



# Complaints Procedure

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*Dr Steve Bailey*  
*Headmaster*  
*Reviewed November 2018*

**This policy applies to all pupils of Twyford School, including those in the Early Years  
Foundation Stage**

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### 1. Availability

This policy is provided to parents, staff and pupils in the following ways: via the School website, in the Parents' Handbook, on the Staff intranet, and on request an electronic version or a printed copy may be obtained from the School Office. Pupils who are boarders are specifically made aware of this policy, and of how they or their parents may contact Ofsted/ISI regarding any complaints they may have about boarding welfare. Parents of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage may also make a complaint to Ofsted/ISI if they believe the School is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

### 2. Introduction

The School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. The School's aims are concerned with meeting the needs of the pupils, parents and other stakeholders. Constant communication and feedback are crucial in monitoring standards and improving provision. Those who have complaints should feel these can be voiced and that they will be taken seriously. There is no distinction in practice between a concern and a complaint; both terms reflect an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response from the school - either to explain its position or to put right what may be wrong. We will seek to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible. A complaint is likely to arise when there are issues of physical or emotional well-being and security at stake, or when the school's stated aims or values are being ignored. A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint. If parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure. Investigations will be thorough, fair and completed in a reasonable time-frame. The complainant may not be entitled to all information regarding the investigation, but will be kept informed of the process and of the decisions reached.

A complaint may be made by parents, pupils or staff. The School also has a 'whistle blowing policy' that is detailed in the Staff Handbook.

Where a complaint is made by a pupil (whether a boarder or a day pupil), particular attention will be paid to ensuring that the complaint is either resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils, without unreasonable delay. Pupils will never be penalised for making a complaint in good faith ('whistleblowing').

The timescales indicated in the procedures below should allow for swift resolution of complaints. There will be some circumstances in which the normal timescales are affected by issues that delay resolution; namely school holidays and other factors. It is intended that all issues will be resolved within 28 days of the first complaint being made.

#### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact the most appropriate member of staff, such as their son/daughter's form teacher or tutor, Head of Years 3 & 4, or Head of Years 5 & 6, a Head of Department, or for boarding matters, the Head of Boarding or Resident Matron. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff contacted cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be

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necessary for him/her to consult the Second Master, the Head of Teaching and Learning or the Director of Studies. In the Pre-Prep complaints should be raised with the class teacher in the first instance.

- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, Head of Teaching and Learning, Second Master or the Director of Studies (or Head of Pre-Prep for younger children) will usually be referred back to the relevant form teacher, tutor or the Head of Boarding unless the more senior member of staff deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally without it going through the normal channels.
- The member of staff who is dealing with the matter will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days or in the event that the member of staff 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. A note should be kept of the date a resolution was reached and the agreed nature of this, so as to help prevent the process from drifting into a longer timeframe.
- Sometimes, parents will raise a concern informally with the Headmaster direct. As above, he may feel that this should be referred back to the relevant form teacher, tutor, Head of Years 3 & 4, or Head of Years 5 & 6, Head of Department or the Head of Boarding. But there will certainly be occasions when the Headmaster feels it is appropriate to resolve the issue informally himself without the need for referral. This will still be under the Stage 1 process of informal resolution. It is only when/if the parents are not satisfied with the outcome that they should proceed to Stage 2 of this Procedure.

### **3. 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 Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within five working 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 Headmaster to carry out further investigations, and he will inform the complainants of this. These investigations should take no longer than seven days in normal term time.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Written records will identify those complaints that relate to boarding provision.
- Once the Headmaster 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 Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision. A note will also be kept of when a final outcome was reached.

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- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### **4. 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 Convenor, who will be 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 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. The other two Panel members will be Governors. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governing Body. The Panel 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 21 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 not later than 5 days prior to the hearing.
- The complainant(s) may be accompanied to the panel hearing if they wish.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately 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 reach a decision and may make findings and recommendations, within 5 working days of the Panel meeting.
- A copy of those findings and recommendations will be –
  - (i) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about;
  - (ii) made available for inspection on the school premises by the Chairman of Governors and the Headmaster
- The complainant(s) will have the right of appeal to a higher authority, namely Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), whose contact details are given at the end of this policy.

### **5. Confidentiality**

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. 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 2008 Act requests access to them; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

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### 6. **Written records and retention**

- A written record is kept of all complaints that reach the formal stage (stage 2 above), and of whether they are resolved at that stage or proceed to a panel. A record will also be kept of what action is taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) and the date on which a final outcome was reached. All records of complaints will be kept for a minimum of three years. Parents may request to know the number of complaints made during the previous academic year. The school will provide on request to Ofsted and ISI, a written record of all complaints made during a specified period and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint.

Parents may ask the Headmaster for the number of complaints received at the formal and panel stage during the preceding academic year.

*In addition to the Complaints Procedure detailed above, parents may also make a complaint to either the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) or, for complaints concerning boarding provision or the Early Years Foundation Stage, to Ofsted. This includes parents appealing against a decision made by the school about their complaint.*

*Contact details:*

Independent Schools Inspectorate.

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

Telephone: 020 7600 0100 Fax: 020 7776 8849 Email: see Website: [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)

Ofsted.

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Telephone: 03001231231 Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)