



Pitsford School

School Policy Document	
Name of Policy	Complaints Procedure
Audience	External
Date last reviewed	April 2019 CGW
Date for next review	April 2020

Introduction

Pitsford School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. This procedure follows the introduction of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2003, which requires independent schools to adopt, make available and apply a complaints procedure in order to comply with the new Standards against which OFSTED/ISI inspections will be carried out.

This policy applies to the EYFS setting. This policy does not apply to parents of prospective pupils. This policy does apply to parents of past pupils if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered, and it does not cover exclusions which are covered in a separate policy.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most issues and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally**.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Class Teacher or Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher or Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the KS1 or KS2 Assistant Head of The Junior School or Deputy Head (Seniors).
- Complaints made directly to a more senior member of staff will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher or Tutor unless the senior member of staff deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Class Teacher or Tutor will make a **written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received**. In the event that the Class Teacher or Tutor and the parent **fail to reach a satisfactory resolution within 15 working days 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 should **put their complaint in writing** to the Headmaster. This formalisation of the complaint should be by letter or email. The complaint will be recorded in the complaints register at this point. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will contact the parents concerned, normally **within 5 days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. If the complaint is received during the school holidays then the Head will contact the parents concerned within 5 days of the start of the next term at the latest.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will **keep written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his/her decision. This stage should happen within 28 days of the complaint being received.
- **If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3** of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should write to the Chair of Governors, who will refer the matter to the specific governor who has been appointed by the Board of Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- **The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration.** The Panel will consist of *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.* **Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors.** The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally **within 20 working 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 not later than 10 working days prior to the hearing.
- **The parents have a right to attend the hearing and 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 the parent decides not to attend, then Panel should consider the complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion.
- 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 working 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 Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

- A written record of all complaints, including the Panel's findings and recommendations, will be kept on the school premises available for inspection by the Head and Chair of Governors.

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 the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Education and Skills Act requests access to them; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Records of all complaints will be kept for at least three years. This will include action taken by the school as a result of complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld or not) and will include both formally resolved during stage 2, and those that go to a panel hearing.

EYFS

In the case of written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, all complainants will be notified of the outcome of the investigation of their complaint within 28 days. The record of complaints is made available to Ofsted and ISI on request. If parents believe that the School is not meeting the EYFS requirements they can contact Ofsted (tel: 0300 123 4666) and/or the Independent Schools Inspectorate on (tel: 020 7600 0100).