



Child Protection: Complaints Policy and Procedure

A Whole-School policy including the EYFS

Responsible:	Michael Matthews (Deputy Head (Pastoral), DSL)
Approved by:	Fergus Llewellyn (Headmaster, DDSL)
Last reviewed:	December 2023
Next review:	December 2024
Reviewed by the main board of Governors and signed by the Chairman annually. Last Review:	Main Board Meeting Dec 2023
Next reviewed by Governors	Main Board Meeting Mar 2024
Reviewed annually or with government change.	

Introduction

Cumnor House Sussex prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure. As required by the Independent School Inspectorate (ISI) Regulatory Requirements and The Department for Education Statutory Guidance '**Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023**', Cumnor House Sussex ensures that this complaints procedure is 'made available free of charge to all parents of pupils', meaning current registered pupils, on the school's website and in the school office during the school day. Parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils who request this document are made aware that it is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available.

What is a complaint?

Cumnor House does not distinguish between 'concerns' and 'complaints'. Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school will be treated in accordance with the complaints procedure. Please note that there is a separate policy for behaviour, sanctions and exclusions which is available on the school website and from the school office. However, exclusion appeals follow the same process as the hearing of complaints.

To whom does the complaints policy apply?

The complaints procedure applies to parents of current pupils and to past pupils if the complaint was raised when the pupil was still registered.

Complaints Procedure Process

The complaints procedure has three stages, to be covered within a period of 61 days excluding school holidays and weekends, between the complaint being made and the final resolution. When complaints are raised in writing in relation to the EYFS, Stage 2 of the procedure will be completed within 28 days of receiving the complaint.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution (Resolution within 5 working days)

- It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally
- If parents have a complaint, they should contact their son/daughter's Form Teacher, Tutor or Houseparent. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher, Tutor or Houseparent cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Headmaster
- Complaints made directly to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher or Tutor or Head of Year, unless the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally
- The Form Teacher, Tutor or Houseparent will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 5 working days or in the event that the Form Teacher, Tutor or Houseparent and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory

resolution, parents will then be advised to proceed with their complaint **in writing**, in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure

- Although all formal complaints will be made in writing, this does not mean that the formal stage is automatically triggered when a concern is expressed in writing, for example, by email. Complaints will usually only progress to the formal stage after first being considered at the preliminary stage, and only then if the complainant intends to escalate a matter to the formal stage

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (Resolution within 28 working days)

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. **Within 2 working days of receiving the written complaint, the Headmaster will acknowledge the complaint, provide a date for an initial meeting with the parents and decide, after considering the details, the appropriate course of action to take**
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or talk to the parents concerned, within 10 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
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established and the complaint has been fully investigated, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of the outcome of this investigation in writing within **28 working days of receiving the complaint**. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure within **7 working days** of receiving the outcome of the investigation

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing: (Resolution within 21 working days)

- Where the parent is not satisfied with the School's response to Stage 2, and indicates a wish to continue to stage 3, for compliance purposes a panel hearing should take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. The panel hearing should, therefore, proceed notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend. If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence 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
- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they must inform the Chair of Governors in writing. The Chair of Governors will refer the complainants to a Convenor, appointed by the Governors. This is usually the Governor for Safeguarding but it may be an appropriate other, such as a former Head or Civil Servant

- 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 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 **15** working 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 **10** working days prior to the hearing
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. For example, this may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation is not considered 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 reach a decision and may make recommendations
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within **6** working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations will be:
 - (i) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about
 - (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster
- A written record will be kept of all complaints and action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld), whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing
- Records of informal complaints will be kept for management purposes to enable patterns of concern to be monitored
- The school's written record of complaints identifies those complaints relating to boarding provision, and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)
- Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be taken seriously and treated 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
- Pupils and boarders are encouraged to follow the guidance on "what to do if you are feeling unhappy" which is displayed throughout the school. Pupils will not be penalised for making a complaint

WRITTEN COMPLAINTS RELATING TO REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR
THE EYFS:

- Written complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within **28 days**
- The record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request
- Cumnor House Sussex will notify parents about an inspection once they have been notified. Parents of pupils in the EYFS setting will be sent a copy of the final inspection report once it has been provided to the school
- Contact:

Ofsted	ISI
Piccadilly Gate	Ground Floor
Store Street	CAP House
Manchester	9-12 Long Lane
M1 2WD	London, EC1A 9HA
General Helpline 0300 123 1231	Tel. 020 76000100

CORRESPONDENCE TO THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Chair of Governors
Cumnor House Sussex
London Road
Danehill
HAYWARDS HEATH
RH17 7HT

Formal Complaints September 2021- September 2023

There were no formal complaints in the Prep school and no formal complaints in the Pre-Prep between September 2021- September 2023.

Related Policies

- Behaviour
- SENDA Policy (Accessibility Plan)
- Policy for Special Provision
- Discipline and Exclusions
- Equal Opportunities
- Use of ICT, Mobile Phones and Other Electronic Devices
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Taking, Storing and Using Images on Mobile Phones or Other Electronic Devices
- Pupil Confidentiality
- Whistleblowing
- Search

- Missing Pupil and Missing Children in Education
- Sexting (sharing of nude or semi-nude imagery)
- Reasonable Restraint
- Social Media
- Boarding Handbook
- Data Protection
- Record Keeping
- Parent Behaviour

Cumnor House Sussex

Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 7HT
01825 790 347 | office@cumnor.co.uk | www.cumnor.co.uk