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See Distribution

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COVENTRY SCHOOL FOUNDATION PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

References:

A: ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools - The Regulatory Requirements, Dated September 2015

B: [The Early Years Foundation Stage: Statutory Framework Published Mar 14, Effective Sep 14](#)

Introduction

The Coventry School Foundation prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. Any complaint made to any of the Foundation's Schools will be regarded as important and will be treated in accordance with this Procedure save where the complaint is referred at any stage to the Police or local authority at which point the Procedure will be held in abeyance.

In accordance with paragraph 24(3) (g) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010¹, confidentiality will be maintained save where exceptionally disclosure is required by overriding legal obligations or where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162(A) of the Education Act 2002² as amended, requires access to them. Throughout the duration of any complaint the relevant teacher at the School will keep a dated and contemporaneous record of all matters relevant to the complaint including details of any enquiries made as to its progress.

A complaint against the Head personally must be made in writing to the Chairman of the Governors. Such a complaint will be dealt with under the Procedure's 'Formal Resolution', the Chairman of the particular school's Academic and Resource Committee taking the place of the Head.

Anonymous complaints will always be referred to the Head for him/her to take such action as he/she thinks fit and will not be dealt with under this procedure.

This procedure applies to all schools within the Coventry School Foundation, including those with Early Years Foundation Stage departments. The procedure is only applicable if the complaint relates to a pupil currently on a Coventry School Foundation school roll.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/schedule/1/made>

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>

General Provisions

The Coventry School Foundation Complaints Policy is to be available to all parents on request from the School or may be downloaded from the schools' websites. The school will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure ('Formal Resolution'), or proceed to a panel hearing, and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint. The outcome of all complaints, whether upheld or not, will be recorded.

What Constitutes a Complaint?

A 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 an individual member of staff or another pupil. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly. A complaint may be made orally, in writing or email.

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 complaint that a parent or child raises in good faith.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within three 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 informal and formal (if required) stages of the procedure within 28 working days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

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.

Informal Resolution

Any complaint whether made orally, in writing or by email should be made initially to the pupil's Form Tutor or Teacher, Year Head or Deputy Head/Head depending on its nature and seriousness. Where a complaint is made to another teacher it will be referred to the appropriate teacher in the first instance. If the appropriate teacher is not available then the complaint will be dealt with by the next in seniority of those named above.

The teacher dealing with a verbal complaint will endeavour to resolve it quickly, within three working days of him/her being asked to deal with it. Any written complaint will be acknowledged by a teacher within three working days of it being received by him/her. If that teacher deems it necessary he/she will not make an immediate response but make such enquiries as are necessary to enable a reasoned reply to be given.

The complainant(s) will be contacted by that teacher informally and if necessary a meeting arranged with them at the School on a date and at a time mutually convenient, within 5 working days. At that meeting the complaint will be discussed and the teacher dealing with the complaint will endeavour to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant(s). If the complainant(s) request it, that teacher will confirm an agreed resolution in writing.

If, for whatever reason, a meeting cannot take place then the teacher might telephone for discussion or, as necessary, send a written or email response to the complainant(s). Thus a reply will be given in relation to any complaint within 10 working days from the date of it being received. It is anticipated that the majority of complaints will be resolved informally in this way.

Where at any stage the teacher dealing with the complaint considers that it is so serious that he/she should not deal with it, he/she will refer it immediately to the Head for Formal Resolution and inform the complainant(s) that he/she has done so and the Procedure from 'Formal Resolution' (below) will then be followed.

Formal Resolution

Where the teacher dealing with the complaint initially has not been able to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant(s) within 10 working days from the date he/she received the complaint then he/she will send a letter/email to the complainant(s) advising them of their right to proceed to formal resolution by the Head whether or not the Head has previously dealt with the complaint informally.

This letter will inform them that if they wish to proceed to formal resolution they should immediately send their complaint in writing to the Head. If no notification in writing is received within 5 working days of that letter then the complaint shall be deemed to be closed and no further action will be taken upon it.

The teacher who initially dealt with the complaint will report to the Head the steps that have already been taken informally to resolve the complaint and provide him/her with the written record that he/she has made of those steps.

