



# Complaints Policy & Procedure

Reference: H02  
Version number: 1.6  
Last updated: October 2023  
Date of next review: September 2024 or if legislation/statutory requirements change

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

*This policy applies to the entire setting, including EYFS.*

Date of Policy	October 2023
Member of staff responsible	Nigel Reed
Role	Head

## Summary of changes and reviews

Version	Date	Summary of amendments	By
1.0	1 Sep 22	Version control numbering implemented. Changed included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of new timeframes to allow for COVID-19</li> <li>• Include procedures for complaints direct to Head office</li> <li>• Include findings section</li> <li>• Include NMS requirements for schools with boarding</li> </ul>	NR
1.1	6 Jan 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend introduction</li> <li>• Head and Panel give reasons and explanations for findings</li> <li>• More detail for partially upheld findings</li> <li>• Reworded EYFS paragraph</li> <li>• Reword section 6 on record keeping to include data protection</li> </ul>	NR
1.2	26 Sep 22	Policy updated in line with KCSIE 2022 and other minor changes by the Head	NR
1.3	28 Apr 23	Clarification of next review date and formatting changes	SB
1.4	15 May 23	Minor wording clarification	NR
1.5	11 <sup>th</sup> Sept 23	Policy updated in line with KCSIE 2023 and other minor changes	NR
1.6	10 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2023	Update in line with Wishford changes	NR



## Contents

Introduction.....	3
The difference between a concern and a complaint: .....	3
Purpose.....	4
Procedure .....	4
Stage 1: Informal Resolution .....	4
Stage 2: Formal Resolution .....	4
Stage 3: Complaints Panel Hearing .....	5
Complaints about the Headteacher or Proprietor: .....	5
Timescale for dealing with Complaints .....	5
Recording Complaints and use of personal data .....	6
Contacts.....	7



## Introduction

This Policy applies to the entire setting including the EYFS and after school and holiday clubs. Copies of this Policy are available for viewing and/or downloading on the school's website.

Hatherop Castle School has long prided itself on the quality of 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 with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. Copies of this Policy & Procedure are available to all parents and prospective parents for viewing and/or downloading on the school's website and a hard copy is available free of charge from the school office. In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014, Hatherop Castle School will also make available, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of the Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

### The difference between a concern and a complaint:

A "concern" may be treated as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought"

A "complaint" may be generally recognised as an "expression or statement of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem, about actions taken or the lack of action". Any action about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is considered to be a complaint.

We take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve them at the earliest possible stage. All concerns and complaint are logged in the complaints log which is reviewed termly by Wishford.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for complaint that you (or your child) raises in good faith.

We do not distinguish between a concern and a complaint. Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is now a complaint and is within the scope of our procedures. We take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve them at the earliest possible stage.

If a complaint concerns safeguarding or child protection issues please also refer to the school's Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy, which has been revised in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2023)

The scope of this policy does not include staff grievances or disciplinary procedures.

### Boarding

Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute their views to the operation of the boarding provision and are able to raise concerns and complaints without fear of being penalised for doing so in good faith.

The school's written record of complaints identifies those complaints relating to boarding provision and the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)



## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the procedure current parents/carers should follow should they wish to make a complaint.

If the complainant contacts the school repeatedly on the same point, the correspondence can be viewed as “serial” or “persistent” and the school reserves the right to choose not to respond.

## 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 child’s form teacher or tutor (Upper School) or Head of Boarding.

In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightway by this means to the parents’ satisfaction. If the form teacher and/or tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head.

Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher or tutor unless the Head deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

The form teacher/tutor will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received and will note what the complainant thinks might resolve the issue. Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days or in the event that the form tutor and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised of their right to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Complaints made directly to the Wishford Head Office will be directed back to the Head of the relevant school. It is expected that all concerns (if they escalate) that all complaints will go through stage 1 and 2 of this procedure before reaching the Proprietor or senior members of Wishford Schools.

If the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the proprietor whose contact details are available in section 4 of this policy.

### 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 provide a copy to the Directors. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head will contact the parents concerned, within two 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 Head, or their nominee, to carry out further investigations before reporting back to the parents. In this case, a response should take no longer than two working weeks.

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 the decision in writing. The Head will give reasons for the decision.



### Stage 3: Complaints Panel Hearing

If parents are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, they may request that the matter be referred to a Complaints Panel for consideration.

The Directors will appoint the members of the Panel, including the Chairman. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, at least one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable, normally within three working weeks.

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 two days prior to the hearing.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be 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 two weeks of the Hearing.

The decision of the Panel will be final and they will make findings and possible recommendations

The Panel's findings and recommendations will be:

- provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
- made available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietors, Director of Education and the Head.

### Complaints about the Headteacher or Proprietor:

If the complaint is about the Headteacher the complainant should write to the Proprietor; Mr Sam Antrobus at the following address:

25-27 High Street,  
Corsham  
SN13 0ES

If the complaint is about the proprietor, the complainant should write to the Directors of Wishford Schools at the above address.

### Timescale for dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously, sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales. Unless additional time is jointly agreed between the school and the parents the following timetable should be followed:

- Informal resolution: 10 working days
- Formal resolution: 30 working days
- Appointment of Complaints Panel: 21 working days



- Resolution by the Complaints Panel: 14 working days from date of hearing

A working day is defined a week day on which the school is in session and excludes weekends, bank holidays, and school holidays (even if the school is open for an INSET day, Holiday Club or similar). This means that during the school holidays or during periods of significant disruption to school life or as a consequence of unavoidable staff absence, it might take longer to resolve a complaint.

Complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the outcome notified within 28 days of the complaint having been received. This section takes guidance from the Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage effective 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### Recording Complaints and use of personal data

The school will keep a written record of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the informal Stage 1, the formal stage 2 or proceed to a panel hearing at Stage 3. The school processes data in accordance with its [privacy notice](#) when dealing with complaints the school and any panel member may process a range of information, which is likely to include:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent(s) and pupil(s)
- Description of the issue
- Records of all investigations
- Witness statements
- Name and contact details of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue
- Notes/minutes of the hearing
- The Panel's written decision.

This may include "special category personal data, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health. Where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint, this data will be processed in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy

The record will indicate:

- whether the complaints were resolved following the formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing; and
- the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.
- The lessons learned by the school

Correspondence, statements and records relating to the individual complaint will 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.

For the Academic year Sept 2022 – Sept 2023 the school received 8 formal complaints. 1 of these complaints was resolved at stage 2 formal resolution; all other complaints were resolved at stage one; informal resolution.



## Contacts

Parents who believe the school is not meeting the requirements of the EYFS may complain to Ofsted by writing to this address:

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD;

or by telephone 0300 123 3155;

or by email to: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

Parents who are not satisfied may also contact ISI at:

Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA or [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

