



HALSTEAD

PREPARATORY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

33a Complaints Procedure for Parents INCLUDES EYFS

Policy History		
Review Date	January 2016	
Review Date	September 2016	
Review Date	September 2017	PA TB
Date of Next Review	September 2018	

Complaints Procedure for Parents, including the Early Years Foundation Stage

Halstead Preparatory School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. If, however, parents do have a complaint, they can expect the school to treat it with care and in accordance with this procedure. Halstead's complaints and concerns procedure is made available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day. The School will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.

In accordance with paragraph 25(3)(g) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, Halstead Preparatory School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the ISI for the purposes of section 162A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (as subsequently amended), details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

What Constitutes a Concern or Complaint?

A concern or 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, incident or event. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a concern or complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most concerns or complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a concern or complaint they should normally contact their daughter's Form Teacher, Head of Pre-Prep (for Pre-Prep pupils) or the Deputy Head depending on the nature of the concern. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher, Head of Prep-Prep or Deputy Head cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Headmistress.
- The member of staff contacted will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved satisfactorily within 14 working days then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.
- A complaint against the Headmistress should be made directly to the Chair of Governors via the school office or email chairofgovernors@halstead-school.org.uk.

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 Headmistress. The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmistress will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 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 Headmistress to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

- Once the Headmistress 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 Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.
- If the complaint is against the Headmistress, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Headmistress and for all the relevant documents. The Chair 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 Chair 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. The Chair of Governors will give reasons for his decision.
- 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 a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to The Chair of Governors or Vice Chair of Governors as appropriate who has been appointed by the Governors 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 and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Convenor, 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 working 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 normally not later than 7 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing 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 facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.

The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parent complainant, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Headmistress.

Timeframe for Dealing with Concerns or Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 20 working days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, 'working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time.

Recording Concerns or Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. Also, details of action taken by the school as a result of those complaints, whether or not they are upheld. At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph (k) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required by the ISI under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority.

Written complaints relating to the requirements under the statutory framework for the EYFS

As Specified in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2014 Halstead Preparatory School will provide Ofsted, on request, with written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years. The record of complaints will also be made available to ISI (The Independent Schools' Inspectorate) on request.

If they wish parents may also complain directly to:

Ofsted on Tel. No. 0300 123 1231 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

ISI on Tel. No. 0207 710 9900 or email concerns@isi.net

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House

9-12 Long Lane

London

EC1A 9HA

DfE at www.gov.uk

Independent and Boarding Team

Department for Education

Mowden Hall

Staindrop Road

Darlington

DL3 9BG

There have been no formal complaints in the academic year 2016 - 2017.



Ratified by
Chair of Governors

Date: Thursday 30th November 2017