



The Study Prep WIMBLEDON

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This policy applies to all pupils including those in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Introduction

The Study Preparatory School ('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 in accordance with this Procedure. The School will make the Complaints Procedure available to all parents of registered pupils via the School's website. It is also available to prospective parents where the complaint concerns the School's admission process. The policy does also apply to past pupils, but only if the complaint was initially raised whilst the pupil was still registered. The only exception to this is if the complaint is a review of a decision taken by the Head to exclude or require the removal of a pupil under clause 6 of the School's Terms and Conditions of Contract in which case such a review must be requested by no later than five working days from the date of the decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil. The School will ensure that parents of pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.

What constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It can be about the School as a whole, a specific department or individual staff member, 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, failed to do something it should have done or has acted unfairly.

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.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

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 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 working days. The timescale is measured in normal school working days whether the complaint is lodged during term time or school holidays.

Stage 3, the Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 working days. Again, the timescale is measured in normal school working days whether the complaint is lodged during term time or school holidays.

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 daughter's Form Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means and to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head.
- Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher unless the Head deems it appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Form Teacher 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 fourteen working days or in the event that the Form Teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will then be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.
- If the complaint is against the Head, parents should make the complaint directly to the Chair of the Governors.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will meet the parents concerned, normally within 7 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head 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 Head will also give reasons for her decision.
- If the complaint is against the Head, the Chair 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 all relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing, together with reasons for the decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chair of Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. 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 Board of Governors. The Chair, 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 working days.

- The Panel hearing should proceed notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend. If necessary, the panel should 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.
- 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 five 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.
- The remit of the Panel shall be at the discretion of the Chair of Governors and the manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint 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 facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within seven days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and its recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents and, where relevant, the person complained of, as well as the Governors and the Head. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Chair of Governors and the Head.

Recording Complaints

A written record will be kept of complaints made in writing under the formal part of the procedure and whether they are resolved at the Formal Resolution stage or proceed to a Panel hearing. A written record will also be made of action taken by the School as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). At the School's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Parent and pupil names
- Details of the issue
- Records of any investigations and witness statements (where appropriate)
- Details of staff members handling the issues at each stage
- Copies of all relevant correspondence relating to the issue
- Notes/minutes of the hearing, and
- The Panel's written decision

The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice. Records kept may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice, but potentially including sensitive data such as information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint.

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 s 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice but in most cases for a period of at least seven years after the pupil leaves the School.

For EYFS, i.e. the Reception classes, all written complaints will be investigated and complainants notified of the outcome, within 28 days of receiving the complaint. All related documents will be kept by the School for a period of seven years.

Parents of EYFS children should follow the three stages of this Complaints Procedure. If parents remain dissatisfied and their complaint is about the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, then parents may take their complaint to the ISI or Ofsted. Parents will be notified by ISI or Ofsted of the outcome of the investigation into their complaint within 28 days of the complaint being received.

The Study will provide ISI/Ofsted, 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 any such complaints will be kept in accordance with its Privacy Notice. .

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Schools must make available details of how to contact Ofsted and/ or the ISI:

Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

ISI can be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net

ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

For the academic year 2020-2021, no complaints were registered under Stage 2 or 3 of the Complaints Procedure Parents can request information regarding the number of complaints in the preceding academic year.

Policy Reviewed: February 2022