

Complaints Policy including EYFS

(PG 10, BG 25, ISI A14 B16 E7, WS)

The School aims to ensure that the whole community feels happy and secure when at school. There is an awareness, however, that things can go wrong and therefore welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, staff and pupils and take seriously any 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 made available to the parents of pupils and of prospective pupils through the school website or a hard copy if requested. It is applicable to all pupils, staff and parents in the school including those in the EYFS and Boarding pupils.

Concern - Defined

A concern is likely to require discussion, perhaps involving a teacher, pupil and parent, and it is hoped that it can be resolved quickly by such a discussion and appropriate action. A concern is dealt with through the normal daily structures of the School. If this does not resolve the concern then it could become a complaint.

Complaint - Defined

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction, which needs a response and is likely to arise when there are issues related to physical or emotional well-being, or over security, or when the School's stated aims or values are being ignored.

A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint.

Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is now a complaint.

Complaints levelled at the Headmaster are to be made in writing to the Chairman of the Governors via the School Office. The Chairman will utilise the panel process described below and liaise with the Deputy Headmaster where necessary.

The Headmaster will be informed of all complaints and their outcome.

A written record is kept of all formal complaints, and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stages or proceed to the Governing Board.

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Complaints Procedure

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 ever rebound on children or the person making the complaint.

Stage 1 – Informal

1. Wherever possible it is best to raise an issue face to face with the person most closely concerned with the matter. 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 immediately and often 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 immediate and feedback will be verbal providing that a satisfactory outcome has been achieved.

Stage 2 – Formal

3. If your complaint cannot be satisfactorily dealt with on an informal basis, you may make a more formal 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 Headmaster and those directly involved. The Chairman 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 normally be managed within fourteen working days. (Occasionally school holiday periods or exceptional circumstances may lead to a longer period being required, not longer than twenty eight days)

If You Are Not Satisfied with the Outcome, you may take your concern to stage 3. A stage 3 appeal will always be the final stage of this procedure)

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Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If you are not satisfied and notify the Headmaster within five days, the Headmaster will advise that you refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors. Alternatively, you may wish to write direct to the Chairman. The matter will then be referred to a Complaints Panel for consideration by the Chair of Governors. 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. The remaining panel members will be made up from the Board of Governors. The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint within two working days and will schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days. You will be asked to present any papers you may have for circulation before the meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend, teacher or relative. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate and if the parents intend to bring a legal representative they should inform the School at least three working days prior to the hearing.

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 it considers relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within five working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the subject of the complaint.

The Chairman of Governors/Panel will:

- a. Acknowledge your complaint in writing within two working days.
 - b. Inform you how the matter will be dealt with and how matters will proceed.
 - c. Organise and lead the panel hearing.
 - d. Send a letter to explain the findings and recommendations to you and, where appropriate, any other involved party, 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 or Chairman of the Governors.
 - e. This should normally 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.
 - 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.
 - g. The record of any such complaint will be kept for at least three years.
4. If your concern has still not been satisfied you may wish to seek independent legal advice. You may also contact, Ofsted 0300 123 666 or ISI 020 7600 0100. Parents may contact these bodies at any stage through the complaints process. Ofsted should also be contacted if it appears that there seems to be a possible breach of the EYFS requirements.
5. If a child appears to be at risk, the School's Safeguarding Policy and guidelines will be followed, as will, the guidelines of the appropriate local authority safeguarding board. In these cases both the parent and relevant staff will work with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr Nicholas Roddis, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Sarah Hall (EYFS), Mr Chris Ward, Mr Craig Boyce, Mrs Elizabeth Alway or Mrs Gill Sommers (Governor) and also with Ofsted/ISI to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Written records, statements and correspondence relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the secretary for state or a body conducting an inspection under section

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162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them. Ofsted and ISI will also be supplied, on request, a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action taken as a result of the complaint.

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. All complaints that reach a formal written stage will be recorded in the summary log kept in the Headmaster's study. This log will be made available to parents and inspectors from appropriate bodies such as Ofsted/ISI. The Boarding house will keep a written record of all complaints (written or not) together with a record of the outcomes of such complaints. This will be reviewed regularly by the Headmaster and Chairman of Governors and be made available to inspection bodies.

In addition to the procedures above:

- If Parents and/or carers of children in the EYFS do not think that the school meet the EYFS requirements they can contact ISI on 020 7600 0100 or Ofsted 0300 1234 666
- This policy is made available to all parents, staff and boarding pupils
- Boarders and their parents are informed how to contact Ofsted or ISI regarding boarding welfare and this information is displayed prominently around the school.
Ofsted 0300 1234 666; ISI 020 7600 0100
- All written records of complaints are reviewed annually by both the Headmaster and the Chairman of Governors. In the year 2021/22 there was (1) formal complaint under this procedure with (0) panel hearing.
- Complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils, staff and parents.
- The Chairman of Governors may be contacted at any time c/o the School Office.

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