COMPLAINTS POLICY

Mayfield Preparatory School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents, including parents of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage, or others do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the EYFS.

A complaint will be treated as any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school.

We wish to ensure that:

- People wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- People realise that we listen and take complaints seriously;
- We take action where appropriate;
- We keep a written record of all informal and written complaints for at least 3 years, detailing whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage, following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing; and the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld);
- Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education act 2008 requests access to them;,
- We will provide OFSTED (and ISI), on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specific period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.
- Anonymous complaints will not be responded to, with the exception that if we are faced with an anonymous allegation of child abuse which names both a member of staff and a child, we will handle it in exactly the same way as if we knew the identity of the person making the allegation.

The Procedure for dealing with complaints

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally, normally within 3 working days. The normal time frame will apply for complaints received in term time. Should a complaint be received outside of term time, a clear time frame will be established that will depend on the availability of staff.

If parents have a complaint:

· they should normally contact their son/daughter's Form teacher in person, by telephone, by email or in writing. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department, the Deputy Head or the Head.

· Complaints made directly to a head of department, the Deputy Head or the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form teacher unless the Head of Department, the Deputy Head or the Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

· The Form teacher will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved at this stage or in the event that the Form teacher 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.

If the Complaint is made by someone else:

- The person receiving the complaint will refer it to the Head, or the Deputy Head, who will appoint a member of staff to resolve the complaint if possible.
- A written record will be made by the person resolving the complaint, and this record will be maintained by the Head.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the informal procedure, it will be dealt with under Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

· If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the complaint should be put 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 speak to the person concerned, normally within 3 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.

· 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 the person who has raised the complaint will be informed of

this decision in writing normally within 7 working days. The Head will also give reasons for his decision.

· If the person who raised the complaint is still not satisfied with the decision, the complaint will be dealt with under Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

· If Stage 3 is invoked (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), the matter will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors, 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 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.

When deciding on the selection of the independent panel member, consideration is given to people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to analyzing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force.

Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The Clerk to the Governors, 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 3 working days prior to the hearing.

· The person who has complained 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 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 normally complete within 7 working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the person who complained informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the person complaining, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Confidentiality

The complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Head and those directly involved. The Chair of Governors may also need to be

informed. It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their pupils.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possible also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. You would be fully informed.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file for at least 3 years, we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

Action which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints would be handled confidentially within the school.

Subject to the following sections relating to complaints from parents of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the decision of the Complaints Panel will be final.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Written complaints about the fulfillment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and complainants will then be notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints will be made available to OFSTED and ISI on request.

For parents of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage, you have the further option to make a complaint to OFSTED (and/or ISI) if you believe the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

OFSTED

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Reviewed : June 2017
Review date: June 2020
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