



## Complaints Policy

*Note: This policy applies to all sections of the school including EYFS*

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1** We make every effort to ensure that our school provides a good education for all our pupils, and the Headmaster and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, we appreciate that sometimes do not go as they should and the school is obliged to have a complaints policy in place and the following sets out the procedure for such circumstances.
- 1.2** We deal with all complaints in accordance with these procedures as set out by the Governing Body. The decision of the Panel is final.

### 2. Aims and Objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any concern or complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the pupil above all other issues. We endeavour to provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

Reference to a 'day' or 'days' in this Policy is to a day or days on which the school is open ie usually Monday to Friday inclusive except for holidays.

### 3. The Complaints Process

#### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.

If parents have a concern or complaint, and unless they feel that there is good reason not to follow this route, they should first contact their son's form tutor/class teacher as soon as possible after the incident giving rise to the concern or complaint occurs. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher concerned cannot resolve the matter alone, or if the parents feel that it is inappropriate for the form tutor/class teacher to deal with the issue, it may be necessary for him/her or them to consult the Head of the relevant part of the school;

- Complaints made directly to a member of the Senior Leadership Team will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless the SLT member deems it appropriate to deal with the matter at that level;
- The relevant tutor or teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received and how they were addressed. Should the matter not be resolved within five days after the parents contacted the school, or in the event that the teacher or tutor and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be reminded that they have the option to proceed with a formal complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.

#### Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing (preferably by letter rather than email) on a formal basis to the Headmaster and as far as possible providing supporting evidence for their complaint. This will then be considered by the Headmaster who will decide then the appropriate course of action to take;
- In every case, except those made anonymously, the complaint will be acknowledged within 24 hours and in most cases, the Headmaster will speak to the parents concerned, normally within forty-eight hours of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage;
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations. These will be completed within 7 days or as soon as is practicable e.g. in the event of school holidays intervening;
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to every formal complaint;
- Once the Headmaster 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 and the reasons for the same. This will in most cases be within 14 days of receiving the formal complaint, or within 28 days in any event;
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they have the opportunity to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.
- If in exceptional cases the parents do not wish the Headmaster to deal with their complaint, they should ask the school to refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors who will then follow the matter up without delay. If this process fails to provide the parents with a satisfactory outcome, they should then seek to invoke Stage 3.
- It is not the policy of the School or Governors to respond to anonymous complaints; these are not helpful and simply engender an aura of suspicion and mistrust for which there is no place in life at Thorpe House.

### Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3, they must do so in writing to the Headmaster within 28 days of receiving the decision from Stage 2, requesting that the matter be referred to the Complaints Panel for formal resolution.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will be appointed by the Chairman of Governors and 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. The complaint will be acknowledged on behalf of the Panel by the member designated to chair it and a hearing scheduled to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may request 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 5 days prior to the hearing. The chair of the panel has the right to declare that any such further particulars received within 5 days of the hearing will be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel as it may not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.
- 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.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out and by when. The Panel will then reconvene and, after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, will reach a decision and may make recommendations. This procedure will be completed within 14 days of the first hearing whenever possible, but always within 28 days unless in exceptional circumstances or otherwise agreed with the parents.
- 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, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing either using electronic mail or hard copied letter to the parents, the Headmaster, the Chairman of Governors and, where the complaint refers to an individual, to that individual.
- Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints (other than those made anonymously) will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential and secure except to the extent required by Part 7 Paragraph 33 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, or where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or under other legal authority.

### **5. Ofsted**

In the case of complaints regarding the EYFS setting, parents may also contact Ofsted if they believe the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements. There is a contact form on the website at <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school> or the contact telephone number for enquiries is 0300 123 1231 or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### **4. Monitoring and review**

- 4.1** The Governors monitor the complaints procedure in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headmaster logs all formal complaints received by the school and records any action taken to ensure the complaint is resolved. If a complaint is escalated to a Panel hearing, a formal record of the decision made and whether or not the complaint has been upheld is stored securely.
- 4.2** Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can understand and be properly informed about the complaints process.

In the year 2017/18 the School received three formal complaints.

Reviewed April 2017  
Reviewed February 2019

Review Date: February 2021

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Headmaster**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Chairman of Governors**