



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Complaints Policy

The School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns that may arise. Many concerns that pupils and parents have do not necessarily call for complaint, but should still be brought to the school's attention. Help can only be given about issues that are known. This policy is available to the parents of pupils and of prospective pupils. It is applicable to all pupils in the school including those in the EYFS.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction, which needs a response. The school will endeavour to deal with complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way, and where appropriate, will take action. It is the school's policy that complaints should not rebound on the children. Pupils themselves are not penalised for making a complaint in good faith.

Complaints Procedure

1. Wherever possible it is best to raise an issue face to face with the person most closely concerned with the issue. Please make an appointment with the person concerned to allow for a suitable period of time to be available to discuss the issues fully. This normally results in the matter being resolved within two days and to your satisfaction.
2. You may ask for a meeting with a senior member of staff to raise your concern and again the matter will normally be resolved quickly to both parties' satisfaction. In this instance the time frame to manage the complaint will be two days and feedback will be verbal providing that a satisfactory outcome has been achieved.
3. If your complaint cannot be satisfactorily dealt with on an informal basis, you may make a more serious complaint in writing and the school will:
 - a. acknowledge your complaint in writing within five working days.
 - b. inform you how the matter will be dealt with and how matters will proceed.
 - c. carry out any necessary investigations.
 - d. Send a letter to explain the conclusion to you, along with reasons for it and any action being taken or proposed.
4. Your complaint or concern will remain confidential and all information treated with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Head and those directly involved. The Chair of Governors may have to be informed.
5. We cannot rule out the possibility of the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly the identities of those involved. This would only be likely to be necessary where a child's safety is involved or an illegal act has occurred. You will be kept fully informed.

6. Whilst information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we may not be able to pursue anonymous complaints.

7. Action, which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints, will be handled confidentially within school.

8. A complaint of this nature should be managed within fourteen working days.

9. A written record of all complaints and their outcome will be kept by the school.

If You Are Not Satisfied With the Outcome

1. We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome and feel that your concerns have been taken seriously.

2. If you are not satisfied and notify the Headmaster within five days, the Headmaster will advise that you refer the matter to the Chair of the Governors. Alternatively, you may wish to write direct to the Chair.

The Chair of Governors will ask for a full report from the Head and will examine all of the facts thoroughly before responding. This may result in a positive solution but if it does not, the Chair will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage. The Chair of Governors will:

- a. Acknowledge your complaint in writing within five working days.
- b. Inform you how the matter will be dealt with and how matters will proceed.
- c. Carry out any necessary investigations.
- d. Send a letter to explain the findings and recommendations to you and, where appropriate, the person complained about, along with reasons for it and any action being taken or proposed. This will also be made available within school for inspection by the Headmaster and Chairman of the Governors.
- e. This should be managed within a period of fourteen days from acknowledging your letter but will be dependent on both parties being available to meet within this period.

3. If this meeting does not bring a resolution you may, within five days, ask for the matter to be referred to a panel of at least 3 Governors who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. In addition to the Governors this panel will have one more member who is independent of the management and running of the school. It is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Chair of the panel will invite you to a meeting and you will be asked to present any papers you may have for circulation before the meeting. Again you will be invited to bring a friend with you. This panel will:

- a. Acknowledge your complaint in writing within five working days.
- b. Inform you how the matter will be dealt with and how matters will proceed.
- c. Carry out any necessary investigations.

d. Send a letter to explain the findings and recommendations to you and, where appropriate, the person complained about, along with reasons for it and any action being taken or proposed. This will also be made available within school for inspection by the Headmaster and the Chairman of Governors.

e. This process should be complete within 28 working days from acknowledging your complaint.

f. Ofsted and/or ISI will, on request, be provided with a written record of all complaints made during a specific period and the action taken as a result of those complaints.

4. If your concern has still not been satisfied you may wish to seek independent legal advice. You may also contact DCSF 0870 0012345, Ofsted 08456 404040 or ISI 020 7600 0100. There are certain circumstances in which the Secretary of State may have an interest and he can be contacted through your local MP. An investigation may be ordered, usually through the Independent Schools' Inspectorate or OFSTED. Written records, statements and correspondence relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them. This record will state whether the complaint was resolved at a preliminary stage or progressed to a panel and will be kept for a minimum of three years.

In addition to the procedures above

- This policy is available to all staff and boarders
- Boarders and their parents are informed how to contact Ofsted regarding boarding welfare and this information is displayed prominently around the school. The Ofsted number is 08456 404040
- Pupils are not penalised for making a complaint in good faith
- All written records of complaints are reviewed annually by both the Headmaster and the chairman of Governors.
- Complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.
- ISI can also be contacted 020 7600 0100

Reviewed: September 2011

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