

Making a complaint

POLICY STATEMENT

The school believes that children and parents are entitled to expect care, courtesy, respect and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.2. Inclusive practice	2.1. Respecting each other 2.2. Parents as partners	3.2. Supporting every child 3.4. The wider context	

PROCEDURES

We keep a 'summary log' of all complaints. This is to be made available to parents as well as to ISI/Ofsted inspectors. The LA regulations for school complaints apply to the school.

1. Making a complaint

- a. Stage 1 – information raising of a concern or difficulty to a member of staff, orally or in writing

Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the school's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the Class Teacher or Head Teacher.

Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

b. Stage 2 – a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the Head Teacher or schoolowner.

For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints; the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent.

The school stores written complaints from parents securely. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the Head Teacher may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.

When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Head Teacher meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.

When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Headteacher meets with the parent to discuss the outcome. Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.

When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

c. Stage 3 – a meeting with the Headteacher and the Owner of the School

If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the Head Teacher and the Owner of the school. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the Head Teacher should have the support of the Owner and vice-versa. An agreed written record of the discussion is made and any decision or action to take as a result is recorded. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.

This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

d. Stage 4 – a Reference to the Complaints Panel

A Complaints Panel (Complaints Panel) hearing is a review of the decisions

taken by the Headteacher and the Owner of the school. The Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint which have not been previously raised as part of the complaints procedure. The Panel's task is to establish the facts surrounding the complaint by considering:

- The documents provided by both parties and
- Any representations made by you and the Headteacher and
- To reach a decision on a balance of probabilities

Composition:

The Panel hearing your complaint will consist of at least three independent members none of whom have any connection with the governance, management and running of the School. They are people who have held a position of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence, for example, civil servants, legal professionals and retired members of the Police Force. You may ask the Complaints Co-ordinator to tell you who has been appointed to sit on the Panel.

Chair: The hearing will be chaired by one member of the Panel (chosen by themselves) and will be conducted in an informal manner. It is not within the powers of the Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, pupils, or parents. The Panel may make recommendations on these or any other issues to the Headteacher or to the Directors as appropriate.

Notification: To request a hearing before the Complaints Panel please write to the Complaints Co-ordinator within 5 working days of the decision complained of. Your request will usually only be considered if you have completed the procedures at Stages 1 and 2

Please ensure that:

- A copy of all relevant documents and your full contact details accompany your letter to the Complaints Co-ordinator
- Your letter states the outcome that you desire and all the grounds of your complaint

The Complaints Co-ordinator is sent a list of the documents which you believe to be in the School's possession and wish the Panel to see.

The Complaints Co-ordinator will acknowledge your request in writing within 2 working days of receipt. If you require assistance with your request, for example, because of a disability, please contact the Complaints Co-ordinator who will be happy to make appropriate arrangements.

Convening the Panel:

The Complaints Panel will be convened as soon as reasonably practicable, but the Panel will not normally sit during half terms or school holidays.

Notice of hearing:

Every effort will be made to enable the Panel hearing to take place within 10 working days of the receipt of your request. As soon as reasonably practical and in any event, at least 7 working days before the hearing, the Complaints Co-ordinator will send you written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the Panel members who will be present. The hearing will normally follow the procedure set out in Appendix 1.

Attendance:

You will be invited to attend the hearing and may be accompanied by one other person such as a relative, teacher, or friend. If you wish to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, acting in their professional capacity, please notify the Complaints Coordinator at least 3 working days before the hearing. Copies of any additional documents you wish the Panel to consider should be sent to the Complaints Co-ordinator at least 3 days prior to the hearing.

Hearing:

All statements made at the hearing will be unsworn. All present will be entitled, should they wish, to write their own notes for reference purposes. The Complaints Coordinator will take a handwritten minute of the proceedings. The Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint unless these matters could not reasonably have been known previously. The introduction of new areas of complaint will be at the discretion of the Chair.

All those present at the hearing shall have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments in an appropriate manner. The hearing is not a legal proceeding and the Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and / or may take written statements into account.

