



## **Timeframe for Dealing with a Complaint**

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3 (the Appeal Panel Hearing) will normally be completed within a further 28 days if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

## **Recording Complaints**

The school will keep a written record of all formal complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date the issue was raised
- Name of parent(s) or guardian(s)
- Name of pupil(s)
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- The action taken by the school as a result of a formal complaint will be recorded (regardless of whether they are upheld)
- The school's written record of complaints identifies those complaints relating to boarding provision, and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by Ref A or where disclosure is required by the ISI under Ref B, or under other legal authority.

## **Stage 1 - Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with a child's Form Teacher, Tutor or Houseparent.

- If the Form Teacher, Tutor or Houseparent cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department, Deputy Head or other member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If the matter is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction within 7 days they may proceed to Stage 2 of this procedure

### **Stage 2 - Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint has not been resolved informally it may be made in writing to the Head (or directly to the Chairman of Governors if the complaint is against the Head). The Head (or Chairman) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and will decide, after due consideration, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases the Head will speak to the parent(s) concerned, normally within 7 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 Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parent(s) will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for the decision.
- If the complaint is against the Head, the Chairman of Governors will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Chairman may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases speak to or meet with the parent(s) to discuss the matter further. Once the Chairman is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parent(s) will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chairman will give reasons for the decision.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 - Panel Hearing**

- If a complaint has not been resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2 it may be referred in writing to the Chairman of Governors to call a hearing by a Complaints Panel.
- The Complaints Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, at least one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Chairman of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.

- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties normally not later than 5 days prior to the hearing.
- The complainant may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. The Panel should be notified of attendees at least 24 hours in advance.
- If possible the Panel will resolve the complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- The Panel will write to the complainant and other interested parties informing them of its decision and/or recommendations, and any associated reasons, normally within 7 days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final.
- A copy of the Panel's findings will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chairman of Governors, Head or other authorised persons.

### **EYFS Provisions**

The school will provide Ofsted with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action taken as a result, where the complaint relates to requirements under the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. A record of any such complaints will be kept for at least 3 years.

Parents of Early Years children may also complain to Ofsted directly if they wish. Ofsted may be contact on 0300 123 1231.