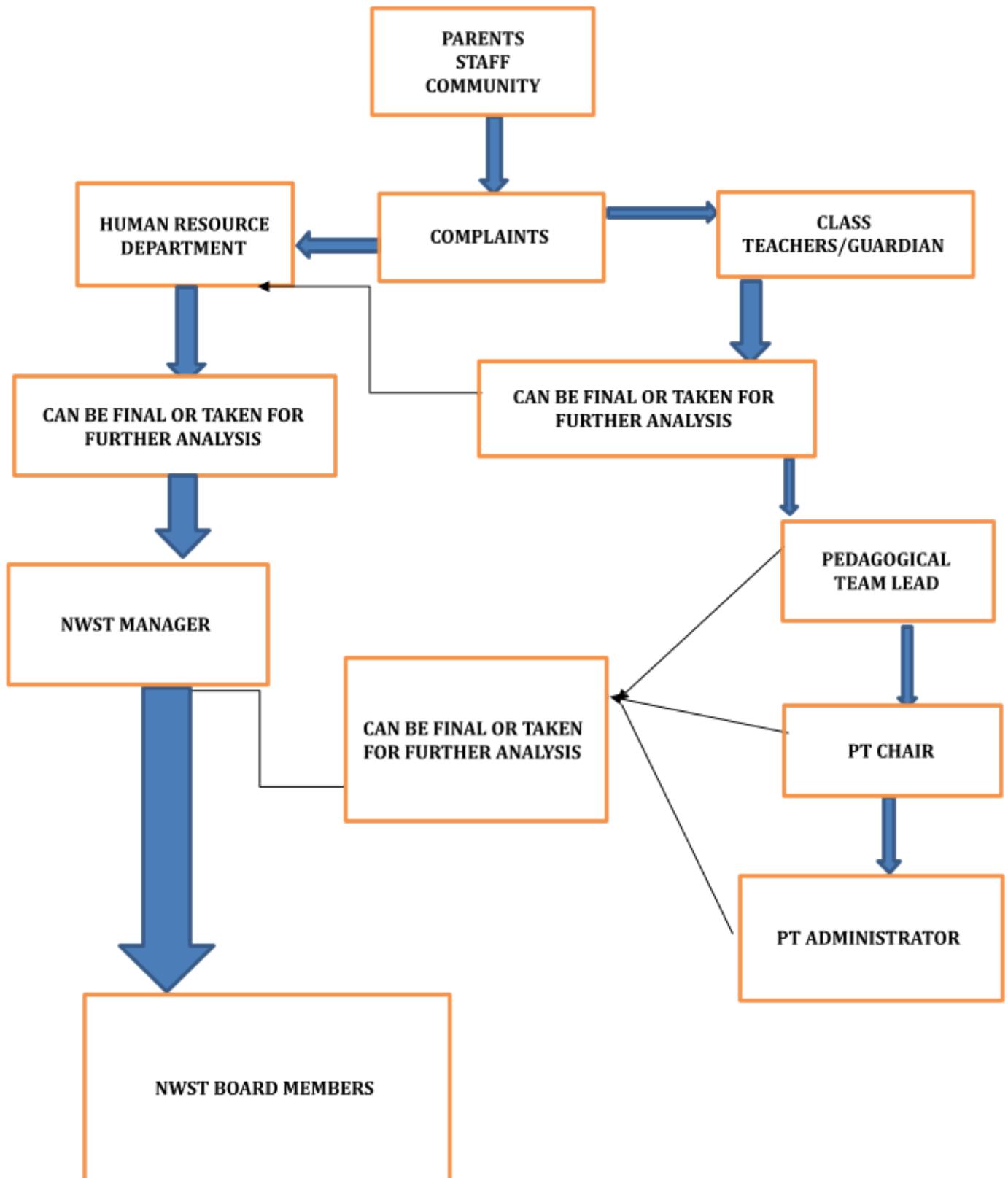
8.5 The human resource department should provide a list of sensitive and recurring complaints during the board meeting.

## 9.0 REVIEW

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9.1 This Policy shall be reviewed every two years by the Human Resource Coordinator and Pedagogical Team Changes in legislation may require an earlier review

## Complaints Management Flowchart



## TEMPLATES

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### Complaints, Compliments, and Feedback Form

We would love to hear your thoughts, concerns, or problems to improve or continue providing an excellent service! Please note you can remain anonymous if you would like and not complete the Name field

Feedback Type\*(Tick One)

Complaint ----

compliment .....

General feedback .....

**Date reported/Discussed.**

**Name (optional)**

First Name .....

Last Name

.....

**Best contact method for us to respond**

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**Phone number**

**Email Address**

**Please provide details below.**

**Was this discussed or reported to anyone? If so, who?**

**Are there any Outcomes you would like to see happen regarding this?**

Please attach any further documentation (copies of emails, forms, written statements, etc.

**Parents complain/compliment Register.**

Date of the complaint	Name of the complainant (optional)	Nature of complaint/compliment	Root cause	Corrective action taken	Feedback is given to Complainant	Date of the feedback	Resolution personnel	Resolution Date

**Note: The human resource manager will manage the Register and inform the complainant when the complaints cannot be resolved within the promised time.**