

Complaints Policy & Procedure



DOCUMENT CONTROL

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TEESSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

Policy Name	Complaints Procedure
Purpose	To ensure that all parents and pupils, and everyone associated with the school is fully aware of the three stage procedure to follow when making a complaint.
Applies to	All departments within the School, including those in the EYFS setting.
Other Associated policies and documents	Code of Conduct, Rewards, Sanctions and Exclusion Policy

INTRODUCTION

The 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 seriously by the school in accordance with this Procedure.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- a. If parents have a concern about any aspect of the school's operation, they should first raise it with the member of staff directly concerned. It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally at this level.
- b. If parents are unable to settle the matter with the member of staff directly involved, then they should contact, in the case of senior school pupils, their child's Subject Head of Department (HOD) (if the matter relates to teaching and learning) or Form Tutor (if the matter relates to a pastoral matter or other pupils are involved) or, in the case of the Preparatory or EYFS pupils, the Director of Prep. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away and informally by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Tutor, Subject Leader or Pastoral Support Officer cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult further with appropriate colleagues.
- c. Complaints made directly to a more senior member of staff will usually be referred back to Stage 1 a or 1 b of this Procedure. Parents should only approach a senior member of staff if:
 - i) the person directly concerned is not available and the complaint is urgent;
 - ii) the complaint is sufficiently serious that it must be dealt with at the formal stage 2 below;
 - iii) if the complaint involves a Child Protection issue. In the case of the latter the Designated Safeguarding lead, (Miss Nicola Stephens) should be approached, or in her absence any senior member of staff, if this is a repeated complaint concerning the same member of staff.
- d. The Tutor, Subject Leader or Pastoral Support Officer, or more senior member of staff (as appropriate) will make a written record of all concerns and complaints raised under para 1 b or 1 c and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within seven working days or in the event that the staff involved and the parents 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

- a. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. She will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- b. The Head (or their delegated representative in their absence) will speak to the parents concerned, within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- c. It may be necessary for the Head to instigate further investigations. In this event, the investigation will be carried out by a senior member of staff who has not been directly involved in the complaint. It is important that the Head is able to make judgements based on facts alone. This investigation may take up to seven working days. If it appears that the investigation may take longer, the school will inform the parent within seven working days of the likely timescale.
- d. The Head and the senior member of staff appointed in para 2 c will make written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Records of all written complaints will be kept in a complaints file and records of written complaints from parents that pertain to the EYFS setting are kept in an EYFS Complaints File which is stored in the School Office.
- e. 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 give reasons for their decision.
- f. The outcome of any investigation into the written complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be shared with the complainant within 28 days of the complaint being made. A record of these complaints will be made available to OFSTED on request.
- g. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- a. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to a Nominated Governor, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. In order to proceed to Stage 3, parents should put their complaint in writing addressed to the Chair of Governors, c/o Teesside High School. This can be in either postal letter format, or by email to the Clerk of the Governors, headspa@teessidehigh.co.uk. The complaint will be acknowledged within three working days.

- b. 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, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.¹ Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The Nominated Governor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 working days.
- c. 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 four days prior to the hearing.
- d. The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend (not the subject of the complaint). Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- e. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parent's complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- f. 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 based on its findings and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within ten working days of the Hearing in writing. A copy of these findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the chair of Governors and the Head Teacher. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the findings will be kept on the school premises.

1. Records

The school shall keep written records on all written complaints at stage 2 and above and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

The School will keep a written record of all complaints that are made in accordance with stage 2 of the procedure, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to stage 3, a panel hearing. A note will be made on each complaint of the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). The school will also ensure that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are 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.

¹ Suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to scrutinise evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. Ideally independent panel members will have 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 – will be considered suitable.

Such records and any correspondence relating to the complaint will remain confidential except where the Secretary of State for Education or a body conducting an inspection under S162A of the Education Act 2002 as amended requests access to them.

The number of formal complaints received since September 2018 is 15, of which 1 went to Stage 3 and a Panel Hearing.

2. EYFS Setting

Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure if they feel that Teesside High School is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

3. Child Protection and Confidentiality

- At any stage the complaint may be superseded by the provisions and requirements of the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Parents must appreciate that Common Law and any Rules and Regulations in force regarding pupil confidentiality shall be observed by the school at all times. Sometimes, this may preclude contact with parents.

This procedure is reviewed annually or when required by statute.

NB 'Working days' do not include school holidays or weekends.

Parents may also complain directly to Ofsted or to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) if they wish. Ofsted may be contacted on 08456 014772 and ISI on 020 7600 0100, or via info@isi.net