

Beech Lodge School COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

The School's aim is to resolve every concern or complaint informally, quickly and fairly to all those concerned. If a matter cannot be resolved informally, the matter may proceed as a formal complaint.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

If parents have a concern or complaint, this should be addressed initially to the Class teacher. It is hoped that the matter will be resolved at this stage.

Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the Class teacher/relevant Staff member unless the Head deems it appropriate for the matter to be dealt with by the Head personally.

If the complaint is against the Head, parents should address their complaint to the Proprietor and proceed to Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure.

A written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received will be kept by the School.

Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days or as soon as reasonably practicable during school holidays, or where parents are not satisfied with the response to the complaint raised informally, parents may proceed with a formal complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

If a complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents may 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 either meet with or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint or as soon as reasonably practicable during school holidays, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

A senior member of staff delegated by the Head may investigate all written complaints.

Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made. The parents will be informed of this decision in writing together with reasons for the decision as soon as reasonably practicable (and normally within 20 working days of receipt of the written complaint).

Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept by the School.

If the parents are not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with the formal procedure, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3, they must write to the Proprietor setting out in full the details of the complaint normally within 10 working days of receiving the Head's decision, or immediately if the complaint is against the Head.

Parents' letters should give full details of the complaint and enclose all relevant supporting documents. A request for a hearing will normally only be considered if parents have invoked Stage 1 and 2, however if the complaint is against the Head, parents reserve the right to invoke Stage 3 immediately.

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. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Proprietor. The Proprietor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint or as soon as reasonably practicable during school holidays.

Parents may be accompanied to the hearing if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be necessary.

The Panel will review the Head's decision. The Panel will not consider any new complaints that have not been raised as part of the initial complaint. After due consideration of all facts the Panel considers relevant, the Panel will reach a decision on the balance of probabilities as to whether or not the complaint is made out. If the complaint is not made out, the Panel will dismiss the complaint. If the complaint is made out, the Panel will uphold the complaint and may make recommendations.

The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it normally within 10 working days of the panel hearing.

If the Panel deems it necessary, the Proprietor will arrange for the complaint to be further investigated. The Proprietor will inform the parents on the day after the panel hearing and a revised response date will be set.

If for any reason the Panel is unavoidably adjourned and reconvened, the Proprietor will inform the parents that day or no later than the day after the scheduled panel hearing, giving reasons for the adjournment and a new date for the panel hearing will be set.

The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise confirmed in writing to the parents, the Head, the Proprietor and, where relevant, the person complained of. The Panel's decisions, findings and any recommendations will also be made available for inspection on the School premises.

A written record (which will be kept for at least three years) will be kept of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 25(k) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2010 where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

The School will provide ISI, upon request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action taken and conclusion reached.

March 2017

Review Date March 2019

