



Belmont Preparatory School Complaints Policy and Procedure, including EYFS

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The 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 with care and in accordance with this Procedure. The School makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of current registered pupils and past pupils (if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered) on the school website and for inspection in the School office during the school day, and the School will take reasonable steps to ensure that parents of current registered pupils who request it are made aware of this. In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, the School will provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an Independent Inspectorate, details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

2 What Constitutes a Complaint?

- 2.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unfairly. This policy does not cover exclusions.
- 2.2 Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The School is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you raise in good faith.

3 Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

- 3.1 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 is 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.
- 3.2 Stage 3, the Panel Hearing, will be completed within 28 days of that Stage being invoked if the appeal is lodged during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

4 Recording Complaints and Confidentiality

- 4.1 The School will keep a written record of all complaints made under Stage 2 below and whether they are resolved at that stage or proceed to a Panel hearing, and the action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). In addition, the Appendix provides details of the number of complaints registered under Stage 2, during the preceding school year. At the School's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:
- Date when the issue was raised
 - Name of parent
 - Name of pupil
 - 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).
- 4.2 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 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Complaints Procedure

5 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- 5.1 It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- 5.2 If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Form Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult either the Head of the relevant Department, the EYFS Co-ordinator, or one of the Deputy Heads (Pastoral or Academic).
- 5.3 Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, EYFS Co-ordinator, or a Deputy Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor or Subject Teacher unless the Head of Department, EYFS Co-ordinator or a Deputy Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- 5.4 The member of staff receiving the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within seven days or in the event that the Form Tutor or Subject Teacher (or, if appropriate, the Head of Department, EYFS Co-ordinator or a Deputy Head) and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.
- 5.5 If, however, the complaint is against the Head, parents should put their complaint in writing (in hard copy and not by e mail) directly to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

6 Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- 6.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing (in hard copy and not by e mail) to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- 6.2 In most cases, the Head 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.
- 6.3 It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations. Such investigations will be carried out within seven days of the complaint being received or as soon as practicable.
- 6.4 The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 6.5 Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made within 14 days and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for the decision.

- 6.6 If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.
- 6.7 If the complaint is against the Head, the Chair of the Board of Governors will call for a full report from the Head and for all relevant documents. The Chair may also call for a briefing from members of staff and will, in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, then parents will be informed of the decision. The Chair will also give reasons for the decision. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

7 Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- 7.1 Upon receipt of the written decision from the Head or, as the case may be, the Chair, the parents are to write to them informing them of their decision to invoke Stage 3 of this Procedure. The parents will then be referred to the Clerk of the Board of Governors who has responsibility for calling hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- 7.2 The Panel will consist of at least 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 Chair. The Clerk to the Board of Governors will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as is practicable and normally within fourteen days. The panel hearing will normally proceed notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend. If necessary, the panel will consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion. All reasonable steps will be taken to accommodate parental availability for dates and consider comments concerning panel composition. 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 seven days prior to the hearing.
- 7.3 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 and this policy does not entitle parents to insist upon legal representation at a hearing.
- 7.4 If possible, the Panel will resolve the parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However should the Panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required, the Panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded.
- 7.5 After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.
- 7.6 The Panel will write to the complainant informing them of their decision together with their reasons. The decision of the Panel will be final.
- 7.8 The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise sent or given in writing to the Head, the Chair of the Board of Governors, and, where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual. In the EYFS, this must be done within 28 days of the original complaint. A hard copy of these findings will be kept confidentially on the school premises.

8 Footnotes to Complaints Procedure:

- 8.1 In the event that a complaint involves or relates to a member of staff, then that member of staff will be kept fully informed in writing of the procedure being adopted in relation to the management of the complaint and supplied with copies of all documentation.
- 8.2 In the event of a Panel hearing, the member of staff will have the right to make representations to the Panel.

9 Footnotes to Complaints Procedure in respect of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- 9.1 The School will provide ISI, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of all such complaints will be kept for at least three years.
- 9.2 Parents may also complain to ISI if they wish. ISI may be contacted on 0207 600 0100 or by email concerns@isi.net.
- 9.3 The parents may also complain directly to Ofsted if they wish. Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 123 4234 or by email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.
- 9.4 Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days.

Appendix

School Year 2016-17

Numbers of complaints registered under Stage 2 in the School Year 2016-17: 0

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Approved by Governing Body

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