

PARENT COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy is applicable to parents of current pupils, within the school to which the pupil is registered, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It is also applicable to parents of pupils who have left the school, where the complaint was made before the child left the school. This document is available in written format upon request and a copy can also be located on the school's website.

INTRODUCTION

The school has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with these procedures.

STAGE 1 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's teacher/form tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher/form tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department will usually be referred to the relevant teacher/form teacher on the same day or as soon as is practicable, unless the Head of Department deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- If deemed relevant, the teacher/form tutor 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 5 working days, or in the event that the teacher/form tutor/Head of Department and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint to Stage 2 of this procedure.

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 Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will speak to the parents concerned, normally the same day that the complaint is received, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations. These will be carried out within 2 days, or as soon as is practicable.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. These records will remain on the pupil's file, which is kept in a confidential and secure location.
- When the Head 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 person in a meeting or in writing. The Head will also provide reasons for his/her decision.

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- The written decision will be issued within 7 days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason, this is not possible, the Head will write to the parents within the 7-day period referred to above, stating the reason(s) why they are unable to issue the decision and
- informing the parents when they will be able to do so, which will be within 14 days of receipt of the complaint, in any event.
- 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 a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chair of Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel on behalf of the Governing Body. The Panel will proceed unless that parents later decide that they are now satisfied and decide not to proceed.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons who are 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 Proprietor. The Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 7 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 days prior to the Panel Hearing.
- 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 necessary, the panel will consider the parent's complaint in their absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion.
- 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 Panel Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and provide the reasons for the decision.
- The Panel will ensure a copy of those findings and recommendations are:
 1. Provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person who is the subject of the complaint.
 2. Available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and/or the Head.

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The school will keep a written record of all complaints and record whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a Panel Hearing. The school will also keep a written record of action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be taken seriously.

Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by the most recent version of the Independent Schools Standards Regulations, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Records of complaints will be kept for at least three years.

Notes to the Complaints Procedure

- In the event that a complaint involves or relates to a teacher, then the teacher will be kept fully informed in writing of the procedure being adopted in relation to the management of the complaint and supplied with copies of all documentation.
- In the event of a Panel Hearing, the teacher will have the right to make representations to the Panel.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

Written complaints about the fulfillment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of receiving the complaint. Parents of children in the EYFS may complain to Ofsted and/or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and only then if the complaint is about the fulfillment of the EYFS requirements.

RECORDS OF COMPLAINTS

The school will provide Ofsted and/or the ISI, upon request, a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and what actions were taken as a result of the complaint.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, the school resolved eight complaints at Stage 2 and zero complaints at Stage 3 of the Parent Complaints Policy.

Details for contacting Ofsted are as follows:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
www.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-us
General Helpline: 0300 123 1231

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Details for contacting ISI are as follows:

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA
Telephone: 020 7600 0100

Details for contacting the Chair of Governors are as follows:

Mr David Pye
Chair of Governors
c/o Milton Keynes Preparatory School
Tattenhoe Lane
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
MK3 7EG
Telephone: 01908 642111

Appendix 1: Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel

The DfE has supplied the following guidance on the identity of an Independent Panel Member:

Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered.

The Parent Complaints Policy was reviewed on 31 August 2018 and will be reviewed on or before 31 August 2019.