

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Eaton Square gives high priority to the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided for pupils. However, if parents do have a formal complaint, it will be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

This policy was reviewed in July 2010 and is due for review again in July 2011.

This policy is available to parents of current and prospective pupils on the School website and on request in the School offices. Parents are also informed annually of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure of panel hearing at the end of this policy, which is updated annually.

Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a concern they should initially contact their child's Class Teacher, if appropriate. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, he/she will consult the Head of Juniors, Head of Infants, Head of Seniors or the Deputy Head (as appropriate).
- Concerns expressed directly to either, the Head of Juniors, Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Seniors or the Deputy Head will be referred to the relevant Class Teacher unless they deem it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The Class Teacher will make a note of all concerns and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 14 days or in the event that the Class Teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to pursue their complaint with the Headmaster.

Headmaster's 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 consider the matter and decide the appropriate course of action.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will speak to or meet the parents concerned to discuss the matter, normally within 14 days of receiving the complaint in writing. 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 the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will give reasons for his decision.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should request a formal resolution through a panel hearing.

Formal Panel Hearing

- If (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) parents request a panel hearing in writing to the Headmaster, giving reasons why they remain dissatisfied, they will be referred to the Secretary to the Board of Directors, who has been appointed by the Board of Directors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- 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. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Directors. The Secretary to the Board, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days of receiving the written notice from the parents.
- 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 4 days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. 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 they will complete within 7 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of the decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final.
- The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent by electronic mail or given to the parents, the Headmaster, the Board of Directors and, where relevant, to staff involved and available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher.

Complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 working days (to allow for holiday time) to cover the period from the lodging of the complaint to its resolution.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially, except where disclosure is required in the course of the investigation. A written record of complaints, including correspondence statements and records is kept for at least three years and details whether the complaints were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them. The School will provide Ofsted (and ISI), on request, a written record of all complaints made during any specific period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Parents may contact OFSTED or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) to register a complaint should they so wish:

OFSTED
The National Business Unit
Ofsted
Royal Exchange Buildings
St. Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

Telephone – 0300 123 1231
E-mail – geninfo@ofsted.gov.uk
Website – www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents

The Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

Telephone - 020 7600 0100
Website: www.isi.net

Number of complaints registered under the formal procedure of panel hearing for July 2009 – July 2010: 1