



Fulham
SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Reviewed by: Executive Group Nov 2020
Confirmed by: Executive Group Nov 2020
Approved: Board of Governors Nov 2020

Next review: November 2021

Fulham School has long prided itself on its openness and on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a formal complaint they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure. Complaints, concerns and all related correspondence will be treated in as confidential a manner as possible and with respect.

Documentation and Record-Keeping

This policy is made available to the parents of pupils at the School; pupils at the School; and staff. It does not apply to parents of prospective pupils, nor does it apply to past pupils, unless the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 25 (i) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards England) Regulations 2010; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Additional requirements apply for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Written complaints will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of EYFS complaints will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request. EYFS complaints will be retained for a minimum of three years and the record will clearly state the action taken as a result of the complaint.

Should any aspect of the complaints' procedure remain unresolved, it is possible for parents to bring such matters to the attention of Ofsted and/or the Independent Schools' Inspectorate.

These organisations may be contacted at:

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
General helpline 0300 123 1231; www.ofsted.gov.uk

Independent Schools Inspectorate, Ground Floor, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA
Telephone 020 7600 0100; www.isi.net

All complaints registered with the school are logged in the Complaints File which is held by the Head. The School maintains a record in a file of all parent complaints for at least three years for regular review by senior management and for inspection by inspectors. The record states whether the complaint was resolved at the preliminary stages or proceeded to a panel hearing and the actions taken as a result of the complaints.

Stages of complaint

NB the timescales specified in this section refer to complaints raised during term-time. During holidays the timeframe is likely to be longer as not all staff are available to address concerns or assist with any investigation. It is not feasible to set a specific timeframe during holiday periods due to such varying circumstances, but the School will keep any complainant informed and always seek to address concerns as rapidly as possible and within a reasonable period.

1. Informal Resolution

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

If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their son or daughter's form teacher or subject specialist teacher, whichever is most appropriate. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher or subject specialist teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the appropriate HOY/Member of the School Leadership Team (SLT), whoever is most appropriate. At the Pre-Prep teachers may consult the appropriate year group coordinator, Assistant Head or Head.

At Stage 1, informal complaints made directly to the Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Prep or Head of Senior will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher or subject specialist teacher or a member of SMT.

The staff member will make a record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

2. Formal Procedure

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Executive Heads (Pre-Prep, Prep & Senior)

The Executive Heads will decide the appropriate course of action within three working days of receipt of the complaint.

In most cases, the Executive Heads will meet or speak to the parents concerned within five working days of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter. As far as possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Executive Heads to nominate a member of the SLT to carry out further investigations. This may be decided at the first meeting with the parents. If, however, the Executive Heads decides to carry out an investigation before meeting the parents, they will be informed of this within three working days of the Executive Heads receiving the complaint and the meeting with parents will take place within seven working days.

The Executive Heads will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Executive Heads are satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. This will normally be within ten working days of receipt of the complaint. The Executive Heads will also give reasons for his decision and if considered appropriate will refer to independent mediation as a means of establishing a productive relationship with parents and pupil. This will not affect the parent's right to proceed to a Stage 3 complaint if the mediation is unsuccessful.

If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

3. Independent Panel Hearing

Complaint heard by an independent panel appointed by the Chair of the Governing Body.

If parents invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will place their complaint and all relevant information, in writing, to the Chair of Governors (via the PA to the

Executive Heads, who co-ordinates Governor business). The Chair of Governors will then convene a panel to consider the complaint. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The panel will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One member of the panel will be independent of the management and the running of the school.

The matter will then be referred to the complaints panel for consideration. The Chair of Governors will, acting on behalf of the panel, acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable, usually within seven working days.

If the Panel deem 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 two days prior to the hearing.

Complainants will be invited to attend the hearing and told of their right to be accompanied by a friend. Where relevant translations/interpreters will be arranged by the Chair of Governors in consultation with the parties. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. If legal representation is to be brought before the panel, it will need at least five working days' notice before holding the hearing.

The panel will ensure that the complainant is heard in private, is welcomed, and as far as possible is put at ease.

The panel will hear the appeal(s), consider all the views expressed and will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within ten days of the Hearing. The panel will write either electronically or by post to complainants informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, along with any recommendations. This communication will also be sent to the Executive Heads and any other relevant parties.

If the complainant is still not satisfied, they may contact the Independent Schools team at the Department for Education (DfE) on 0870 0012345 or Ofsted – enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or 0300 1234 234 for further guidance.