



School Complaints Procedure

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Introduction

At Ruckleigh School (the School) we pride ourselves on the quality of teaching and pastoral provision we afford our pupils. However, if pupils or parents do have a complaint in good faith, they can expect to be assisted by the School in accordance with the procedure detailed below. The aim of the procedure is to produce a resolution that everyone involved can accept.

In cases where the complaint has regard to the permanent exclusion of a pupil the appeal process outlined in the exclusion policy should be followed and not the complaints procedure.

This complaint procedure is available to all pupils, parents of current pupils and prospective pupils and all staff on the School website. However, the undertakings within this procedure apply to current pupils and parents only.

It is helpful if, at the outset, both parties (i.e. the complainant and the School) can be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. The School does take informal concerns seriously and concerns raised orally will often be dealt with swiftly and easily. Parents are also invited to raise concerns in writing. In such cases, the School will respond in writing within 7 working days (though usually sooner).

The School actively seeks the input of parents and no parent should hesitate to raise a concern he or she may have about the School or the welfare of his or her child.

General Principles

All complaints received, including those ultimately resolved at an informal stage, are recorded by the Headmaster.

The outcome of the complaint shall also be recorded, together with reasons for that decision, the outcome falling into one of the following categories:

- a. complaint resolved informally
- b. complaint dismissed
- c. complaint to be dealt with under another procedure
- d. complaint upheld and the appropriate action is deemed to be one of:
 - i. counselling
 - ii. training
 - iii. general supervision
 - iv. other management action

Urgent complaints will be identified as such and given priority.

All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully and complainants will be kept informed of progress during, as well as at the end of each stage.

The main aim at all times will be to secure that that complaint is settled or that a decision is taken about the complaint and it can then, if required, proceed to the next stage.



The School aims to resolve all EYFS Complaints within 28 working days.

Pupils

Pupils should follow the procedures laid out in the 'If you have a concern' posters displayed in classroom and available as Appendix D of *'The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy' 2018*.

Parents

Informal Stage

It is hoped that all complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. If parents have a concern or a complaint they should normally first contact their son / daughter's Class Teacher. It is anticipated that Class Teachers themselves will be able to resolve the majority of concerns to the parents' satisfaction, although it might be necessary to consult a Head of Section¹ if the question is an academic one.

Similarly, Class Teachers might need to refer to the Deputy Head if the concern is about a disciplinary matter. In some instances, it might be appropriate for parents to raise their concern directly with the Headmaster.

The Class Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints, the date on which they were received and their outcome, and these will be made available to the Headmaster for review. Should the matter not be resolved within a reasonable period of time (normally within 14 working days), or in the event that the Class Teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory solution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with the procedure below.

Formal Stages

If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then parents should put their concern in writing to the Headmaster. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged, and the Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Headmaster will meet with the parents, within 7 working days of receiving the complaint if it is in term time, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. In the case of a complaint about any matter concerning EYFS, the Head Master will also inform parents as to how they may contact ISI/OfSTED.

It might be necessary to carry out further investigation, for example where there are other parties involved.

Once the Headmaster is satisfied that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing within a further 7 working days or as soon as possible thereafter.

The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision. The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. These written records will also show whether the formal complaint was resolved by the Headmaster or proceed to a panel hearing

¹ Co-ordinator of EYFS – Helen Coleman
Co-ordinator of Lower School – Kerrie Bullard
Co-ordinator of Middle/Upper School – Jane Finch



(please see below) and any action taken, which will be recorded separately. If parents are still not satisfied, they should proceed as below.

Panel Hearing

This stage of the Complaints Procedure will only be necessary should the matter not be resolved at the former two stages. If this stage has been reached, parents should write to:

The Directors,
c/o C Laurens
Ruckleigh School
Solihull
B91 2AB

A Panel, which consists of two Directors not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and a Chairman who is independent of the management and running of the School, will then be convened to hear the concern. The Directors will acknowledge the receipt of the letter of concern and will schedule a meeting to take place within 14 working days or as soon as practicable thereafter.

Parents may be accompanied to this meeting by their son/daughter and one other person in support. Parents are asked to notify the Directors, in advance of the hearing, of the details of any person accompanying them. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' concern 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 the relevant facts, the Panel will form a decision within 7 working days of the ending 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 recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the parents, and, where relevant, the person against whom the complaint has been made; and it will also be made available for the Directors and Headmaster.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Furthermore, all decisions will be made impartially and within a reasonable time.

Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as disclosure is required of the School by the Secretary of State and the DfE in the course of an Inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails.



APPENDIX A : RECORD OF COMPLAINTS

The School maintains a written record of all complaints that are made, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or whether they proceed to a Panel Hearing, and then the action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). In the academic year 2019 – 2020 there was one formal complaint received by the Head.

Updated: September 2019