



Complaints Procedure (for the whole school including the EYFS)

This policy is written with due regard to the Education Regulations and to the guidance in the ISI Handbook

Introduction

Garden House School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure. A complaint is defined as any matter about which a parent of a child at the school is unhappy and wishes the school to take action. This policy is available to parents of current registered pupils. Parents of past pupils can use this procedure, but only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered and it does not cover exclusions. This policy is made available to parents on the school website and can be requested via the school office.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the relevant Head. In either case, that Head should be informed so that the complaint can be addressed properly. A record of informal concerns and complaints is kept on the school system and further information can often be found on a child's academic tracker.
- Complaints made directly to the Heads will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher unless the relevant Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- Should the matter not be resolved within 5 working days or in the event that the class teacher or Head 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 complaint 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 or speak to the parents concerned, normally* within 5 working 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. Action taken by the school as a result of the complaint will be kept on the written record.
- 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, normally* within 5 working days of the original meeting and 10 working days if the written complaint having been received. The Head will also give reasons for his/her decision. A record will be kept of whether the complaint is resolved at this stage, or whether it is to proceed as below.
- 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), they will be referred to Judith Robinson (Bursar), who has been appointed to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least 3 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 (see appendix). Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the proprietor. Judith Robinson, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally* within 14 working 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 2 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 10 days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of findings and recommendations. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained of. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and Head.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. A written record of all complaints made in writing under the formal procedure will be maintained, with a record of whether they were resolved or proceeded to a panel hearing and the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they were upheld or not). Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

EYFS

In the case of the EYFS, parents can make a complaint to ISI if they so wish should they feel the EYFS requirements are not being met.

All written complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints will be made available to ISI on request.

The contact details for ISI are:

0207 6000100
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

* The normal timeframe is that anticipated for complaints received in term time. Complaints received when the school is not in session may take longer depending of the availability of relevant staff. In these circumstances, a suitable time frame will be agreed for each complaint received.

Updated by Heads and Proprietor June 2019
Review Date: June 2020

Number of formal complaints received in the Academic Year 2018–2019: 0

Appendix

***Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel**

DFE guidance states that:

Our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members had some standing in the local community. In this connection serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background – perhaps retired members of the Police Force – might be considered suitable by schools.