

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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## **Informal Approach**

If parents and guardians are concerned about an issue relating to their child's academic or pastoral wellbeing they should contact their child's class teacher or form tutor. If that does not resolve the problem Upper and Middle School parents should contact the Head of Year or the Head of Pastoral Care and Lower School parents should contact the Head of Lower School.

If there is a concern about an issue other than academic or pastoral wellbeing parents should contact the Bursar

## **Formal Approach**

If the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved by the informal approach parents or guardians may write to the Head, who will normally respond within 5 term time working days and, after considering the matter, attempt to reach a resolution.

If parents or guardians remain dissatisfied they may discuss the matter with the Chair of Council. The Head's PA or the Bursar can arrange a meeting or the parent/guardian may contact the Chair directly. The Chair will seek to arrange the meeting within 5 term time working days of being contacted. In urgent cases, should the Chair not be available, the school management will make arrangements for another member of Council to meet the parents or guardians.

If parents/guardians are still not satisfied they may refer the complaint in writing to the Bursar who, in his capacity as Secretary of the Council will arrange for a Review Panel to consider the matter. He will, in consultation with the Chair of Council, appoint the panel within 10 term time working days of receiving the written complaint and request for a panel hearing.

### ***The Review Panel***

The Review Panel will consist of two or three members of Council and an individual independent of the management and running of the school. Review Panel members will have no detailed knowledge of the issues raised or of the complainants and will therefore not normally include the Chair of Council. The panel will appoint one of its number to act as Chair.

The Review Panel will seek to meet within 5 to 15 term time working days after being appointed. The Secretary of the Council will provide all parties with a procedure and timescale to be followed and confirm the role of the panel.

Copies of relevant documents will be distributed to members of the Review Panel and those attending the meeting not less than 3 working days before the Review Panel meets. The documents will be provided for the purpose of the meeting and must be returned to the Secretary on its conclusion.

### ***The Review Meeting***

The meeting will normally take place at the school premises, or, at the discretion of the Chair of the Panel, at a nearby independent venue.

Those present at the review meeting will normally be:

- Members of the Review Panel
- The Head and any appropriate member of SMT
- Other relevant school staff
- The complainant
- Panel Secretary, (generally the Secretary to the Council)
- Any other person at the discretion of the Chair of the Panel, for all or part of the meeting

Parents or guardians may be accompanied by a friend or relation. Legal representation will not be appropriate.

The proceedings will be conducted in an informal manner. They will not be tape recorded, but the Secretary will keep a minute of the main points that arise. All present will be entitled to write and retain their own notes. The meeting will be directed at all times by the Chair of the Panel who will ensure that all those present have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments.

All those present are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners. The Chair may at his/her discretion adjourn or terminate the meeting.

Each of the issues raised in the letter of complaint will be considered and discussed. If the panel considers that further investigation is required it will decide how it should be carried out.

As soon as possible after the meeting the panel will consider all facts it regards as relevant in reaching its decision and deciding upon any recommendations. In the case of an equality of votes the Chair of the Panel will exercise a casting vote. The panel's decision will be final and will be notified in writing to all parties (including the complainant, the Chair of Council, the Head and where relevant the person complained about) within 7 term time working days of the meeting, unless additional time is required for further investigation. Council members will be informed of the nature of the complaint, key findings and recommendations.

**Note 1**

If a complaint is received during the week preceding a school holiday the time limits in this policy will run from the first day of the next term or half term period.

**Note 2**

Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required by law including where the Secretary of State or a body carrying out an inspection of the school requires access to them.

**Note 3**

A record will be kept of complaints, noting at which stage they have been resolved. The record will be retained for a minimum of 3 years after the child has left the school.

**Note 4 – Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

If the school receives a complaint from a parent or guardian relating to the schools' EYFS provision (Reception Class) the complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of that complaint being received in writing.

The parents/guardians of children in the Reception Class (EYFS) only are entitled to raise complaints about the school's EYFS provision with Ofsted and/or the ISI: contact details are below.

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

Telephone 020 7600 0100  
Fax 020 7776 8849

Ofsted

The National Business Unit,  
Ofsted,  
Royal Exchange Building,  
St Anne's Square,  
Manchester  
M2 7LA.

Telephone helpline 08456 40 40 45.  
Or E-mail your complaint to [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)