



Parental Concerns Policy and Complaints Procedure

This policy is applicable to all pupils including those in the EYFS.

Introduction

At Kirkstone House School we welcome suggestions and comments from parents and pupils and take seriously complaints and concerns. We pride ourselves on our excellent relationships with parents and strong pastoral system which is proactively geared to resolving concerns before they escalate into less soluble 'problems'. However, from time-to-time situations may occur in which parents feel the need for redress. A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response. All complaints will be treated in a professional manner and will not rebound adversely on pupils or parents within school.

Complaints will be treated in a confidential manner, with knowledge of it limited to those strictly involved. However, in certain circumstances, for example where a child's safety is concerned, safeguarding procedures will be followed.

The Parental Concerns Policy and Complaints Procedure is available as a download from the School's website or in hard copy on request.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practice; is fair to those concerned and helps to promote parents' and pupils' confidence in the School's ability to safeguard and promote welfare. The School will try to resolve every complaint in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter which may have gone wrong and where necessary, reviewing its systems and procedures in the light of these circumstances.

Policy Statement

The School needs to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. It recognises that a difficulty that is not resolved quickly and fairly can soon become a cause of resentment and can be damaging to relationships and also the School's culture. Parents and pupils should never feel- nor should there every be any suggestion made-that a genuine complaint will be taken amiss or will adversely affect a pupil or his/her opportunities in School.

Management of Complaints

Stage 1- Informal Resolution of a Concern or Complaint

- It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a concern, they should normally contact their son/daughter's tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved immediately by this means to the parents' satisfaction. However, if the tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Headmistress.
- Academic concerns should first be raised with the subject teacher
- If preferred it is possible to contact the Headmistress direct. Telephone 01778 560350 and make an appointment to speak with Mrs C L Jones.
- If the complaint is about the Headmistress, parents should contact the Proprietors of the School direct.



The tutor/subject teacher will make a written record of all concerns and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days (during term time) or in the event that the tutor and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their concern in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure. (It should be noted that during holiday periods, concerns will be dealt with as and when possible, given likely staff absences).

Stage 2- Formal Complaint

Formal Resolution

- If the concern cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then parents should put their concern in writing to the Headmistress or to one of the Proprietors (Mrs B K Wyman, Mr E G Wyman or Mr J W R Wyman). This should be made in writing to the School's address. The Headmistress or Principals will decide, after consideration, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmistress will speak to the parents involved normally within two days (during term time) of receiving the concern, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. If the complaint is received during the School holidays, every effort will be made to deal with it by the Headmistress as far as can be possible given staff absence.
- It may be necessary for the Proprietors and the Headmistress to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the concern.
- Once the Headmistress and the Proprietors are 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. This will be within 5 days of the complaint being received unless further investigations are necessary. The Headmistress/Proprietors will also give reasons for their decision.
- Where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint, provision is made for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Proprietors and consisting of three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

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 Complaints Panel for consideration.
- Parents should make their request within seven days of the decision being complained of.
- The request will only be considered if the complainant has completed procedures at stage 1 and/or stage 2.
- The complainant must ensure that a copy of all relevant documents and their full contact details are included in their letter of request.
- The letter must state the outcome that the complainant desires and all the grounds of their complaint must be accompanied by a list of documents which the complainant believes to be in the School's possession and wishes the panel to see. The request will be acknowledged within four working days.
- Each of the Panel members will be appointed by the Proprietors and a hearing will be scheduled to take place as soon as is practicable and normally within twenty one days.



- The panel will consist of three people who are not concerned with the matter under consideration, and at least one member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the School. Parents will be informed of the names of the panel members.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the concern or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than three 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. For security purposes, the school should be advised of the names of attendees.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' concern immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. This may include an adjournment for further investigation of any issue.
- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within fourteen days of the Hearing.
- A copy of the findings and recommendations is provided to the complainant and where relevant, the person complained about; and is available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the headmistress.
- It is not within the powers of the panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, pupils or parents. The panel may make recommendations on these or any other issues to the Headmistress or to the Proprietors as appropriate.
- For EYFS, the complainant must be notified of the outcome of the investigation of a complaint within 28 days from the receipt of the written complaint.

Further Action

If a complaint has not been resolved within the school, parents can choose to contact ISI, their own lawyer, their MP or the Secretary of State for Education.

In EYFS parents may make a complaint to Ofsted and ISI

Ofsted: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD, General helpline: 0300123 1231

ISI: Ground Floor, Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA. Tel: 0207 600 0100

Private Proceeding

A hearing before the Complaints panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be disclosed directly or indirectly to the press or other media.

Confidentiality / Record Keeping

A written record of all formal complaints will be kept for at least three years, including whether it is resolved at the formal procedure or proceeds to a panel hearing and the action the School has taken as a result of the complaint regardless of whether or not the complaint was upheld.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 (paragraph 33(K) to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/3283) that is, where access is required by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of a School's inspection or under other legal authority. Records of complaints relating to the EYFS setting will be made available to OFSTED and the ISI on request. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will normally be



destroyed following each school inspection. In exceptional circumstances, some will be retained for a further period if necessary.

Number of Complaints: The School has received no complaints registered under the formal procedure during 2016-2017.

Mrs B K Wyman

On behalf of the Principals

Mrs C L Jones

Headteacher

Policy review date: October 2019