Edenhurst Preparatory School

Complaints Procedure

The school is required under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2003, (amended January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009) to adopt, make available, and apply a Complaints Procedure, in order to comply with the Standards against which OFSTED/ISI inspections will be carried out.

'Complaints' are not defined in the Independent School Standards Regulations, but the guidance for maintained schools suggests that there is a difference between 'concerns' which should be dealt with informally and 'complaints', which should be subject to a formal procedure.

The Independent School Standards Regulations only refer to complaints from parents. This Policy therefore concerns complaints from parents who can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

The Policy does not cover complaints from members of staff as these are covered by the school's grievance and disputes procedures.

There are additional points of guidance for parents with children in EYFS classes (Early Learners and Reception). Please see Page 3 for further information.

Provision of Information
The Complaints Procedure is available to parents on request from the School Office.

Timescale
See below for definitions and details of each stage of Resolution

1. Informal Resolution – within seven school days
2. Formal Resolution – meeting with parents within two school days
3. Panel Hearing – meeting within seven school days, decision with five school days of the hearing

Procedures
There are three stages.

STAGE 1 - INFORMAL RESOLUTION

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

If parents have a complaint or concern they should normally contact their son/daughter's Form Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved immediately by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult an appropriate person such as Subject Coordinator, Head of EYFS, Head of Key Stage, Deputy Head, Bursar or the Head; and the parents will be consulted.

(Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, the Deputy Head or the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher or member of staff unless the Head of Department, the Deputy Head or the Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally).

The Form Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and the date on which they were received on the internal **'Informal Concern Form (Parent)'.** All matters will be resolved a soon as possible but should the matter not be resolved within seven school term days or in the event that the Form Teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

STAGE 2 - FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the concern 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 two school 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 his decision.

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

STAGE 3 - PANEL HEARING

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, the Head will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel, which has been appointed by the Head to attend 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** and one other who shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Head will schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally **within seven school days.**

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 two 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.

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. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete **within five school days 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, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents and, where relevant, the person complained of.**

The findings of the Panel will be available for inspection by the Proprietor and Head.

Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them.

Additional guidance for parents with children in EYFS (Early Learners and Reception)

1. Records of complaints will be kept for three years.
2. Parents may make a complaint to Ofsted and ISI if they so wish.
3. Complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of the School or Nursery receiving the complaint.
4. The School and Nursery will provide Ofsted and ISI a written record of all complaints made during any period specified by them, with a written explanation of action taken as a result of each complaint.

Ofsted telephone: 0300 123 1231
ISI telephone: 020 7600 0100

Types of Concerns and Complaints:

The majority of concerns/complaints received by the School fall into the following categories:

- financial, administrative and breach of contract
- academic
- pastoral care
- safeguarding (child protection)
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Complaints against The Headmaster

Complaints against the Headmaster may fall into two categories; this Policy provides for parents to complain as below.

1. Regarding Child Protection

   Parents should make to complaint to the Child Protection Officer, Mrs. Christine Long. He would then invoke the school's Child Protection procedure and, if necessary, the procedure for Allegations Against Members of Staff.

2. Other matters directly involving the Headmaster

   Parents should address their complaints to Mr. Mark Malley, Chief Executive, Bellevue Education Group, 60 High Street, Wimbledon, London, SW19 5EE.

Responsibilities:

The Headmaster: for

- adopting the Policy, procedures, and guidelines;
- appointing where necessary an independent panel of at least three people independent of the management to hear complaints when complainants are not satisfied with the school's response;
- receiving reports and findings from the Panel

The Headmaster will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes regularly. The Headmaster will also monitor the school's response to complaints and any panel recommendations.

Chair of the Independent Panel:

To ensure that:

- the parties understand the procedure;
- the issues are addressed;
- key findings of fact are established;
- complainants are put at ease;
- the hearing is conducted as informally as possible;
- the panel is open-minded and acts independently;
- no member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome, or has been involved in the issues previously;
- all parties have the chance to be heard;
- any written material is seen by all parties; and
- findings are communicated to the parent and school within five school days of the hearing.

Internal Responsibilities:

Headmaster:

- for the overall internal management of the procedures;
- for ensuring that there is both an Informal and Formal procedure;
- for ensuring that the written Policy and procedures are available to parents on request;
- for hearing complaints at the second stage; and
- for ensuring that the procedures are monitored and reviewed

Deputy Head: for

- the efficient operation and management of the Policy and procedures;
- training staff on how to deal appropriately with complaints;
- keeping parents, pupils and others informed of the procedure;
- compiling reports for the Head as required;
- for receiving any safeguarding (child protection issues)

Bursar: for administrative, environmental and financial queries and complaints

Heads of Key Stage/Department/Subject: for dealing with and where possible resolving concerns/complaints about academic matters/programmes of study/teaching methods at stage 1 of the procedures.

Form Teachers: for dealing with and where possible resolving complaints concerning overall pupil progress, discipline issues, pastoral care.

All staff: for hearing any concerns brought to them by parents and pupils and reassuring them that they will be dealt with as soon as possible by the appropriate member of staff, and for informing the relevant staff of the concerns. And for passing any complaints received from other people who are not parents or pupils to the Deputy Head.

Policy Review
This Policy was reviewed in December 2011
Next Review September 2012