



Complaints Policy

*This policy has regard to "The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 (updated September 2015)
and Section 5 of the DfE "Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards 2015"*

Introduction

The School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage [Reception and Nursery] has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, should a parent have a complaint, the school will treat it in accordance with the following procedure:

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- We hope to resolve most complaints quickly and informally either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils, without unreasonable delay.
- If a parent has a complaint, initially they should contact their child's Form teacher (day child) or the Head of Boarding (boarding child) as appropriate. If the Form teacher or Head of Boarding cannot resolve the matter alone, he/she may consult other staff e.g. Head of Department, Deputy Head, Headmaster, et al., as appropriate. In the EYFS provision, complaints should be directed to the Head of Lower School or Nursery Manager.
- The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 24 hours by the recipient and is aimed to be resolved within 10 working days.
- Complaints directed to a Head of Department, the Deputy Head, Headmaster or Head of Boarding will usually be redirected to the child's Form teacher unless the member of staff deems it best to deal with the matter personally.
- The Form teacher/Head of Boarding/Head of Lower School/Nursery Manager will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. In the event that the Form teacher/Head of Boarding/Head of Lower School/Nursery Manager and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure. This will happen within 10 working days.

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 Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet/speak to the parents concerned to discuss the matter within 5 working days. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this



decision in writing within 28 working days of the complaint having been received. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure within ten working days.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the appropriate Governor, who has been appointed by the Governing Body to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The appropriate Governor will make provision for a hearing before a Complaints Panel appointed by or on behalf of the Governors and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One panel member appointed by the appropriate governor shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The elected Chair of the Complaints Panel will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working 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 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the initial part of the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. After the initial part of the hearing, the panel may decide to continue their discussions and consider the matter independently.
- 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 make findings and recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 working days of the Hearing. The Panel will send a copy of those findings and recommendations by electronic mail or otherwise to the complainant and where relevant the person complained about; and makes those findings and recommendations available for inspection on the school premises by the Governing Body and Headmaster.
- The decision of the Panel will be final.

Further Information

- A written record will be kept of all complaints and whether they were resolved following the formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing, and the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints regardless of whether they were upheld (Independent Schools Statutory regulations para 349 j)
- Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. 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 (ISSR para 349k) requests access to them; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.



For the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision:

- A record of complaints is kept for at least three years.
- Parents can make a complaint to Ofsted and/or ISI should they wish:
Office for Standards in Education: Independent Schools Inspectorate:
0300 123 4666 0207 600 0100
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/> <http://www.isi.net/>

The EYFS provision is required to notify the complainant of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.

The EYFS provision is required to provide Ofsted and ISI, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Headmaster:

SR Symonds
September 2015