Conduct:

All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chair. If terminated, the Chair has the discretion to hold that the original decision will stand. Any person who is

dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and his / her comment will be minuted.

Adjournment:

The Chair may, at his / her discretion, adjourn the hearing for further investigation of any relevant issue. This may include an adjournment to take legal advice.

Decision:

The Panel will reach a decision on a balance of probabilities unless there is an agreed position. The decision shall be confirmed in writing to you by electronic mail normally within 7 working days of the hearing. If you do not wish to receive the decision by electronic mail, a copy will be given or posted to you. The decisions, findings and any recommendations will be available for inspection on the School premises by the Governing Body and the Head. Reasons for the decision will be given. The decision may include recommendations and will be sent to you, the Complaints Co-ordinator, the Headteacher and, where relevant, any person about whom the complaint has been made.

Private proceeding:

A hearing before the Complaints Panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media.

Confidentiality:

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they were resolved at Stage 1, Stage 2 or proceeded to a panel hearing. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be supplied to parents on request.

Record Keeping:

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an investigation under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 or where disclosure is required in the course of a school's inspection or under other legal authority. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will normally be destroyed following each school inspection. In exceptional circumstances, some details will be

retained for a further period as necessary.

Early Years Foundation Stage:

The Complaints Co-ordinator will keep a written record of complaints and their outcome and will provide Ofsted on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Policy status:

The policy has been approved by the Headteacher and the Directors of the School. It provides guidelines for handling concerns and complaints. It takes account of paragraph 25 of schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England)

Regulations 2010 (SI 2010/1997), and the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. The policy applies to all sections of the school including Early Years.

The procedures set out may be adapted as appropriate to meet the policy aims and circumstances of each case. Certain parts of the procedures can only be carried out during term time

2. Timetable of Procedure

a. Stage 1 - Informal Stage - Complaint raised informally with the appropriate member of staff

The complaint has to be acknowledged within 2 working days during term time or 5 days during the holidays.

If the complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily within 15 working days, it will have to be raised formally in accordance with stage two.

b. Stage 2 - Formal Stage - Complaint raised formally in writing with the Headteacher

The complaint has to be acknowledged within 2 working days during term time or 5 days during the holidays.

The complainant has to be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 working days of the complaint being formally raised.

c. Stage 3 – Formal stage

The complaint has to be raised formally in writing with the Owner within 2 working days during term time or 5 days during the holidays.

The complaint has to be acknowledged within 28 working days of the complaint being formally raised.

d. Stage 4 - Complaints Panel

The complainant has to write to the Complaints Co-ordinator to request a hearing within 5 working days of the decision to which the complainant objects.

The complainant's request has to be acknowledged in writing within 2 working days of receipt of the request for a hearing.

The hearing will (normally) take place within 10 working days of receipt of the request for a hearing

The complainant will be sent written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing and brief details of the Panel members to be present at least 7 working days before the hearing.

The complainant should notify the Complaints Co-ordinator of any additional documents for the Panel to consider at least 3 working days before the hearing.

The complainant should notify the Complaints Co-ordinator if they will be legally represented at the hearing at least 3 working days before the hearing.

The complainant, the Headteacher and (if relevant) the person about whom the complaint was made to be notified of the Panel's decision within 7 working days of the hearing.

- Parents may approach ISI/Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.

- The number to call ISI is 03076000100–

ADDRESS: *Independent school inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA*

EMAIL: info@isi.net

-

- *The number to call Ofsted (for Cambridge Gardens Nursery) with regard to a complaint is: 03000 123 4666*

ADDRESS: *Ofsted, National Complaints Team*

Ofsted Early Years, The National Business Unit Picaddilly Gate, Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

EMAIL: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



- These details are displayed on our school's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our school follows the procedures of the Local **Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.**
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the headteacher works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

3. Records

A record of complaints against the school and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Summary Complaints Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

[See record keeping policy](#)