



## **Complaints Procedure**

West House 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.

### **Availability**

This policy is available to view via the school website. Hard copies are available to view in the school office and parents may request that a hard copy be sent home free of charge.

### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

1. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. These will usually take the form of a telephone call, a note in a pupil's planner or reading record book, an email, or a word with a member of staff.
2. Such complaints will normally be handled by the Form Teacher/Tutor or Key Worker. In the vast majority of cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway, and certainly within 48 hours, to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Tutor/Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head of Pre-Prep & Nursery, the Headmaster or a member of the Senior Management Team.
3. Complaints of this nature made directly to the Head of Pre-Prep & Nursery, Headmaster or a member of the Senior Management Team will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor/Teacher or Key Worker unless they deem it appropriate for the matter to be dealt with at Senior Management level.
4. The Form Tutor/Teacher or Key Worker will make a written record of the complaint, the date on which it was received, details of any investigation and the date on which parents were informed of the outcome. Such details will be recorded on the 'Informal Complaint Details' sheet and retained in individual pupil files for future reference. Should the matter not be resolved within two days or in the event that the Form Tutor/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**

1. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster (an email would not necessarily constitute a formal complaint, unless specifically presented as such). This action will constitute a formal complaint. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to

- take. The nature of the complaint and subsequent action will be recorded and retained in the Parental Complaints File.
2. The Headmaster will acknowledge the complaint upon receipt of the letter and in most cases, he will speak to the parents concerned, normally within seven days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
  3. It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
  4. The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint and these will be retained in the Parental Complaints File.
  5. 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 decision. Parents will be informed of the decision within 14 days of the complaint being made (during term time).
  6. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to stage 3 of this Procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

1. If parents seek to invoke stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to a convenor, appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. Under normal circumstances, the convenor will be the Secretary to the Board of Governors.
2. 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 Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days (during term time).
3. 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 four days prior to the hearing.
4. The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
5. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
6. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
7. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within seven days of the Hearing. The Panel will inform the parents, by electronic email or otherwise, of the findings and recommendations. Where relevant, a copy of the findings and recommendations will also be sent by electronic mail or otherwise to the person complained about.

8. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the Headmaster and the Governors.

### **Complaints Relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage**

Parents with children within the Early Years Foundation Stage should follow the procedures laid out above. However, they should also be aware of the following points specifically relating to EYFS:

- A record of complaints will be kept by the school for at least three years.
- Should parents wish to make a complaint to Ofsted (Tel: 0300 123 4666) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (Tel: 020 7776 8830), they may do so. Full details of procedures and contact details appear in the entrance to the school nursery building ('Field House').
- Complainants are required to be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of the complaint having been received.
- The school/nursery is required to provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints received during a specific period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

### **Confidentiality**

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them or where any other legal obligation prevails.

A record of the number of formal complaints received during the academic year is maintained and available in the school office.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Headmaster will carry out an annual review of this policy. He will inform the Board of Governors of the outcome of the review and any formal complaints received on an annual basis.

**Implemented:** February 2008  
**Reviewed:** December 2010  
**Next Review:** December 2011