

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

The School aims to provide high quality teaching and pastoral care to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents in **Nursery, Reception, Infants and Juniors** have a complaint, they should normally contact their daughter's teacher by making an appointment via the school secretary or homework diary. If the situation is not resolved or if the complaint is about the teacher, the matter should be referred to the Head of Junior School.
- If parents in **Senior School** have a complaint relating to the welfare of their daughter they should normally contact their daughter's Form Teacher. If the situation is not resolved or if the complaint is about the Form Teacher, the matter should be referred to the Head of Senior School. If the complaint relates to teaching, parents should normally contact the Subject Teacher concerned. If the situation is not resolved the matter should be referred to the Head of Subject or the Deputy Headmistress.
- The Form Teacher / Subject Teacher / Subject Head will make a **written record** of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within two weeks, or longer if agreed by both parties, or in the event that the Form Teacher / Subject Teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint, within Stage 1 to the next level as stated above.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department (Nursery, Infant, Junior, Senior School) / the Deputy Headmistress / the Headmistress will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher / Subject Teacher unless the Head of Department / the Deputy Headmistress / the Headmistress deems it appropriate for him / her to deal with the matter personally.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmistress. The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Headmistress will speak with the parents concerned, within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmistress to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmistress 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 Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Convenor, who has been appointed by the Trustees to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. Convenor Miss H A Tyler, with Cllr J Murray, Mr D Lockett.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Convenor. The Convenor, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.
- 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. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than three working days prior to the hearing.

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- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately 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 all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmistress, the Trustees, and, where relevant, the person complained of.
- In all cases the school will resolve a complaint in a period of 28 working days.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The Headmistress will keep a written record of all complaints and a record of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

The Headmistress will keep correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints and that these will be kept confidentially except where the Secretary of state or a body conducting and inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act as amended, requests access to them.

Should you wish to know the number of complaints in the previous year under the Stage 3 Panel Hearing please contact the Headmistress.

For pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- Any record of complaint of kept for at least three years.
- Parents in EYFAS may make a complaint directly to Ofsted if they wish on 0300 123 4666