



HOWE GREEN HOUSE SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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| Issue Number | 3 |
| This policy is endorsed by | Governing Board and the Headteachers |
| This policy is owned by | The Headteachers |
| Review Body | Finance and Premises Committee |

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| Most Recent Revision Date | February 2024 |
| Last Reviewed by Governors | February 2024 |
| Period of Review | Annual |
| Next Review Date | February 2025 |
| Previous Reviews | 6 |

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| To be made available | YES |
| To be on website | YES |
| Internal staff only | NO |
| Internal students only | NO |
| Internal staff and students | YES |

Complaints Procedure

Howe Green House School

This Policy also includes the Early Years Foundation Stage and Before and After School Provision

Statement of Intent

The Governors and staff of Howe Green House School believe that we should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment, which promotes the academic, social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

Introduction

Howe Green House 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 procedure.

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 their son/daughter's class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway to the parents' satisfaction. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with the Head of Department.
- Complaints made directly to the Head of Department will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher unless the Head of Department deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The class teacher 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 10 working days or in the event that the class teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents are 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 Headteachers**. The Headteachers will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

- In most cases, the Headteachers will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 5 working 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 Headteachers to carry out further investigations.
- The Headteachers will **keep written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headteachers are 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 Headteachers will also give reasons for their decision.
- The complaint will be resolved within 28 working days of receipt of written notification of the intention to proceed to Stage 2.
- If parents are 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 of the complaints procedure in writing they shall inform the Headteachers of that fact, whereupon the Governors will make provision for the matter to be considered by a Complaints Panel.
- The Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors and will consist of at least two persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, but normally members of the Board and, in addition, a third panel member will be appointed who is independent of the management and running of the school – the choice of who this may be will depend upon the nature of the complaint, but will be a person who has held a position of responsibility in a suitable profession – i.e. civil servants, retired police officers, Heads or senior leaders from another school - in line with DfE guidance. The Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working days from the date the Headteachers received notice from the Parents that they wish to invoke Stage 3 of the complaints procedure
- 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 2 working 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 it shall complete *within 14 working days* of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within 28 days of the outcome being decided, or within 28 days of the written complaint being received for Early Years and Foundation Stage. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headteachers, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of and will be made available on the school premises for inspection by the Governors and the Headteachers.
- A written record will be kept of all complaints which were not deemed resolved at the informal stage and which details – whether the complaint was resolved following the formal procedure or if they proceeded to a panel hearing. Details of the actions taken by the school as a result of complaints will also be logged.
- Once a parent has indicated that they are not satisfied with the school's response to their complaint at stage 2, a panel hearing will take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. In all other circumstances the panel will therefore proceed notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend. If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in his / her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint, thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by Part 7 paragraph 33 (k) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails. A record of complaints will be kept for a minimum of three years. A record of any complaints from the previous academic year, which were received at the formal stage or that proceed to a panel hearing, will be made available on this document annually which can be found on the school website.

During the previous academic year (September 2022 – August 2023) the following complaints were recorded:

Stage 3 complaints: 0

The time taken to deal with each stage of the complaints procedure is assuming that the complaint is dealt with during term time. Complaints received during holiday periods will be dealt with as swiftly as possible.

Complaints relating to the School can also be made to The Department for Education, at Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3 9BG or to the Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9 - 12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

Complaints relating to Little Oaks Nursery School can also be made directly to Ofsted at Piccadilly Gate, Store St, Manchester M1 2WD

Date of Policy Update: February 2024

Next Review: February 2025

Reviewed by: The Finance & Premises Committee

Signed by: Sam Bristow and Ed Fielding - Chair of Governors

Signed by: Paul Bailey and Anna Lipani - Headteachers