



Aims

This complaints procedure is for parents of pupils at the School who wish to make a complaint. The School's complaints procedure is provided to parents of current and prospective pupils, and to all staff. It can be downloaded from the School's website.

Requirements of this policy

This policy complies with Part 7 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014.

Complaints and external bodies

The chain of complaint is:

1. Headteacher / teachers
2. Governing body/ owner
3. Department for Education

(There is a possibility that Local Authorities may be involved in the chain of complaint – for example, when the complaint concerns child safeguarding, prolonged absences from School or statements of special educational needs.)

Guidance on school issues can be obtained from DfE public enquiries. Tel 0370 000 2288

Policy Statement

The School believes that children and parents are entitled to expect care, courtesy, respect and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all the parties involved.

PROCEDURES

The procedures set out may be adapted as appropriate to meet the policy aims and circumstances of each case. Certain parts of the procedures can only be carried out during term time.

1. Making a complaint

a. Stage 1 – information raising of a concern or difficulty to a member of staff, orally or in writing

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally through an email exchange or meeting, within fifteen days of being raised; a member of the SMT may assist with finding an informal resolution. The complaint has to be acknowledged within 2 working days during term time or 5 days during the holidays.

b. Stage 2 – a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher

If a complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then parents should put their complaint in writing, within seven working days, to the Headteacher. The complaint has to be acknowledged within 2 working days during term time or 5 days during the holidays.

- The Headteacher will then decide the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Headteacher will make the person against whom the complaint has been made aware that a formal complaint has been received as soon as reasonably practicable.
- A written record will be kept of all formal complaints, and of how, and at what stage, they were resolved.
- In the case of complaints which raise issues of safeguarding children or vulnerable adults, the School's safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- In most cases the Headteacher will meet with the parents concerned, normally within seven 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 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 practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made, and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headteacher will also give reasons for his decision.
- Stage 2 of the process will be completed within 28 days (unless holidays dictate that it is not practicable to do so).
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to stage 3 of this procedure.

C. Stage 3 – a Reference to the Complaints Panel

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Office Manager, who has been appointed by the Headteacher 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 Headteacher. The Office Manager, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.

If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied to all parties not later than seven 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 is not 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 the facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within fourteen 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 Headteacher, the Proprietor and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint has been made. The School will record any findings and recommendations, whether or not the complaint is upheld.

Record Keeping

A written record will be kept of all complaints that are made at the formal stage, whether they are resolved following the formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing. The school will also keep a record of the action taken by the school as a result of formal complaints, whether or not they are upheld.

The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be supplied to parents on request.

Confidentiality

Correspondence, statements, and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the *Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008*. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will normally be destroyed following each school inspection. In exceptional circumstances, some details will be retained for a further period as necessary. **See record keeping policy.**

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Complaints Co-ordinator will keep a written record of complaints and their outcome and will provide Ofsted 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.

If parents or carers have concerns about the school's ability to meet EYFS requirements, they should contact Ofsted (see paragraph below).

ISI/ OFSTED

Parents may approach ISI/Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaint's procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.

- The number to call Ofsted (for Cambridge Gardens Nursery) with regard to a complaint is: 03000 123 4666.

ADDRESS: Ofsted, National Complaints Team
Ofsted Early Years, The National Business Unit Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

EMAIL: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

- The number to call ISI (for Clarendon) is 03076000100

ADDRESS: *Independent School Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA*

EMAIL: info@isi.net



- If a child appears to be at risk, our school follows the procedures of the Local **Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.**
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the headteacher works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Policy status

The policy has been approved by the Headteacher. It provides guidelines for handling concerns and complaints. It takes account of paragraph 25 of schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 (SI 2010/1997), and the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. The policy applies to all sections of the school including Early Years.

Last updated: December 2022