



Stratford Preparatory School

Name of Policy/Document	Complaints Procedure - EYFS and Main School
Date	September 2021
Author	Tracey Woodcock, Headmistress
Ratified by	Catherine Quinn, Proprietor
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Stratford Preparatory School has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils, including the EYFS section. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated in accordance with this procedure.

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 the class teacher or member of staff if appropriate, who will acknowledge the complaint. The member of staff may consult with other teachers or members of staff if necessary, for example to ascertain what may have happened in a particular incident. At the conclusion of the consultation, if it has taken place, and certainly within seven days of receipt of the complaint, the member of staff will invite the parent to make an appointment through the school office to discuss the matter informally with them, allowing sufficient time for the matter to be thoroughly discussed. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. This timeframe may need to be extended in the event that staff are absent due to Covid.

Where a parent feels that the complaint has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher or member of staff, they should make an appointment through the school office to discuss the matter informally with the Headmistress.

Should a parent have a complaint about the Headmistress, they should contact the school office to make an appointment to discuss the matter informally with the Principal.

Should a parent have a complaint about the Principal, they should contact the school office to make an appointment to discuss the matter informally with the Headmistress.

The member of staff involved, or Headmistress or Principal if involved, will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received. This will be recorded in the school's complaints log. Should the matter not be resolved within fourteen days, or in the event that the member of staff, Headmistress or Principal (if involved) and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution in that time, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure. This timeframe may need to be extended in the event that staff are absent due to Covid.

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 (Mr Tracey Woodcock). Should the complaint be about the Headmistress, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Principal (Mrs Catherine Quinn).

Should the complaint be about the Principal, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmistress. The receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing, and a copy of the Complaints Policy will be enclosed with this acknowledgement. The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases the Headmistress (or Principal if the complaint is about the Headmistress) will speak to the parents concerned, normally within fourteen days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage. This timeframe may need to be extended in the event that staff are absent due to Covid.

It may be necessary for the Headmistress (or Principal if the complaint is about the Headmistress) to carry out further investigations.

The Headmistress (or Principal if the complaint is about the Headmistress) will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Headmistress (or Principal, if the complaint is about 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 (or Principal if the complaint is about the Headmistress) will also give reasons for his (her) decision.

The Principal may choose to appoint an independent person to investigate any complaint made about the Headteacher.

If the 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) provision will be made for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Proprietor (Mrs Catherine Quinn) and consisting of people who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

At least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel will normally be appointed within 14 days.

If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter may be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied by the Proprietor to all parties not later than seven days prior to the hearing. The action taken and outcome is also recorded.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative or a 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 the facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision, which it shall complete within 14 days of the hearing. This timeframe may need to be extended in the event that staff are absent due to Covid.

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 will be sent in writing to the parents, Headmistress and Proprietor, and where relevant the person about whom the complaint was made.

A copy will be available for inspection on the school premises by Headmistress and Proprietor.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Copies of the findings and recommendations are made available.

Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by sections 108 and 109 of the 2008 Act; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

The school will provide for a written record to be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stages or proceed to a panel hearing. The school will make a note of action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether it was upheld) and will keep this on premises.

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints must be made available to ISI and Ofsted. The action taken and outcome is also recorded. This timeframe may need to be extended in the event that staff are absent due to Covid.

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy.

If parents believe that their complaint has not been properly dealt with, after following all the stages of the school's Complaints Procedure, they have the right to contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), or Ofsted.

ISI can be contacted at:

Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA, telephone 020 7600 0100, or via their website www.isi.net. Email info@isi.net

Ofsted can be contacted at:

The National Complaints Team, Ofsted National Business Unit, Picadilly Gate, Store St, Manchester M1 2WD. Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. Telephone 0300 123 4666.

During the Academic Year 2020-21 the school received 0 complaints which reached Stage 2 or 3.

Retention of records

The Department of Education regulator has advised that complaints which do not have a safeguarding implication should be retained for 7 years. Where safeguarding is involved records of any alleged abuse must be kept for the term of the independent inquiry into sexual abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years after the date of the allegation if it is longer.