



WALTHAMSTOW HALL
SEVENOAKS

COMPLAINTS & CONCERNS PROCEDURE

Includes Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Introduction

Walthamstow Hall 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 with care and in accordance with this procedure. This Procedure is available on the school's website; a printed copy is available from the school office during the school day. In accordance with Part 7, paragraph 33 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Walthamstow Hall will make available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the ISI for the purposes of section 157 (1)(g) of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), paragraph 109 of the Education Act 2008 (as amended), details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

What Constitutes a Concern or Complaint?

A concern or complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a concern or complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.

Timeframe for Dealing with Concerns or Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Recording Concerns or Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. At the School's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- We shall record any action taken by the school, regardless of whether or not the complaint is upheld, in the complaints register.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by sub-paragraph (k) of Part 7, paragraph 33 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required by the ISI under Section 157 (1)(g) of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or paragraph 109 of the Education Act 2008 (as amended) or under other legal authority.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most concerns or complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a concern or complaint they should normally contact their daughter's Form Tutor, Head of Year or one of the Deputy Heads depending on the nature of the concern. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Tutor Head of Year cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department, a Deputy Head or the Headmistress.
- The member of staff contacted will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved satisfactorily within 14 days then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.
- A complaint against the Headmistress should be made directly to the Chair of Governors.

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 Headmistress. The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmistress will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 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 Headmistress to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmistress 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 Headmistress will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If the complaint is against the Headmistress, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Headmistress and for all the relevant documents. The Chair may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair of Governors will give reasons for his/her 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) they will be referred to The Chair of Governors or Vice Chair of Governors as appropriate who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Convenor, 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 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 normally not later than 7 days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint 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 make findings and may make recommendations.

- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Headmistress.

WRITTEN COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EYFS: As Specified in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2017: 'All providers must investigate written complaints relating to their fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted on request.' The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years. Parents may also complain directly to ISI on **020 7600 0100** or Ofsted on **0300 123 4666** if they wish.

Review Date June 2018
Next Review June 2019

Signed.....Date.....

Mrs J Adams
Chair of Governors