

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This procedure is intended to set out how the school will deal with general complaints. Parents should feel able to express their views in the full knowledge that they will be dealt with fairly.

Who does this procedure apply to?

This procedure applies to all children at the school, including those in the EYFS.

The procedure is limited to the parents of children currently on roll at the school, or parents of ex-pupils of the school if the complaint was first raised whilst the child was on roll at the school.

The complaints policy does not apply to issues relating to admissions or fees.

Concern or complaint?

Any matter about which a parent of a child is unhappy and seeks action by the school will be considered as a complaint.

A complaint is likely to arise if there are issues of physical or emotional well-being and security, or when the it is considered that the School's stated aims and values are not being applied.

A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint.

Whether a concern or complaint is made informally or formally, all parties should ensure details are only known to those involved in investigating the complaint. Parents should be assured that making a complaint will not adversely affect their child.

The number of formal complaints for the preceding school year will be available for parents upon request and will be shown on the Complaints Policy document available on the website.

Working days

References to *working days* apply to Monday to Friday during term time. Complaints made during the holiday period of the school will be dealt with at the beginning of the following term.

OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE:

Stage 1 Informal

- The vast majority of complaints can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where complaints are resolved straight away through the class teacher or Principal depending on the nature of the complaint. Informal complaints may be made verbally or by email.
- All complaints will be dealt with by an appropriate member of staff with responsibility for the particular issue raised by the parent or child. The Principal will be kept informed.
- On certain issues, the Principal may decide to deal with the concern or complaint directly at this stage.
- Informal complaints will be dealt with as soon as possible and in any event *within 7 working days* of the informal complaint being made. The response may be made verbally or by email.
- If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant will be asked if they wish their concern to be considered further. If so, it progresses to the next stage, when it becomes a formal complaint and is reported in writing.

Stage 2 Formal

- **Complaints will usually only progress to the formal stage after first being considered at the informal stage and only then if the complainant wishes to escalate a matter to the formal stage**
- The complaint should be made formally in writing to the Principal.
- The Principal will document it and acknowledge it in writing *within 5 working days* of receipt. The acknowledgment will give a brief explanation of the school's complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This should normally be *within 10 working days*; if this proves impossible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date.
- Any necessary investigation, consultation, interviews and action will take place and a written response to the complaint will be provided to the complainant. Where appropriate, the response will include what action the school will take to resolve the complaint.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved, the complainant will be advised of the next stage which is to have the complaint heard before a panel appointed by the School Proprietor.

Stage 3 Panel Hearing

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint as dealt with at Stage 2 above, then they will be invited to write to Proprietor (at the School address) requesting a panel hearing. Such a request cannot be made by email.
- The request for a panel hearing must be made as soon as possible and in any event *within 5 working days* of the decision in Stage 2 of the complaint being notified.
- The Proprietor will appoint a panel that will consider the complaint *within 15 working days* of the receipt of the notification. The complainant will be notified *with at least five working day notice* of the date of the panel hearing.
- The panel will have at least three people who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and include one member independent of the management and running of the school (see note below regarding the appointment of an independent member of the panel).
- Parents may attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish. Parents do not have to attend the hearing.
- The panel will consider the School's response and carry out further investigations and/or interviews as appropriate.
- The panel will aim to reach a final decision on the complaint and recommend an appropriate action as quickly as possible, normally *within 5 working days* and in any event *no more than 15 working days* after the panel hearing.
- The panel will record in writing its findings and recommendations and they will be sent to the complainant and where relevant the person(s) complained about and will be made available to the Proprietor/Principal for inspection on the School premises.

- **Additional guidance for children in the Kindergarten (Early Years Foundation Stage)**

Written complaints **relating to the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage** will be investigated and notification of the outcome will be given within 28 days of having received the complaint. Parents may refer complaints relating to the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Ofsted Early Years or the Independent Schools Inspectorate, provided the above complaints procedure has been followed.

The address is: **Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, MANCHESTER, M1 2WD**. Telephone: **0300 1231231**
email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Or the **Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1 9HA ISI**
Telephone **020 7600 0100** email: concerns@isi.net

Record keeping

Written records of complaints made under the formal part of the school complaints procedure will be kept by the school. This will record whether the complaint was resolved at the formal stage or proceeded to a panel hearing. It will also record the action taken by the school (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld). Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the Principals and staff of the school and will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review schedule or in the light of changes to policy or procedure.

Note on appointment of an independent panel member

The independent panel member will be appointed from professional/educational consultants appropriate to their expertise and the nature of the complaint. This may include a panel member with relevant EYFS experience in the case of a complaint relating to the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) or with SEN experience in a complaint relating to the provision of Special Educational Needs.

Record of formal complaints 2017-18

There was one complaint which has been recorded as a formal complaint during the academic year 2017-18, in order that the school's policies and procedures can be reviewed at the next school inspection. There were no panel hearings.