



HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

Policy

Holmewood House has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided for its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated seriously by the School in accordance with this policy, which has been drawn up having regard to *Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools*. It is on our website and is obtainable from the School Office on request. This Policy applies to children in the EYFS as well as children from Year One to Year Eight (including children attending the After School Owls club.)

Any parental complaint about a matter of School policy or administration affecting their children must be made in accordance with the following procedure except one regarding a decision to expel or remove a pupil, which is subject to a Governors' Review as set out in the Parent Contract. Every reasonable complaint shall receive fair and proper consideration and a timely response.

Procedure

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 straight away by this means to the parent's satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the appropriate head of department or the Deputy Head as appropriate. Concerns relating to child protection must be referred directly to the Head.
- Concerns relating directly to the Head must be referred to the Chair of Governors who can be contacted through the school office 01892 860000 or by email admin@holewoodhouse.co.uk
- Complaints made directly to the Head of Department (e.g. Pre-Prep, Lower or Upper School) or the Deputy Head will usually be referred to the relevant teacher for a written response unless the line manager concerned deems it

- appropriate to deal with the matter personally. In this event the line manager will attempt to resolve the matter in five working days or as soon as is practicable.
- The relevant teacher will make a written record of all complaints and concerns, and the date on which they were received. Should a matter not be resolved within five working days, or in the event that the relevant teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

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, who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will meet with or speak to the parents concerned, within 48 hours 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. These will be completed within seven working days or as soon as is practicable.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that 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 give reasons for her decision.
- The written decision will be issued within fourteen days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the Head will write to the parents within the fourteen-day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why he is unable to issue his decision and informing the parents when he will do so, which will be within twenty-eight days of receipt of the complaint in any event.
- If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they may take the opportunity to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- Where a parent is not satisfied with the school's response to their complaint at stage two and indicates a wish to continue to stage three, the panel should go ahead unless the parent later indicates he or she is now satisfied and does not wish to proceed further.
- A panel hearing should therefore, proceed notwithstanding that a parent may subsequently decide not to attend.
- If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in absentia 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

- Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents seek to invoke Stage 3 of this procedure, they are to write to the Head informing him of their decision to do so within 7 days, whereupon the matter will be referred to a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Chairman of Governors.
- The panel will consist of at least three persons who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One of these will be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The complaint will be acknowledged on behalf of the panel and a hearing scheduled to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.
- If the convener of the panel and/or the panel members deems it necessary, they may require (in writing) that further particulars of the complaint or any other related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Any such particulars received within five days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it may not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not be appropriate.
- If possible, the panel will resolve the parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However, should the panel decide that further investigation is required, the panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded. The panel will reconvene and, after due deliberation, will reach a decision and may make recommendations. This procedure will be completed within 14 working days of the first hearing whenever possible but within 28 working days in any event unless otherwise agreed with the parents. The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision together with the reasons. The decision of the panel will be final.
- The panel's findings and any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the Head, Chairman of Governors and, where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual.
- The findings and recommendations will also be made available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Head.
- Provision will be made for a written record to be kept of all complaints, and of whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or if they proceeded to a panel hearing.
- A written record will also be kept of any action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).
- 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 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.
- A record of complaints will be kept for three years.
- With regard to complaints relating to the School's Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception): written complaints about the fulfillment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome

- of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints must be made available to ISI on request.
- Should parents wish to do so, complaints should be made to the Independent School Inspectorate : ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate), CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, and London EC1A Tel: 020 7600 0100 Fax 020 7776 8849
 - The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted on request: Clive House, 70 Petty France, London SW1H 9EX · 0300 013 0415

One complaint was registered under the formal procedure during the academic year 2022 - 2023

Person responsible for the Complaints Policy and Procedure: The Head

Revised: September 2023