



Complaints Procedure

Person responsible	Head
Last update	June 2018
Frequency of Review	Annual
Date of last review by Governors	June 2018
Date of next review by Governors	June 2019

This policy applies equally to the EYFS (Reception Class), Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 as taught at Bute House.

Annual recording of formal complaints is noted for the previous five years. Records of formal complaints prior to that are summarised.

Summary

Formal complaints prior to 2012 NONE

Annual Record from 2010/11

Number of formal complaints in 2012/13 NONE

Number of formal complaints in 2013/14 NONE

Number of formal complaints in 2014/15 NONE

Number of formal complaints in 2015/16 NONE

Number of formal complaints in 2016/17 NONE

Number of formal complaints in 2017 to date (June 2018) NONE

Information pertaining to complaints received is retained in the Complaints File which is held in the Office.

In accordance with wording changes made in January 2015, anything about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the School is a complaint and in the scope of the Complaints Procedure.

Introduction

The 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.

Parents are encouraged to inform us of any complaints and the access to staff, the Heads of Department and Phase as well as the Deputy Heads are, in reality, available on a daily basis as part of our Open Door policy, in order that these issues or concerns can be resolved promptly. In addition, the Head is available as part of the Open Door policy wherever practicable and this willingness to meet parents promptly is something we believe underpins our commitment to successfully addressing issues and providing the highest quality care and service to our pupils and parents.

The time scales set out in the procedure below are therefore indicative of the maximum amount of time and, in reality, complaints are normally dealt with much more quickly.

If complaints are raised during the school holidays, both electronic and standard mail are routinely dealt with so that senior staff, including the Head, Deputy Head, Bursar and Assistant Heads will make themselves available to deal with the complaint in accordance with the policy timescales.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

1. It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
2. If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their daughter's Form Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. The Form Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints, the date on which they were received and the discussions which took place. These notes are kept on Teacherlink in the Pupil Pastoral Notes. The Heads of Phase are made aware of these, even in the usual event of the concern or complaint having been resolved. Should the matter not be resolved within fourteen days (maximum), or in the event that the Form Teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised to speak to the Head of Phase or the Pastoral or Academic Assistant Heads, depending on the nature of the complaint.
3. If the parent wishes for specific reasons to contact the Head of Phase (Lower School, Middle School or Upper School) in the first instance, this is permissible, the complaint will be recorded as above, the relevant members of staff will be informed and asked for their views and the Pastoral and Academic Assistant Heads informed. The matter must be resolved within fourteen days.
4. Complaints made directly to the Heads of Department or Phase will usually require discussion with the relevant Form Teacher or subject teacher, as outlined above, unless the Heads of Department or Phase deem it appropriate for *[him/her]* to deal with the matter personally. However, in these instances, the Assistant Heads will be informed and written notes kept on Teacherlink in Pupil Pastoral notes.
5. If there is still no satisfactory conclusion, then parents will be advised to write to the Deputy Head as soon as possible in order to put their complaint in writing and a meeting with the Deputy Head will be arranged as soon as is practicable and within seven days in order for the issue to be resolved; the Deputy Head will remind parents at this stage of their right to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure. An opportunity to meet with the Head is also offered at this stage.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

If no resolution has been reached, a meeting with the Head and parents will take place and, as part of the appropriate course of action considered by the Head, further investigations and discussions with staff and pupils may be required. This will take no longer than seven days. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

6. 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. The Head will also give reasons for her decision. Copies of any correspondence will be kept in the pupil's file and in the Complaints File. The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. These will be kept in the Parental Complaints folder, sub-section Formal Complaints.
7. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure. For compliance purposes, a panel hearing will take place even if the parent indicates later that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. The panel hearing will, therefore, proceed notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not

to attend. If necessary, the panel will consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion. The requirement for the panel to proceed does not prevent the school from accommodating parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning panel composition.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

8. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Bursar, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
9. The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel, appointed by the Governors, for consideration. The Panel will consist of two Governors who are independent of the complaint and another independent person who is not involved in the management and running of the school, with appropriate background and experience; see Appendix 1. The Bursar, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.
10. 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 three working days prior to the hearing.
11. The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Parents are not entitled to insist on legal representation at a hearing.
12. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
13. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. The Bursar will ensure that access to a member of staff or any documentation required for the panel to complete this investigation is available immediately. 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 days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents on the day on which it reaches its decision, 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 Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept for three years and confidentially except insofar as is required of the school by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act, requests access to them. The School maintains a Complaints File which includes all correspondence and notes of meetings relating to Formal and Informal complaint in order that patterns of concern can be monitored.

13.1.1 The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. The record will specify i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; ii) action taking by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). A summary of the issues discussed will be written at the same time as the letter is sent to parents of the final outcome. This will be kept in the Complaints File under the 'Informal Complaints' section as part of the monitoring procedures.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Any written complaint concerning a child in the Early Years Foundation Stage (our Reception class) about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. A record of the complaint will be made available to OFSTED and ISI on request.

Parents have the right to contact Independent Schools Inspectorate (tel 020 7600 0100) First Floor, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA, or to **info@isi.net** or OFSTED on 08456 404045 if they believe the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements. The School must inform parents if they are to be inspected by Ofsted and supply parents with a copy of the report post inspection (ISSR 32(1)(d) and 33.

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