



Spring Grove School

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This Policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the EYFS.

INTRODUCTION

Spring Grove 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 with care and in accordance with this procedure. Spring Grove School makes its complaints procedure and the number of formal complaints in the previous school year available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and also available from the school office

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.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.

TIMEFRAME FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 7 - 14 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 14 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

For any complaints received from parents/carers of EYFS pupils, complainants will be informed of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of having received the written complaint.

RECORDING COMPLAINTS

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing and the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an Inspection in Section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

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 Head.
- Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form teacher unless the 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 7 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, however, the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chairman of Governors.
- A written record will be maintained of any complaints from parents/carers of pupils in the EYFS and their outcome will be maintained.

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 7 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.
- 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 his/her decision.
- If the complaint is against the Head, Stage 2 of this procedure will be conducted by the Chair of Governors.
- 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 Bursar (The Convenor) who has been appointed by the Governors 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 and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 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 normally not later than 7 days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint 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 make findings and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chairman of governors and the Head.

Formal Complaints received during the academic year 2013/14 - 1.

- The school will provide OFSTED (and ISI) on request with the record of complaints. If the parents believe that the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements they may contact OFSTED and or ISI directly
- COMPLAINTS TO OFSTED / ISI REGARDING EYFS SERVICE PROVIDERS: Parents may also complain directly to Ofsted / ISI if they wish. The contact details for Ofsted / ISI with regards to a complaint are:

Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate,

Store St, Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 4666

www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents

ISI

9-12 Long Lane

CAP House

London

EC1A 9HA

NOTES

Spring Grove School will provide inspectors, 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. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.

APPENDIX

Complaints Procedure - Independent Member of the Panel

The following guidance comes from a letter sent by the DfE 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.”

This was expanded in the DfE's Registration of Independent Schools Information Pack of July 2011:

Whilst we do not wish to be prescriptive about who schools should appoint as an independent person our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered by schools. Schools will of course have their own views.

Bill Jones
Headmaster
June 2015