

Hemdean House School



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

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Next Review Spring 2015

DEFINITIONS AND AIMS

The Nature of Complaints

There are three types of complaint.

- The first may just be a concern that is mentioned to a member of staff and dealt with, coming to an amicable solution by both parties.
- A complaint taken to another member of staff, Deputy or the Head would be recorded in the complaints book. The complainant may be asked at this stage if the matter is not resolved whether they wish to make a formal complaint.
- A formal complaint must be put in writing to the Head and then this will be passed to the Chair of governors. If the complaint is about the Head the complainant would proceed to Stage 3.

Complaints may come from parents, pupils, members of the public and staff in this policy they are all called the complainant.

Aims for dealing with a complaint

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine concern or dissatisfaction which needs a response. No complaint from a parent will be allowed to have an adverse effect on their child.

We aim to:

- inform complainant how to make a complaint
- listen carefully and take complaints seriously
- respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous way
- take action where appropriate
- respect the confidentiality of the parties involved as far as possible.

The following procedures

Stage One

Complaints should be resolved as quickly as possible and dealt with seriously. Listening carefully to the complainant and actually asking them to summarise their grievance and give a suggestion as to what they think should be done to resolve the matter can help. If the complaint is against a particular member of staff they feel too compromised to deal with the complaint, it should be referred to another member of staff or the Deputy Head. It may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to the complainant's satisfaction. Notes will be kept in the pupil file.

Stage 2

At this stage the complaint is heard by the Head. The complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been handled at stage one and may wish to pursue their initial complaint. The Head may delegate staff to investigate the complaint and collate information. The complaint will be written in the complaints book with evidence and outcomes and dates. The complainant will be told the information and outcome as soon as possible in writing or in person.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome or the complaint is about the Head proceed to Stage 3. At this point it is a formal complaint.

Stage 3

The complainant needs to write to the Chair of governors giving details of the complaint. The chair will consult with other members of the governing body and reply to the complainant within 5 working days.

If the matter is not settled the Chair will convene a meeting with the Head if appropriate, and other members of the governing body to discuss the matter and try to resolve the complaint. This may take up to 15 working days. The response will be sent to the complainant.

If the matter is still not resolved at this point the complainant may request a meeting with the Chair and the Head, if appropriate, and at least two other members of the governing body. They may wish to bring a friend to support them. It will establish the facts and make recommendations that will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint is being taken seriously.

The panel must hear the appeal in an independent and impartial manner. No governor may sit on the panel if they have prior involvement in the complaint or the circumstances surrounding it. The panel should be sensitive to issues of race, gender and religious affiliation. One member of the panel should be independent of managing and running the school.

The aim of the hearing, held in private, will be to try to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. This may not always be possible.

The panel will try to be as welcoming as possible to the complainant, especially if it is a child.

The governors should all be made aware of the complaints procedure.

The hearing should be as informal as possible. A format for the meeting should be worked out in advance giving both parties the right to give evidence and ask and answer questions.

The chair would

- set the date and time convenient for all parties
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive
- allow the complainant to explain their complaint and produce witnesses
- allow the Head Teacher or chair to ask questions and explain the school's course of action
- allow the complainant to ask questions.
- Sum up the complaint
- ensure both parties leave while the panel make their decision
- record the proceedings and keep written accounts confidential.

- Notify all parties of the panel's decision in writing within 20 working days.

The panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that a problem of a similar nature does not occur again

The chair of the panel needs to ensure the complainant is notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response, within 20 working days. The letter needs to explain if there are any further rights to appeal and if so to whom they need to be addressed.