



Policy for Complaints Procedure for Parents (Including Boarding and EYFS)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We strive to provide a good education for all our children. The Headmaster and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.
- 1.2 If any parents are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's class or subject teacher immediately.
- 1.3 All parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

2 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases, we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

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 contact their son/daughter's form teacher/tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parent's satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Main School or Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Main School or Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless he/she deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally. In this event, he/she will attempt to resolve the matter in five days or as soon as is practicable.
- The relevant member of staff (including the Headmaster) will make a written record of all complaints and concerns and the date on which they were received. Should a matter not be resolved within five working days, or in the event that the relevant teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution:

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents will be asked to put their complaint **in writing** to the Headmaster, who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate action to take.
- If the complaint is about the Headmaster, the complaint should be put **in writing** to the Chair of Governors who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster/Chair of Governors will speak to the parents concerned within forty-eight hours of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster/Chair of Governors to carry out further investigations. These will normally be completed within seven working days or as soon as is practicable.
- The Headmaster/Chair of Governors will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster/Chair of Governors is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing by email or conventional mail. The Headmaster/Chair of Governors will give reasons for the decision.
- The written decision will normally be issued within fourteen working days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the Headmaster/Chair of Governors will write to the parents within the fourteen working day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why he is unable to issue his decision and informing the parents when he will do so, which will normally be within twenty-eight working days of receipt of the complaint in any event.
- If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they may take the opportunity to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing:

- Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents seek to involve Stage 3 of this procedure, they are to write to the Headmaster informing him of their decision to do so within 28 days, whereupon the matter will be referred to a named governor. The named governor will then take responsibility for the organisation of a complaints panel hearing.
- The panel will consist of at least three persons, all of whom shall not be directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and at least one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school.
- Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the board of governors.

- The named governor, 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 named governor and/or the members of the panel deem it necessary, they may require (in writing) that further particulars of the complaint or any other related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five days before the hearing. Any such further particulars received within five days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it will not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.
- 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 parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However, should the panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required, the panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded. The panel will reconvene and, after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, will make findings, reach a decision and may make recommendations. This procedure will be completed within fourteen working days of the first hearing wherever possible but within twenty-eight working days in any event unless otherwise agreed with the parents. The panel will either email or send by conventional mail their decision together with their reasons and a copy of this will be emailed or sent by conventional mail to the person or persons being complained about. A further copy will be securely filed at school and will be available for inspection by the Chair of Governors and Headmaster. The decision of the panel will be final.
- The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent by email or conventional mail to the Headmaster, governors and, where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual.
- Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection (including ISI) under section 162A of the 2002 Act requires access to them or where any other legal obligation prevails.
- With reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage, we will keep the record of complaints for at least three years and complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of the school having received the complaint.
- With reference to Boarding, this policy has regard for Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2015).

Parents have the right to make a complaint to the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and/or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), their addresses and phone numbers are shown below:

OFSTED
NBU, 2nd Floor
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA
Tel: 08456 404040
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

ISI (Including complaints about boarding)
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA
Telephone 020 7600 0100
Email: info@isi.net

Footnotes to Complaints Procedure:

1. Number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the academic year 2020/2021: 0
2. Written records of complaints and the action taken as a result of each complaint are available to OFSTED and/or ISI on request.
3. In the event that a complaint involves or relates to a member of staff (including the Headmaster), then the member of staff/teacher will be kept fully informed in writing of the procedure being adopted in relation to the management of the complaint and supplied with copies of all documentation.
4. In the event of a panel hearing, the member of staff will have the right to make a representation to the panel.

Signed:



Date: September 2021

Review Date: September 2022