



# **MOORLANDS SCHOOL** **PARENTAL COMPLAINTS POLICY**

## **Introduction**

Moorlands 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 by the school in accordance with this Procedure.

The complaints policy applies to parents of pupils in the school (Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and the EYFS) and parents of past pupils, only if the complaint was an issue raised when the pupil was still registered.

## **What Constitutes a Complaint?**

A 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.

*All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. No pupil will be penalised as a result of a complaint raised by a parent in good faith.*

## **Making a Complaint**

There are three stages in the complaints procedure.

### **Stage 1 – Informal Complaints**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's Form teacher. 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 Key Stage Manager, the Deputy Head or the Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to a Key Stage Manager, the Deputy Head or the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Form teacher unless a Key Stage Manager, the Deputy Head or the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him / her to deal with the

matter personally.

- The Form teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 14 days 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 against the Headmaster, parents should make their complaint directly to the Headmaster.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Complaints**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or speak to the parents concerned, within 10 working days (during term time) of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster 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 Headmaster will also give reasons for his 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 Chairman of the Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The Chairman of the Governors will acknowledge the complaint within three working days (during term time).
- 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 Governors. The Chairman of 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 twenty-one

working days (during term time).

- 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 seven working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents 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 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 facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within fourteen working days of the Hearing.
- 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 and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

### **Recording Complaints**

In accordance with the ISI Commentary on the Regulatory Requirements (September 2016) – Part 7 paragraph 33, the school will maintain a written record of all formal complaints (written) and whether they are resolved at stage 2 or stage 3 of the procedure, and any action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

The school also records informal complaints as good practice.

In relation to these complaints a written record will be kept as to whether the complaint has been resolved or whether the complaint has proceeded to a panel hearing.

The Deputy Head will also keep a record of informal complaints for a management purpose to enable patterns of concern to be monitored.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. 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 2008 Act requests access to them. Findings and recommendations will be kept on the school premises and available for inspection by the Board of Governors and the Headmaster.

**Written complaints relating to the requirements under the statutory framework for the**

## **EYFS**

Moorlands School will provide Ofsted and ISI, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. Complaints regarding the fulfillment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days.

### **Complaints to OFSTED regarding EYFS Service Providers.**

Where parents have complaints specifically about the fulfillment of EYFS requirements they may complain directly to Ofsted. Ofsted may be contacted at: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD. General helpline 0300 123 1231; textphone no. 0161 618 8524 or by email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

### **Complaints to ISI regarding EYFS Service Providers**

Where parents have complaints specifically about the fulfillment of EYFS requirements they may also complain to ISI if they wish. ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net) or by post: Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA.

## **Wider consideration**

It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children. Similarly, pupils at the School should be reassured that they will not be penalised if they or their parents lodge a complaint in good faith.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the School aware of a complaint or of the identity of those involved. This would happen where, for example, a pupil's safety is at risk or where matters need to be referred to the police. In such circumstances, parents would be kept fully informed.

In respect of the timescales outlined above, if a formal written complaint is sent during a School published holiday period when the School office may be closed, the timings may have to be extended accordingly.

As a School, we recognise and acknowledge the entitlement of parents and pupils to complain and wish always to work in the best interests of the pupils in our care, bearing in mind their rights and also duties.

In rare circumstances complainants behave in an unreasonable manner when raising and/or pursuing concerns. The consequences are that the actions of the complainants begin to impact negatively on the day-to-day running of the School and directly or indirectly the overall well-being of the pupils or staff at the School. In these exceptional circumstances the School may take action in accordance with our vexatious complaints policy.

## **Record of Complaints**

Number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during proceeding school year: 1

Author: Mark Langley  
Position: Acting Headmaster  
Date: September 2016  
Review: September 2017