

# COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## Section One

### Statement of Policy on Dealing with Complaints including EYFS

- All schools receive complaints from time to time. It is not the culture of the School to encourage complaints, but we are open to expressions of genuine dissatisfaction and believe that all complaints which we receive should be treated seriously and investigated fully and fairly.
- The School will always try to resolve complaints informally and in an amicable fashion where possible. The School's Complaints Procedure is divided into Informal and Formal Stages and it is expected that the majority of complaints will be resolved quickly at the Informal Stage.
- Complaints will be dealt with on as confidential a basis as possible, but it may be necessary for the person who first receives a complaint to discuss it with those who can resolve it, so anonymity and total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- No-one will receive adverse treatment as a result of having raised a complaint, or because someone else has raised a complaint on their behalf.

### What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

## Section Two

### Summary of Procedure for Parents and Pupils

#### (i) Informal Stage of Complaints Procedure

- If a parent or pupil wishes to make a complaint, they should usually contact the member of staff concerned in the first instance. Many concerns arise from misunderstandings and can be resolved by simple clarification.
- The member of staff will make a written record of the complaint and the date on which it was received. Should the matter not be resolved within 10 days or in the event that a satisfactory resolution is not reached then the complainant will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage (ii) of this Procedure.

## **(ii) Formal Stage of Complaints Procedure**

- More serious complaints and complaints which it has not been possible to resolve informally should be addressed in writing to the Headmistress. The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmistress will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 10 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- All formal complaints which are received by the School will be logged in a confidential log book which will contain the date of the complaint, a brief outline of it, a summary of the steps taken to resolve it and the outcome.
- Complaints against members of the teaching staff will normally be investigated by their Head of Department or by a member of the School's Senior Management Team. Complaints against members of the non-teaching staff will normally be investigated by the Bursar. If the complaint is against the Head, parents should address their complaint directly to the Chairman of Governors. Investigations will be undertaken as quickly as possible, so that matters can be resolved as soon as possible.
- The person making the complaint will also be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation, although details of any action which may result in the use of disciplinary or other formal procedures will normally remain confidential.
- The Headmistress will seek advice and assistance from the Chairman of Governors, or another Governor, if necessary when dealing with a complaint. The Governor consulted on this basis will be excluded from taking part in any formal procedure which may result from the complaint.

## **Section Three**

### **Appeals Stage of Complaints Procedure**

- Whilst it is hoped that all complaints will be resolved internally, people who make complaints and who feel that they have not been adequately dealt with by the School may appeal in writing to the Board of Governors and must include the reasons why they are dissatisfied with the School's response to their complaint.
- If the Chairman of Governors believes that there is valid reason for an appeal he will appoint a Panel of two members of the Board of Governors who have not previously been involved in discussions about the complaint in question and one person who is not involved in the management or running of the School.
- The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a Hearing to take place as soon as is practicable and normally within 14 days.
- Evidence collected at any previous stages of the complaint will be made available to the Panel on a confidential basis. The complainant(s) may also submit additional evidence and

will be invited to meet the Panel to explain their dissatisfaction. The complainant(s) 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.

- The Headmistress will be provided with copies of all relevant documents given to the Panel and will be invited to give written and/or oral evidence to the Panel.
- 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 10 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 Headmistress, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Parents should note that:

- The record of complaints is retained for three years.
- Parents can make a complaint to OFSTED and/or ISI should they so wish; details for contacting OFSTED and ISI are found at the end of this document.
- Complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of the School having received the complaint.
- The school will 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.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

*Reviewed Autumn 2011*

Contact details:

#### **OFSTED**

**Address:** Royal Exchange Buildings  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

**Education:** 08456 40 40 45

**Other enquiries:** 08456 40 40 40

#### **ISI**

Schools Inspectorate  
CAP House  
9 - 12 Long Lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA

Tel: 020 7600 0100

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