

Hulme Hall Grammar School



Complaints Policy and Procedure

Report	Complaints
Approval Body	Full Board
Date Reviewed	December 2022
Review Schedule	Bi-Annual
Next Review due	December 2024

This is a Whole School Policy and also refers to the Early Years Foundation Stage (Pre-School).

Aims

The School is an open community and aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be discussed and then resolved.

If parents do have a complaint, it should be dealt with in accordance with this policy and procedure. All complaints will be handled sensitively and as quickly as possible.

A copy of this policy and procedure is available on the School website and upon request to parents of current pupils at the school and parents of former pupils – if they raised a complaint during the time that their son / daughter attended the School. (For the purpose of this policy, the term parents will also include guardians and / or carers who have parental responsibility for a pupil at the school).

What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with, or concern about, a real or perceived problem.

A complaint may be made if a parent thinks that the school has, for example:

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something that it should have done
- Acted unfairly.

A complaint may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department, about an individual member of staff or about a specific incident.

All complaints will be handled seriously, as an unresolved issue may become a festering dispute or even a confrontation. Our procedure aims to handle both formal complaints and the informal raising of concerns.

The procedure outlined below does not apply to complaints arising from the decision by the Headmaster to permanently exclude a child from the School. This is dealt with under the Behaviour and Discipline Policy and Exclusions and Appeal Procedure, both of which can be found on the School website.

If parents have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with the following three stage procedure:

Stage 1: Informal Complaint Procedure

Unless the matter is especially pressing or is likely to be of significant concern to the parent, the pupil, and / or the School, parents are requested to initially adopt the informal complaints procedure, which is designed to bring about a swift resolution to the complaint. It is hoped that the majority of complaints can be handled quickly and informally in this way:

- If parents have a complaint, they should initially raise it with their child's form teacher either verbally or in writing. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parent's satisfaction

- If the form teacher is unable to resolve the issue alone, they may consult with the relevant subject teacher, Key Stage Manager or another member of SLT to assist with the resolution of the complaint
- Complaints at this stage made directly to a member of the SLT or the Headmaster may be passed down to the relevant form teacher, depending on the nature and severity of the complaint, unless the member of SLT or the Headmaster deem it appropriate to deal with the issue personally
- A record of all concerns or complaints dealt with under this stage of the procedure will be kept on the School Management Information System (MIS) and will include the date on which the complaint was received, a brief statement of the issue, the location of any correspondence (e.g. notes of telephone calls or meetings) relating to the issue and a note on how the issue was resolved
- Complaints made under Stage 1 of this procedure should normally be resolved within seven working days
- If staff are unable to reach a satisfactory resolution at this stage of the process, parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint, in writing, under Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Procedure

If the informal procedure fails to produce an outcome that satisfies the parents, or the parents feel the issue is serious enough to disregard the informal procedure, the parents can proceed to the formal complaints stage:

- The parents must put their complaint in writing and send it addressed to the Headmaster
- In most cases the Headmaster will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within seven working days, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution may be reached at this stage
- Alternatively, it may be necessary for the Headmaster to conduct further investigations into the matter
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will provide the written reasons for his decision within seven working days of the meeting / call mentioned above having taken place
- The Headmaster will also explain to the parents their right to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure and what that entails
- The Headmaster will keep a record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, including whether the complaint is resolved at this formal stage or proceeds to a panel hearing, and the action that has been taken by the School as a result of the complaint (whether it was upheld or not)
- The complaint will be noted in the Complaints Log, which will record all complaints proceeding to Stages 2 and / or 3 of this procedure
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster or relating to a sanction / school procedure endorsed by him, the parent should write to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors should adopt the procedure noted above.

Stage 3: Complaints Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 of this procedure, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution at the formal stage (Stage 2), they must give notice in writing to the Clerk to the Governors (the Business Manager) setting out their grounds for requesting a Complaints Panel Hearing. This notice must be given within seven working days of receiving the decision set out in Stage 2 above.

Upon receiving this notice, the Governing Body shall establish a Complaints Panel. This shall be chaired by a Governor (referred to as the 'Chair'), but who is not the Chair of Governors.

If the 'Chair' is not satisfied that the Formal Procedure Stage (Stage 2) has been fully exhausted, he / she can decide, in his / her discretion, to refuse to accept the complaint and refer it back to the Headmaster, unless the complaint is about the Headmaster.

