



## The Schools at Somerhill

# Parental Complaints Procedure Policy

**Policy reviewed: September 2010**

**Next review due: September 2011**

### Introduction

The school prides 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 (If at any stage parents wish to withdraw the complaint, this should be done in writing).

### 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 the teacher to consult with others including the Head.
- Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form teacher unless the Head deems it appropriate for it to be dealt with personally.
- The Form teacher will make a **written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received**. In the event that the Form 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, with a clear statement that they are making a formal complaint. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint together with the Principal, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will speak to the parents concerned, normally **within two 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 the decision.

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

### **Stage 3 – Reference to Principal**

- Any unresolved complaint will at this stage be formally reviewed by the Principal.

### **Stage 4 – Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 4 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to an appointed Governor 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, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.* Each of the panel members shall be instructed by the **appointed Governor**, who, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally **within seven working days**.
- If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter may be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than one day prior to the hearing.
- **The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person.** This may be a relative, teacher or friend. This hearing is not a legal meeting and so legal representation is not appropriate.
- 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 recommendations, which it shall complete **within seven working days of the hearing. The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. 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 confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.**

Whilst it is not anticipated that pupils invoke this procedure there is the legal provision for this should any matter arise.

EYFS parents have the right to make complaints to Ofsted and/or ISI and the contact details are as listed below:

Ofsted: Tel 08456 014772 if you want to make a complaint or have a concern about any service Ofsted inspects or regulates (08.00 to 18.00)

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

Independent Schools Inspectorate  
CAP House  
9 - 12 Long Lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA

**Telephone 020 7600 0100**  
Fax 020 7776 8849