



Reviewed : May 2017

Reviewed by: Gillian Chumbley and Katie Callaghan

Adopted by: Full Governing Body on Tuesday 9th May 2017

Next Annual Review: May 2018

Complaints

Rationale

The School's Governors and the Headteacher recognise the value to all concerned of dealing fairly, speedily and effectively with any complaint against their decisions, actions or omissions, which a parent of a pupil may have.

Aims

It is our aim that any complaints about the School or its staff are received in a positive manner and are handled seriously and sensitively at an early stage. We aim to be open and listening to parents and pupils alike, allowing members of the School community to feel comfortable in contacting the Headteacher or other members of staff.

Objectives

- Our complaints procedure:
- encourages resolution of problems by **informal** means wherever possible;
- is easily **accessible** and **publicised**;
- is **simple** to understand and use;
- is **impartial**;

- is **non-adversarial**;
- allows **swift** handling with established **time limits** for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensures a full and **fair** investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respects people's desire for **confidentiality**;
- addresses all the issues and provide an **effective** response and **appropriate** redress, where necessary;
- provides **information** to the School's senior management team so that services can be improved.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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 the three-stage procedure outlined below. Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is considered to be a complaint.

This policy can be made available in large print or other more accessible format, if required. If assistance is required with making a complaint, for example because of a disability, parents should contact the Inclusion Manager who will be happy to make appropriate arrangements.

Separate procedures apply if the Headteacher expels or asks a pupil to leave and the parents seek a Governors' Review of that decision (a copy of the School's Expulsion, removal and review policy is available on request).

This policy applies to complaints from parents of current pupils and to parents of former pupils if the complaint was initially raised whilst the pupil was on the School roll.

Timescales for each stage are set out below in the relevant sections. When we refer to working days, we mean Monday to Friday, when the School is open during term time. The dates of the terms are published on the School's website. Complaints received during holiday periods will be dealt with as soon as is practicable but are likely to take longer to resolve due to the unavailability of relevant staff.

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 class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Director of Studies/Headteacher.
- Stage 1 complaints will be responded to by the school within 5 working days of being made. Where a complaint has not been resolved by informal means within this time scale to the parents' satisfaction, the parents may proceed to make a formal complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.
- A written record of the complaint, its resolution and any actions taken will be kept by the person dealing with the matter. Such records will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team.

Complaint against the Headteacher

- A complaint about the Headteacher should first be addressed directly to the Headteacher for an informal resolution. If the parent is dissatisfied with the response of the Headteacher or in the event that the complaint cannot be resolved by informal means, the parent may make a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure.
- Alternatively, parents may choose to make their complaint about the Headteacher in writing to the Chair of Governors via the clerk to the Governing Body. In this case, the complaint will be treated as a formal complaint under 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 Headteacher. The Headteacher will acknowledge in writing receipt of the complaint within 3 working days, indicating what action is being taken and the likely time scale. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headteacher will meet or speak to the parents concerned. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

- It may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations. The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headteacher 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 within 10 working days of the formal complaint being acknowledged. The Headteacher will also give reasons for the decision reached.
- If parents are still not satisfied, 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 advised to write to the Chair of Governors or his appointed person (the Convenor), who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- 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 Chair of Governors.
- The Chair of Governors or the Convenor will acknowledge the request within 5 working days of receiving it and schedule a hearing before the Panel to take place as soon as practicable and within 15 working days thereafter.
- 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 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 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 the matters discussed at the hearing, the Panel will reach a decision. The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations shall be confirmed in writing to the parents and, where relevant, to the person complained about within 10 working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headteacher.

Additional information with regard to EYFS provision

- All written complains relating to the fulfilment of EYFS requirements will be investigated and parents will be notified of the outcome within 28 days of the school receiving the complaint.
- Parents may make a complaint about the school's fulfilment of EYFS requirements directly to Ofsted and/or the Independent Schools Inspectorate. Their contact details are as follows:

Ofsted

Independent Schools Inspectorate

Royal Exchange Buildings

CAP House

St Anne's Square

9-12 Long Lane

Manchester

London

M2 7LA

EC1A 9HA

Tel: 0300 123 4666

Tel: 0207 600 0100

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Email: info@isi.net

- The record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate on request.
- The record of complaints is kept for at least 3 years.

Confidentiality, records and other matters

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them, or where any other legal obligations prevail. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be kept for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary in the circumstances.

A written record will be kept by the Headteacher of all formal complaints, including any action(s) taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether it is upheld) and of whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or progressed to a panel hearing. The Governing Body examines this record on an annual basis.

The number of formal parental complaints received by the School in the academic year 2015/2016 is as follows:

Stage 2 Complaints: 0 Stage 3 Complaints: 0