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OVERSTONE PARK SCHOOL

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## Complaints Policy



## Complaints Procedure

Date	Review Date	Coordinator
September 2024	August 2025	Mrs M Brown Mrs D York Mrs V Price Mrs K Gorton

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

- Local Government Act 1974
- Local Government Act 1988
- Education Act 1996
- Data Protection Act 1998
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- Education Act 2005
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Children, Schools and Families Act 2010
- Education (Admissions Appeals Arrangements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008
- Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (non-maintained Special Schools) Regulations 2011
- School Admissions ( Appeals Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012
- The Independent School Standards 2015

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- **Complaints About Ofsted: Raising Concerns and Making a Complaint about Ofsted (Ofsted)**
- **School Admission Appeals Code ( DfE)**

## **Principles**

**We believe that this school provides an excellent education and that the Principal and school personnel work very hard to build positive relationships and have in place clear lines of communication with all parents and others. In so doing complaints are kept to a minimum.**

## Compliments

These are always welcome and very encouraging to teachers and staff. The school encourages positive feedback or opinions from pupils and parents. In practice this dialogue is continuous, sometimes directly and also indirectly, for example, through the annual questionnaires. It may not always be possible to act immediately but pupils and the school always benefit so please don't hold back.

## Informal Concerns

It is natural that parents may, occasionally, be concerned about an aspect of their child's education or welfare at school. This could include issues concerning the school's approach to aspects of the curriculum, homework, behavioural problems or any other issue.

The school welcomes enquiries from parents about any matter. Teachers and staff will explain the school practices, policies, and how they affect the pupils. The vast majority of concerns will be handled by the class teacher or by the subject leader if this is more helpful. If in doubt, keep asking until you are completely satisfied as all staff are eager to help.

The usual format is to speak to the child's class teacher in the first instance, or to contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your concern with whoever you wish. At all times the staff will help to resolve a problem. In the spirit of true partnership between home, school and community, if you are still concerned and wish to talk to a member of the leadership team, please make contact personally or through the school office or if you prefer you can complete a feedback/concern form. We take these informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

## Complaint

The difference between a concern and a complaint A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures.

The school has defined procedures for handling complaints so don't be embarrassed if you feel an issue warrants more attention – complaint procedures.

Under section 29 of the Education Act 2002 we have in place clear procedures to deal with any complaint made against the school or individuals connected with it. We take any complaint seriously and we deal with them professionally following set procedures.

We believe complaints need to be resolved as quickly as possible but in some cases we need to establish whether the issue brought to our attention is a complaint or an

actual concern. In such cases 'many issues can be resolved informally without the need to invoke formal procedures'.

We agree with the definition that a concern is 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.' While a complaint is best defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'. By making this distinction between a concern and a complaint and taking all informal concerns seriously the number of concerns should reduce before developing into formal complaints.

We all must be aware that besides parents/carers of children who are registered at this school any member of the general public can make a complaint about 'any provision of facilities or services' that we provide at this school.

We have a duty to publish the complaints policy in the school handbook and on the school website with hard copies available from the school office.

We understand that a complaint may be made in writing, by telephone or in person. However, we will endeavour to accommodate those complainants who may be disabled or have learning difficulties by having in place alternative methods of registering a complaint.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

## **Aims**

- To deal with any complaint against the school or any individual connected with it by following the correct procedures.
- To deal with all complaints thoroughly and by being open, honest and fair when dealing with the complainant.
- To differentiate between a concern and a complaint.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.
- To work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

## **Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure**

### **Role of the Principal**

#### **The Principal will:**

- deal with all complaints impartially and in a non-adversarial manner;
- keep the complainant fully updated at all stages of the complaints procedure;

- keep records;
- not share third party information;
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- Preliminary Note: Complaints Policy Timeline
- In accordance with the Overstone Park School Complaints Policy, the school is obliged to:
  - • Acknowledge and respond to a complaint within 5 working days, and
  - • Resolve the matter within 15–20 working days, depending on complexity.

