



# PINEWOOD

*Est. 1875*

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

A Whole-School policy including the EYFS

### Introduction

The School 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 Complaints Procedure. This procedure is made available to all parents of pupils on the School website or on request as stated in the Parent Contract. It is also available to prospective parents, staff and boarding pupils. This procedure is not, however, available for use by prospective parents – it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

### What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

### 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 the relevant Form Tutor / Head of Department or, in some cases, simply the teacher concerned. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head of School or Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor / Head of Department/ Head of School / Director of Education unless the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally.
- The person handling the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received and annotate the entry later with any relevant details. Should the matter not be resolved within 2 weeks or in the event that the member of staff dealing with the matter and

the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

- If, however, the complaint is against the Headmaster, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chairman of Governors.

### 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 Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Headmaster will write to or meet the parents concerned, within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. However, if the complaint is received when the School is on recess, and depending on the nature of the complaint, then parents may have to wait until the School re-opens as it may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out investigations. If this is the case then the Headmaster will contact the parents concerned within 7 days and advise them on any necessary delay due to the recess.
- 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 within 14 days of having received the complaint. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, the Chairman of Governors will call for a full report from the Headmaster and for all relevant documents. The Chairman may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chairman is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing within 28 days of having received the complaint. The Chairman will give reasons for his/her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.
- EYFS Requirement. The School must investigate written complaints relating to their fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.

### Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to a Designated Member of Council, who will be appointed by the Governing Body to call the hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of the Designated Member plus 1 other Member of Council not involved directly in the matter detailed in the complaint, and a further person whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Designated Member. The Designated Member, on behalf of the Panel, will then

acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within 14 days during term time or 28 days if the school is on recess.

- 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 3 days prior to the Hearing.
- The parents may attend the Panel Hearing and may be accompanied by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be 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 the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decisions and any reasons for it within 5 working days of the Hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the Hearing). The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings, their reasoning, and recommendations (if any) will be sent by email or otherwise given to, the parents, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be made available for inspection on the School premises by the Chairman of Governors and the Headmaster.

### Recording Complaints

- Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all complaints that proceed under the formal part of this Complaints Procedure i.e. Stage 2 as well as details of those that proceed to Panel Hearing. This will include details of any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). This detail will be recorded in the School's Complaints Log held by the Headmaster (or held by the Chairman of the Governors if the complaint was against the Headmaster) and will contain the follow information as a minimum:
  - Date when the issue was raised
  - Name of parent making the complaint
  - Name of pupil
  - Description of the issue
  - Any findings/decisions made
  - Any recommendations made
  - Any actions taken

Further information such as records of all investigations, witness statements, names of staff handling the issue at each stage and copies of all correspondence on the issue may also be kept by the School's discretion.

- Records will be kept for a minimum of 6 years and made available to Ofsted and ISI.

### General Points

- Governors will be kept informed of all formal complaints on an annual basis or more regularly if the Headmaster deems it necessary to do so.

- Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.
- Complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils, without unreasonable delay.
- Parents should also be aware that, if they feel they have failed to receive a satisfactory outcome, or notwithstanding, they are unhappy about the way the school is run pastorally or from a welfare angle, particularly with regard to boarding or meeting EYFS requirements, they can contact:

**Ofsted (EYFS)**

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

**or Independent Schools Inspectorate**

CAP House  
Ground Floor  
9 – 12 Long Lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA

Telephone 0300 123 1231  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

020 7600 0100  
[concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

- Alternative Dispute Resolution. Parents should also be aware that should the internal complaints procedure become exhausted the School will follow the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) route. The details of the ADR entity to be used will be provided to parents as necessary should this stage of proceedings be reached.

**Over the Academic year 2019/20 the school did not receive any formal complaints.**

Reviewed October 2020  
Reviewed by Neal Bailey, Headmaster  
Next Review Date: October 2021