

## **Complaints Policy and Procedure (ISI 33a)**

This Policy covers EYFS

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Reviewed by: Headmistress

Reviewed:

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## **Introduction**

Feltonfleet prides 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 the following procedure. This policy applies to parents of the School's current pupils.

## **Definition of a Complaint**

Feltonfleet's definition of a parental complaint is an oral or written expression of serious dissatisfaction or concern in relation to the School's activities, regarding which the parent seeks action by the School.

## **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 normally contact their son's or daughter's form tutor or, where appropriate for boarders, the Head of Boarding. In the vast majority of cases, the matter will be normally be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form tutor or Head of Boarding cannot resolve this matter alone, it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Year Leader, Deputy Head or Headmistress.
- ◆ Complaints made directly to the Year Head, Deputy Head or Headmistress will usually be referred to the relevant form tutor or to the Head of Boarding unless the Year Leader, Deputy Head or Headmistress deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- ◆ The form tutor or Head of Boarding will make a **written** record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received.
- ◆ Written complaints that are raised informally will be acknowledged by telephone, email or letter, normally within five working days of receipt.
- ◆ Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days, or in the event that the form tutor or Head of Boarding and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint to Stage 2 of this procedure.

## **Stage 2: Formal Resolution**

- ◆ If a complaint has been considered at Stage 1 and cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then parents should put their complaints in **writing** to the Headmistress, who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. Where the complaint is against the Headmistress, parents should make their complaint to the Chairman of Governors.
- ◆ The complaint will be acknowledged by telephone, email or letter within five working days.
- ◆ In most cases, the Headmistress (or the Chairman of Governors as appropriate) will arrange to meet or speak to the parents to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- ◆ It may be necessary for the Headmistress (or the Chairman of Governors as appropriate) or another senior member of staff to carry out further investigations.
- ◆ The Headmistress (or the Chairman of Governors) will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- ◆ Once the Headmistress (or the Chairman of Governors) is satisfied that, as far as practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing within 28 calendar days of receipt of the complaint by the Headmistress (i.e. the commencement of Stage 2 – Formal Resolution).
- ◆ Should any complainant wish to discuss the matter further, the addresses of Ofsted and I.S.I. (Independent Schools Inspectorate) are given below.
- ◆ 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, they should write to the Chairman of Governors within ten days of the Stage 2 decision being issued (or they should write to the Bursar, if the Chairman of Governors has dealt with the complaint at Stage 2, and the Bursar will refer the complaint on to an alternative Governor who will be the parents' point of contact). Parents should ensure that a copy of all relevant documents and their full contact details accompany their letter. If parents require assistance with their request, for example, because of a disability, they should contact the Chairman (or the alternative Governor onto whom they have been referred by the Bursar, as appropriate) who will be happy to make appropriate arrangements. Any correspondence with the Chairman of Governors (or Bursar, or alternative Governor nominated by the Bursar) should be addressed c/o Feltonfleet School.
- ◆ The Chairman (or alternative Governor, as appropriate) will then acknowledge the complaint, normally within five working days.
- ◆ The Chairman (or alternative Governor, as appropriate) will schedule a hearing with a Complaints Review Panel (the 'Panel') to take place as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within fifteen working days of the receipt of the request. Parents should note that the Panel will not normally sit during half terms or school holidays.
- ◆ The Panel will comprise three persons, of whom two will normally be Governors, but must include a person who is independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the Panel members will have been appointed by the Board of Governors and must not be directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The

Chairman of Governors may be one of the Panel members in circumstances where the Chairman has not been involved with the complaint at Stage 2.

- ◆ The Panel will usually sit in person, however where it is not practical to do so, a remote meeting will be held via conference or video call.
- ◆ 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 two working days prior to the hearing.
- ◆ 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 at this stage.
- ◆ All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Panel. If terminated, the original decision may stand. Any person who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way in which the hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and their comment will be noted. If the meeting is to be held as a remote meeting the Panel will give participants regular breaks in order to confer as necessary.
- ◆ If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- ◆ The Panel hearing will proceed notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend, and if necessary the Panel will consider that parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint.
- ◆ Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. The Panel may, at their discretion, adjourn the hearing for further investigation of any relevant issue or to take legal or other professional advice.
- ◆ After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations. It is not within the powers of the Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, pupils or parents, though the panel may make recommendations on these or any other issues to the Headmistress or to the full Governing body as appropriate. The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations shall be confirmed in writing within ten working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. Copies of the decision, findings and recommendations of the Panel will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, and will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Chairman of the Governors and the Headmistress.

### **Confidentiality**

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and all records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

### **Record-keeping**

A written record will be kept for all formal complaints, specifying:

- Whether they were resolved at Stage 2 or proceeded to a panel hearing;
- The action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they were upheld).

The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be kept only for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary in the circumstances.

## **EYFS**

This policy and procedure conforms with EYFS requirements in the following respects:

- Records are maintained of complaints and their outcomes;
- Parents can make a complaint to Ofsted and / or Independent Schools Inspectorate (I.S.I.) if they wish. Addresses and phone numbers are at the end of this document;
- Complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of the school receiving the complaint (see Stage 2 above);
- The school will provide Ofsted and I.S.I. on request a written record of all complaints made, and of action taken as a result of the complaint.

## **For Boarders**

- Boarders and their parents can contact I.S.I. regarding any complaints about boarding welfare using the below contact details.
- 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).

## **Shelley Lance Headmistress**

OFSTED  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD  
Tel: 0300 123 1231  
Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

ISI  
CAP House  
9-12 Long Lane  
London EC1A 9HA  
Tel: 020 7600 0100  
Email: [info@isi.net](mailto:info@isi.net)

## Number of Formal Complaints

Academic year 2019-20                      0