- seek an interpreter if the need arises;
- refer any complaint made against him/her to the relevant authority;
- ensure full and fair investigations are undertaken by an independent person where necessary;
- ensure confidentiality at all times of correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints; except where the secretary of state or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 act requested access to them.
- ensure all complaints are resolved as quickly as possible within realistic time limits;
- log all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved;
- whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel meeting;
- discuss the complaints log every year with those in charge.
- monitor and review complaints to see how they can contribute to school improvement;
- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by speaking with school personnel and parents.

### **Role of the Complainant**

We ask the complainant to:

- cooperate with school to find a solution to the complaint as quickly as possible;
- provide enough information as possible;
- be respectful to everyone involved in the complaint procedure.

### **Complaint Procedures**

#### **Complaints Procedure**

In relation to complaints made in regards to the EYFS. The school will investigate written complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.

The academic, social and emotional needs of our pupils are our priority at Overstone Park School. We are a school that listens and acts proactively to resolve

**complaints fairly and swiftly. However if parents or guardians do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with the following procedure:-**



## **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a concern or a complaint they should normally contact their child's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to involve the Principal.
- Unresolved concerns or complaints made directly to the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher unless the Principal deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally. Any concerns are usually resolved by correspondence between the Principal and the Parent/Guardian. This can be a telephone call, a face to face meeting and is followed up with a letter.
- The form teacher or Principal will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received. The written record should be passed on to the office in order for it to be filed in the pupil's personal file.
- Should the matter not be resolved within 14 days or in the event that the form teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.

## **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 Principal. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Principal will speak or write to the parents concerned, normally within three 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 Principal to carry out further investigations. A response will be provided to the complainant normally within three days.
- The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint whether or not they are resolved following a formal procedure; or proceed to a panel hearing and the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints regardless of whether they are upheld.
- Once the Principal 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 Principal will also give reasons for the decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should continue to keep open channels of communication with the Principal (by telephone, email, letter or face-to face). A resolution is preferred.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they could proceed to stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Appeal Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), a complaints panel will be convened excluding the Principal
- If a resolution cannot be found, the matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least two 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. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Principal. The Principal, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 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 not later than three days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by an independent person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation is not 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 14 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be communicated to the Principal. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, and where relevant, the person complained of. The action taken by the school as a result of those who have complained will be recorded.

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 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Any findings of the panel will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher.

### **External Agencies**

Parents can, at any time, ask the Principal (via the office) for the number of any formal complaints against the school in the last 12 months.

## **Raising Awareness of this Policy**

**We will raise awareness of this policy via:**

**School Handbook/Prospectus;**

**School website;**

**Staff Handbook;**

**Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops;**

**School events;**

**Meetings with school personnel;**

**Written communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters;**

**Annual report to parents;**

**Headteacher reports to the Governing Body;**

**Information displays in the main school entrance;**

**Text messages**

**Email**

**Social media:**

o Facebook

o Twitter

o Virtual pin boards

o School

**blog [Training](#)**

**All school personnel:**

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on induction which specifically covers:
  - ☐ All aspects of this policy
  - ☐ Communication
  - ☐ Community Links
  - ☐ Community Cohesion
  - ☐ School Prospectus
  - ☐ School Website
  - ☐ Home-School Agreement
  - ☐ Equal opportunities
  - ☐ Inclusion
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications.

## **[Equality Impact Assessment](#)**

**Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.**

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Principal:	Mrs M F Brown	Date:	June 2024
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### Complaints 2023 - 2024

As per statutory requirements under the ISI, all complaints must be documented in our updated Complaints Policy. Please find the recent complaints summarized below:

1. A student wore earrings to school, which contravened the uniform policy, resulting in deregulation. After discussions with the parent, the issue was resolved, and the student complied by removing the earrings as per policy guidelines.
2. A parent expressed concerns about a teacher's attitude in the classroom. This was addressed promptly with a meeting held to understand the teacher's perspective. Following an evaluation, the parent was reassured about the teacher's behavior and classroom methods, and the issue was resolved.
3. A parent reported not receiving homework for their child. After investigating, it was found that the homework email had gone to the parent's junk mail folder. This clarified the issue, and it was quickly resolved.