If the 'Chair' decides to deal with the complaint, the following procedure shall apply:

- The Complaints Panel will consist of not less than 3 people, none of whom are directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and at least one of whom is totally independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governors
- The Panel will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and ask if the parent wishes to provide any further information or documents about the complaint. Alternatively, the Panel may ask for further information or documents to be provided in advance of the hearing. The Panel will also ask the parent if there are any dates when the parents will be unable to attend a Panel Hearing to present the complaint
- On receiving the parent's response, the panel shall set a hearing date which shall take place within ten working days or as soon as possible thereafter. The parent shall receive not less than three working days' notice of the hearing
- Copies of all documents will be provided by the Panel to the parent and the Headmaster not less than three working days before the hearing
- The parent is entitled to attend the hearing and be accompanied by a friend or companion, although not by legal representation
- The Headmaster, or person whose decision the Panel is reviewing, is entitled to be present and may be accompanied as above
- After hearing the complaint and asking any questions that it deems necessary, the Panel shall retire to consider its decision. Where possible, it is hoped that an immediate decision can be reached, although it is possible that the Panel may need to undertake further investigation
- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and accordingly decide whether to:
 - a. Dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part
 - b. Uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part
 - c. Make any recommendations
- A decision should be reached and communicated in writing to the parents within ten working days of the Panel Hearing taking place. This communication, including any reasons for it and any recommendations, if any, shall be provided to the parents, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of
- A copy of the findings will be available on the School premises for inspection by the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster
- The Complaints Panel's decision shall be final
- As with Stage 2 of this procedure, the Headmaster will keep a record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint and the action that has been taken by the School as a result of the complaint (whether it was upheld or not)
- The complaint will be noted in the Complaints Log, which will record all complaints proceeding to Stages 2 and / or 3 of this procedure.

Confidentiality

The School shall ensure that all complaints, whether formal or informal, are treated sensitively and confidentially, save where information must be provided to an Inspector or by virtue of any legal obligation.

In keeping with the School's aim of openness and fairness, it is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children and similarly that complaints raised by pupils should not rebound adversely on them or on other pupils.

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 Education and Skills Act 2008, requests access to them.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints may arise where there is no indication of either name or address, or where the complainants say that they do not wish to be identified. They may come from parents or members of the public.

Complaints from the public about the behaviour of a group of pupils may be dealt with on a general basis, with reminders about the School's expectations.

Parents should be encouraged to provide their names and should be given reassurance on the issue of confidentiality. If they persist in wishing to remain anonymous, it is at the Headmaster's discretion as to what action, if any, should be taken, depending upon the nature of the complaint.

Anonymous complaints about child abuse will be dealt with under the guidelines set out in the School's Safeguarding Policy.

Evaluation of the Complaints Procedure

It is important for the school to learn from any complaints, whether justified or not, in order to avoid repetition in the future. The Governors should monitor the complaints procedure to ensure that such issues are handled properly.

The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring the smooth running of these procedures, including adherence to the various timeframes and that parents are content with these procedures.

Early Years Foundation Stage (Pre-School)

- Parents of EYFS children should follow the same three stage complaints procedure as outlined above
- Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated by the Head of Pre-School and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days
- The record of the complaint is kept for at least three years
- Parents can make a complaint to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) (and / or Ofsted) if they feel the School is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

An individual complaint should be made through the School's complaints procedure or through ISI or Ofsted if it is in relation to EYFS.

ISI, Cap House, 9 – 12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA - Tel: 020 7600 0100. www.isi.net
e-mail: info@isi.net or concerns@isi.net

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD - Tel: 030 0123 1231. www.ofsted.gov.uk
e-mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The Number of Complaints

The number of Stage 2 complaints in the 2020/21 academic year was 0.

The number of Stage 3 complaints in the 2020/21 academic year was 0.

The number of Stage 2 complaints in the 2021/22 academic year was 1.

The number of Stage 3 complaints in the 2021/22 academic year was 0.



Headmaster: Mr D Grierson BA, MA (Econ)
Hulme Hall Grammar School, Beech Avenue, Stockport, SK3 8HA
Phone: 0161 485 3524
Email: secretary@hulmehallschool.org
Hulme Hall Educational Trust (Registered Charity No: 525931)



www.hulmehallschool.org
