



**HawleyHurst School
Blackwater, Camberley
Surrey**

**Parents' Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
2018/19**

There were 0 Level 3 complaints registered at the school in the
Academic Year 2017/18

Reviewed March 2018
Next Review August 2018

Complaints Procedure

This policy applies to all children, including those in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) who are on role at the school. It does not apply to prospective students or those who have left the school unless the complaint was lodged during the time when the student was registered at the school. This complaints policy and procedure is available to parents on the school website or as a hard copy directly from the school.

Introduction:

HawleyHurst prides itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint or wish to appeal against a decision, they can expect it to be taken very seriously and treated in accordance with this Procedure.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution:

For pupils in Years 7-13

- If parents have a complaint or concern they should normally contact their son/daughter's Tutor initially. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Deputy Headteacher Pastoral as is appropriate.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Headteacher Pastoral will usually be referred to the relevant Tutor unless he/she deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The Tutor will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. A copy of this will be submitted to the Deputy Headteacher on the day the complaint is received (for monitoring purposes). Should the matter not be resolved within **5 working days**, or in the event that the Tutor/Deputy Headteacher Pastoral and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint or appeal in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

For EYFS pupils and pupils in Years 1-6:

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's class teacher initially. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the teacher with responsibility for EYFS or the Prep School.
- The class teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. A copy of this will be submitted to the Headteacher of Prep School on the day the complaint is received (for monitoring purposes). Should the matter not be resolved within **5 working days**, or in the event that the Class teacher/ the teacher with responsibility for the Pre-Prep; Prep or EYFS 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.
- Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution - Preliminary Stage:

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should **put their complaint in writing** to the Principal. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Principal will meet the parents/guardian concerned, normally **within 10 working days** of receiving the complaint in the senior school and within **7 working days** of receipt of the written complaint for EYFS – Y6 to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations.
- The Principal will **keep written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Principal is satisfied that, as 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 Principal will also give reasons for their decision.
- Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the school will endeavour to complete Stage two within a further **10 working days** (in the Senior School) and a further **5 working days** (in EYFS and Prep School). In the event that the matter is complex and requires more time, a formal resolution must be completed within **15 working days** (in the Senior School) and **10 working days** (in the EYFS and Junior School). Parents will be informed if the matter is deemed to be complex.

If parents/guardians are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3. In the event that the complaint relates to the exclusion of a child, the Principal may suspend the child pending the outcome of the complaints procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing:

- A written appeal must be lodged by the parent within **7 working days** of the formal resolution (of Stage 2) being communicated to the parent. Any appeal can only be in relation to the formal resolution communicated (of stage 2); it cannot be an amendment of the facts of the original complaint.
- If a parent is not satisfied with a school's response (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) and indicates a wish to continue to Stage 3, the panel hearing will go ahead unless the parent indicates he or she is now satisfied and does not wish to proceed further.
- If necessary, the Appeals Panel will consider the parent's complaint in absentia and issue findings on the substance of the complaint, thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion.

- Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by and on behalf of the Proprietor, and 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 – they will be people who have held positions of responsibility used to taking decisions from a balanced position e.g. civil servants; business people; members of the clergy; heads or senior members of staff from other schools; people with a legal background; retired members of public services e.g. police. Panel members will be issued with clear guidance as to the process and a direction to reach final decisions within the specified timescale.
- The Proprietor, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint or appeal and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practical and normally within **10 working days** of Stage 3 being invoked (in the Senior School) and within **5 working days** of Stage 3 being invoked (for EYFS and Junior School pupils).
- The requirement for the panel to proceed does not prevent the school from accommodating parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning panel composition.
- 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 **2 days** prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative or friend parents cannot insist on legal representation at the hearing.
- The school keeps a written record of all complaints or appeals for three years, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. Parents/guardians can be assured that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential and subject to the Data Protection Act except where the Secretary of State; the DfE or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint or appeal immediately without the need for further investigation. The Panel's findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant, and where relevant the person complained about, within 5 working days of the hearing. In addition a copy of the findings will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Principal. The record of complaints will detail what actions were taken (regardless of whether or not the complaint was upheld) and whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

- If the school has been unsuccessful in resolving a parent's complaint via their complaints procedure and have notified the parent in writing that this is the case, the parent will be advised of the Alternative Dispute Resolution service and whether it is the school's intention is to use this process in this particular instance.

Additional Information

- **Complaints during the holidays** – where a complaint is received during or near to the commencement of the school holiday period the school may out of necessity need 28 working days to resolve the complaint.
- **Complaints regarding the Principal** – parents/guardians should write, meet or speak to her directly. Should they be dissatisfied with the Principal’s response then they should proceed to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure.
- **Complaints regarding admissions** - parents/guardians should write, meet or speak to her directly. Should they be dissatisfied with the Principal’s response then they should proceed to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure.
- **Complaints about Financial Matters** – should parents/guardians have any concerns, no matter how small, regarding the payment of fees etc the Bursar should be contacted in the first instant. Should the matter not be resolved then the matter should be brought to the Principal. In the event of the issues not being resolved at these two levels the concern should be put in writing to the Directors. Complaints will be dealt with at the next scheduled meeting following the receipt of the written complaint regarding fees. The Directors will respond to the complaint within **5 working days** of their decision.

On request the school provides Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) with a record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

In the case of a complaint brought about by an EYFS parent, the school undertakes to complete its investigations and reach a solution within 28 working days of the formal meeting at Stage 2 unless the matter is found to be very complex. In that instance, the matter can take up to a further 7 working days. This will be monitored by the Headteacher.

A copy of the teacher’s report of the complaint will be received by them when the original complaint is made. If parents are dissatisfied with the procedure at any point of the investigation or feel that intervention at a higher level is appropriate, parents may lodge a complaint with Ofsted regarding EYFS (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-us> - enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Telephone: 0300 1234 234) and/or ISI (www.isi.net).

They are:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD
General Helpline 0300 123 1231
Text/phone 0161 618 8524

Independent Schools Inspectorate
Ground Floor
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London EC1A 9HA

Phone 020 7600 0100

Current Post Holders

Director/Principal – Ms V Smit

Reviewed: March 2018

This policy must be reviewed no later than: August 2019

Academic Year 2016/17

There were 4 Level 3 complaints investigated by the school.