The Prebendal School

A14_Complaints Procedure Guide for Parents

This policy is available from the website (www.prebendalschool.org.uk) or upon request from the school office.

At the heart of Prebendal is concern for the well-being of our pupils. We want to do our best for them and we listen to them and to our parents. We do our best but at times we may get it wrong and we want you to tell us if we do. That way we can improve what we do, not just for you and your child, but for others as well. We take all complaints very seriously and are grateful to everyone who brings shortcomings to our notice. We regard a complaint as a form of unpaid quality control. This procedure applies to complaints relating to all pupils including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which involves the notification of the Chair of Governors in writing either by the Head or the Parent.

We wish to ensure that:

- parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
- we respond to complaints within a reasonable time courteously and efficiently
- parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously
- we take action where appropriate

All complaints will be treated professionally and no child will be treated differently or discriminated against because that pupil's parents have made a complaint.

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaint will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

“How do I make a complaint?”

01.09.19/01.09.20/H/P
Talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter or telephone. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you. In virtually all cases things can be sorted out quickly, with the minimum of fuss.

Any member of staff will be happy to help. It will usually be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue; however, you may prefer to take the matter directly to a more senior member of staff, for example, one of the Deputy Heads or the Head. If you have a concern regarding individual teaching you should normally talk to the teacher involved, then the Head of Department, then the Deputy Head Academic and then the Head. If your concern is about behaviour and pastoral matters you should contact the Form Teacher first, then the Deputy Head Pastoral and then the Head.

“What will happen next?”

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

In many circumstances, the matter will be resolved informally straight away to everyone’s satisfaction. In other cases the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague, or colleagues, and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issues is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

The teacher concerned will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 5 working days, or should the teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory conclusion then parents will be advised to proceed to stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head, who will then decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action.

In most cases the Head will meet, or speak to, the parents concerned, normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

The Head may need to carry out further investigations and these will normally be carried out within 5 working days of meeting or speaking with the parents.

The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
Once the Head is satisfied that, as far as practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents informed of this in writing, with the reasons.

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

**Stage 3 Panel Hearing**

If parents seek to invoke stage 3, following failure of an earlier resolution, they should write to the Chair of the Governing Board who will refer the matter to a Complaints Panel for consideration.

The Panel, appointed by the Chair of Governors, will consist of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Chair of Governors will also direct who will Chair the Panel. The Chair of the Panel will then acknowledge the complaint in writing and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practical, normally not later than 14 school term calendar days. The parents will be informed in the letter convening the hearing that they may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person, who may be a teacher, relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If the Panel deems it necessary it may require further particulars of the complaint or any related matter to be supplied in advance of the hearing. The Chair will request this information through the Clerk to the Governors and be provided with it no later than 7 days before the Hearing. The Panel will compile a list of all personnel they require to meet at the Hearing and give this to the Clerk to the Governors who will compile a timetable for the Hearing and inform all personnel of their appointment. After the Hearing the Panel will make their decision.

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 is carried out. After consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make findings and recommendations, which it shall normally complete within one week of the Hearing.

The Chair of the Panel will write to the Chair of Governors informing them of its decision and the reasons for it and including a copy of the findings and recommendations. The Chair of Governors will in turn write to the complainant stating the decision and providing them with a copy of the Panel findings and recommendations. Where relevant a copy of these documents will also go to the person complained about. A copy of these letters and documents will be given to the
Clerk to the Governors and thereby be available for inspection on the school premises by the Head.

The decision of the Panel shall be final.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint or concern will be treated seriously and confidentially.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld), and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

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 Education and Skills Act requests access to them.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

Action which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints will normally be handled confidentially.

In all cases a record of complaints will be kept for three years from the resolution of the complaint.

Parents may, if they wish, make a complaint to Ofsted (0300 123 1231) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (Telephone 020 7600 0100).

The School will provide Ofsted and ISI, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action that was taken as a result of the complaint.

The number of formal complaints (complaints referred to the Governors Committee), received during the academic year 2017-2018 was 1.