



Complaints Procedure Inclusive of the EYFS

Introduction

Highfield and Brookham Schools have long prided themselves on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents, staff or children do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure. Copies of this Procedure are available from the both schools offices; a copy is on the board outside Brookham School and on the Nursery information board at the school, there is a copy of this Procedure on the Headmaster's Notice Board at Highfield. This Procedure is drawn up with reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and the Independent School's Standards and Regulations.

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 their son/daughter'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 the Deputy Head.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher unless the Deputy Head 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 two working 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.

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 Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will meet the parents concerned, normally within two 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 and keep records of any actions taken by the school and at which stage of the procedure the complaint has been resolved.

- 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 within 5 working days of the complaint. The Head will also give reasons for his/her decision. Records of complaints relating to the EYFS setting will be investigated and complainants notified of the outcome within 28 days. The record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.
- 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 Mr William Mills, who has been appointed by the Directors 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 (see Appendix 1). Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the proprietor. On behalf of the Panel, Mr William Mills will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 7 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 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 is of course allowed but will not normally be necessary. Where a parent wishes to bring legal representation the school will need a week's prior notice of this.
- 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 2 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents 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 parents, the Head, the Directors and, where relevant, the person complained of. Records of the outcomes and of any action taken by the appeal panel will be kept in school for all relevant parties including the head and proprietor to see whether they are upheld or not.

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 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. Records relating to the complaint will be kept for a period of 3 years in line with the EYFS Statutory Guidance.

There have been no formal complaints in the last academic year.

Contact Details:

Headmistress (Brookham) Mrs. Sophie Baber
Telephone Number 01428 722005
Email headteacher@brookhamschool.co.uk

Headmaster (Highfield) Mr. Phillip Evitt
Telephone Number 01428 728000
Email head@highfieldschool.org.uk

Proprietor Mr. William Mills.
Telephone 07980 6378814
Email bill@explorellearning.co.uk

These contact details are secure both in term time and during school holidays.

In the case of wishing to complain to the Independent School's Inspectorate or Ofsted who conduct regular inspections of the school the contact details are as follows.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate
Telephone Number 0207 600 0100
Cap House
9-12 Long Lane
London EC1A 9HA

Ofsted
Telephone 0300 123 4666
Royal Exchange Building
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M27LA

Boarding Parents May contact the National Standards Care Commission in the event that they have any concerns relating to their child's welfare.

Telephone Number 0207 2104850

PGSE/SEWB
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Appendix 1

Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel

The following guidance comes from a letter sent by the DfES to the ISC General Secretary in 2002. Although dated, the advice is extant:

Whilst we do not intend to be prescriptive our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members 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 – might be considered suitable by schools. Schools will have their own views and may well have other suitable suggestions to make.

You asked if it would be acceptable to appoint former governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member. The regulations do not preclude this since the stipulation is that the person must be independent of the management and running of the school. Clearly former governors or staff would not have any such involvement. However, schools should bear in mind that they may be subject to criticism that such people would remain too close to the school and would not be truly independent.