



SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

COMPLAINTS



2022-2023

Approved by: Headteacher

Date: September 2023

Last reviewed on: November 2023

Next review due by: September 2024

Hale Prep School Complaints Procedure

The school is fully acquainted with the Children Act 1989, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the rules of natural justice. All underpin the right to a fair hearing recognising the need for an open, fair, and independent handling of complaints. This policy relates to the whole school, including EYFS.

- (a) The head or deputy head is present in the yard at the beginning and end of the school day to discuss any issue with parents.
- (b) The school has a policy of staff availability before and after school to discuss any issue/problem.
- (c) Informal chats with the head/deputy will be granted on the same day.
- (d) All teachers record informal concerns/ complaints from parents or other teachers about individual children on CPOMS. This allows any patterns of concerns to be monitored by form teachers and senior staff members.

Stage Two. Formal Resolution

Suppose the informal procedure does not provide a solution within two working days. In that case, the complainant will be advised that the complainant must make a formal complaint in writing which will result in an appointment with the deputy and the headteacher to discuss the issue. The matter will be discussed during this meeting, and minutes will be kept. As a consequence of the meeting, the headteacher/deputy head might conduct further investigations. After these further investigations, if thought necessary, a second meeting with parents will be held within two working days. If the matter is unresolved, the complaint will proceed to stage three.

Where a parent is not satisfied with the school's response to their complaint at stage 2 and indicates a wish to continue to stage 3, the panel hearing will go ahead unless the parent states they are satisfied with the outcome and do not want to proceed further. A panel hearing will proceed, notwithstanding that a parent may subsequently decide not to attend. If necessary, the panel will consider the parent's complaint in absentia and issue findings on the substance of the complaint, thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion. The requirement for the panel to proceed does not prevent Hale Prep from accommodating parental dates for availability for dates or considering comments concerning panel composition.

Stage Three. Panel Hearing

A panel, comprising three members appointed by the head, will then consider the complaint.

No panel member will be a party to the complaint, and at least one member will be independent of the running and management of the school. Examples of persons suitable for serving on the panel – are retired business people and people with a legal background.

The panel will arrange a meeting with the parents within seven working days. In holiday periods, it might be beyond seven days. The parents may be accompanied by a legal representative at the school's discretion.

The panel will have available members from the previous meeting. The hearing will be a full merits hearing.

The panel may resolve the complaint without further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out and then make a written response, including both decision and reason. This will be the final decision and will be circulated to all parties. The panel's decision, reasons, and recommendations will be circulated within five days of the meeting.

The school will provide panels with clear terms of reference, a clear process, and direction to reach a final decision within a specified timescale.

The findings and recommendations of the panel will be copied to:

- i. the complainant, and where relevant, the person complained about; and
- ii. will be available for inspection on the school premises by the head teacher.

All correspondence, statements, and records relating to complaints will be kept confidential except when the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access.

It must be stressed:

- (i) The school will strive to make a complaints procedure unnecessary.
- (ii) All concerns and complaints will be dealt with seriously and confidentially, and a written record will be kept of all concerns and complaints whether they are solved at stages 1, 2, or 3. At stage 1, informal notes will be written and kept in the form room.
- (iii) The panel members will be chosen so that the panel will be able to analyse evidence, provide a balanced view and give a reasoned decision. Thus, the panel might include members of the legal profession, retired business people, and governors of schools out of the immediate area of the school.

(iv) Since the school was established, no complaint has progressed beyond the informal resolution step.

Any written complaint about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements must be investigated, and the complainant must be notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The procedure will be as described above.

The record of complaints must be made available to The Independent Schools Inspectorate and Ofsted on request.

Parents may wish to make a direct complaint to The Independent Schools Inspectorate. The complaint may be filed in writing to The Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9 - 12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA, or by email to concerns@isi.net.

Alternatively, complaints relating to EYFS may be filed in writing to Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD, or by email to enquiriesv@ofsted.gov.uk

There have been no formal complaints during the academic year 2020-2021

Complaints that do not have a safeguarding implication will be retained for a minimum of 7 years. Where there is a safeguarding angle, "Records concerning allegations of abuse must be preserved for the term of the independent inquiry into child sexual abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for ten years from the date of the allegation if it is longer."

Persistent correspondence – where a parent makes repeated attempts to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy.

COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST MEMBERS OF THE STAFF (including low-level concerns) Appendix 4

Please see the safeguarding policy.

EYFS

This policy applies to all pupils, including EYFS. The named practitioner in EYFS is Rebecca Naylor.

