



Child Protection

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A Whole-School policy including the EYFS

Developed by:	Paula Talman Director of Compliance, Health & Welfare (Lead DSL)
Approved by:	Christian Heinrich Headmaster (Deputy DSL)
Implemented:	2011
Last reviewed:	September 2018
Next review:	September 2019
Any Changes made to this policy are highlighted in bold text. Previous Safeguarding Policies are saved in the archives folder.	Please read the entire policy as a number of changes have been made
All staff must sign the form on page 9 of the Safeguarding Induction Policy. The form must be returned to the DSL	
Reviewed by the main board of Governors and signed by the Chairman annually. Last Review:	Main Board Meeting 2017
Next reviewed by Governors	Main Board Meeting Dec: 2018
Reviewed annually or with government change.	

Contents

Introduction 3

What is a complaint 3

Who does the complaints policy apply to 3

The complaints policy is made available to parents of pupils..... 3

.....

Complaints procedure process..... 3

Stage 1- Informal Resolution..... 3

Stage 2- Formal Resolution 4

Stage 3- Panel Hearing 4/5

Written complaints relating to requirements of the EYFS 6

Correspondence for the Chair Of Governors 6

Related Policies 7

.....

.....

Introduction

Cumnor House Sussex has long prided 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. **The complaints procedure has three stages, to be covered in a period of 28 days excluding school holidays and weekends between the complaint being made and the final resolution.**

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 is now a complaint and in the scope of the complaints procedure, **whatever the school labels it as.** Please note that, there is a separate policy for behaviour, sanctions and exclusions which is available free of charge on the school website and from the school office. However, exclusion appeals follow the same process as the hearing of complaints.

Who does the complaints policy apply to?

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

The complaints policy is “made available” to parents of pupils

As required by the Independent School Inspectorate (ISI) Regulatory Requirements 2017 and The Department for Education Statutory Guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016”, 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 perspective pupils who request this document are made aware that it is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.

Complaints Procedure Process

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 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 then parents will 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 complaint intends to escalate a matter to the formal stage.**

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (Resolution within 10 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, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. 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

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing (Resolution within 13 working days)

- **Where the parent is not satisfied with the schools response the 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 will be referred to a Convenor, who has been 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 10 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 7 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 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 3 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
 - (i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing;
 - (ii) and action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)
- 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 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.
- **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 THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EYFS:

- Written complaints about the fulfilment of the 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
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

ISI
Ground Floor
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London, EC1A 9HA

General Helpline 0300 123 1231

Tel. 020 76000100

CORRESPONDENCE TO THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The Chair of Governors
The Registrar Office
Cumnor House School
London Road
Danehill
West Sussex

Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Special Education Needs (SEN) and Learning Difficulties Policy
- Disability Policy
- Discipline and Exclusions
- Equal Opportunities
- Guidance on the use of ICT, Mobile Phones and Other Electronic Devices
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Taking and storing of images on mobile phones or other electronic devise
- Pupil Confidentiality Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Search Policy
- Missing Child
- Sexting Policy
- Search Policy
- Social media Policy
- Boarding Handbook
- Data Protection Policy
- Record Keeping Policy



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