The Head will contact the complainant(s), direct them to the Foundation or school website to view a copy of the Complaints Procedure and arrange a meeting at the School on a date and time mutually convenient. The meeting will take place within 10 working days of the complaint being referred to the Head or within 10 working days of the complaint in writing being received by the Head, whichever event is the latter.

At the meeting the Head may be able to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant(s). Where it is resolved at the meeting then the Head will confirm the details of what was agreed in writing to the complainant(s) within 5 working days.

Where after discussion with the complainant(s) the Head decides that it is necessary for him/her to make further enquiries before attempting to resolve the complaint then the meeting will be adjourned to another date within 5 working days.

If the complaint is not resolved in the meeting(s) with the Head then the complainant(s) will be informed in writing within 10 working days of their final meeting with the Head of his/her decision. If, for whatever reason, a meeting cannot take place then the Head will send his/her decision in writing to the complainant(s).

It is anticipated that the Head will give his/her written decision within a period of 20 working days of him/her having had the complaint referred to him/her or him/her having received it in writing whichever is the later event. His/her written decision will advise the complainant(s) that if they are not satisfied with his/her decision they may proceed to a Panel Hearing.

Panel Hearing

Any parent not satisfied with the Head's formal resolution of their complaint may seek a Panel Hearing. Any Panel Hearing will be conducted by three persons not directly involved in the dispute. One of them will be a person independent of the management and running of the School; who may act as the Chairman of the Panel. The other two will be Governors of the School.

A complainant(s) seeking a Panel Hearing shall, within, 10 working days of receipt of the Head's decision notify the Convenor (the Bursar) in writing that they seek a Panel Hearing. If no notification in writing is received within that period of time then the complaint shall be deemed to be closed and no further action will be taken upon it.

However, where the Convenor receives such notification from the complainant(s) within the requisite time the Convenor shall establish as soon as is reasonably practicable the membership of the Panel and the date on which the Panel Hearing can take place. The compilation of the Panel will be notified to the complainant who will be given the right to object to any member(s) provided reasons are given.

The Panel Hearing will take place at the School within 20 working days from the date on which the notification was received by the Convenor. The Convenor shall send to the Chairman and members of the Panel photocopies of all records made by the relevant teacher and the Head in relation to their investigation and attempted resolution of the complaint. The Convenor will also disclose copies of those records to the complainant(s), unless, on advice, the Chairman decides it is inappropriate in the particular circumstances of the complaint. This may be because information may be considered sensitive.

The person appointed to Chair the Panel shall decide the timetable and procedure which shall be adopted prior to and at the Panel Hearing. In consultation with the other two Panel members he/she may seek further information relevant to the complaint through the Convenor from the complainant(s) and/or the School.

Such information or details shall be provided within the timescale set by the Chairman unless he/she agrees to an extension of time which shall only be given in exceptional circumstances. The Convenor will place all such information at the earliest opportunity before the Chairman. The Convenor will also disclose copies of those records to the complainant(s), unless, on advice, the Chairman decides it is inappropriate in the particular circumstances of the complaint.

At the Panel Hearing, the complainant(s) may be accompanied by one other person e.g. a relative or friend. Legal representation will only be permitted if the Chairman considers it appropriate. If it is considered appropriate the Chairman will direct the Convenor to inform the complainant(s) to that effect so that they may choose to be legally represented at the Panel Hearing if they so wish. Should the complainant(s) decide to be legally represented they shall inform the Convenor of their intention at least 10 working days before the date set for the Panel Hearing. If the complainant(s) chooses to be legally represented the Convenor will notify the other parties of that decision to enable them to have legal representation at the Panel Hearing should they so wish. The Panel will hear the complaint and receive such evidence that the Chairman decides is appropriate. The Panel will hear any representations that the parties may wish to make at the end of any such evidence. The Panel will make their findings and recommendations known to both the complainant and, where relevant the person complained about, in writing within 10 working days of its completion. The findings of the Panel will also be made available for inspection on the school premises to the Governors and the Head.

In the exceptional circumstance of a Panel Hearing having to be adjourned for further enquires to be made and/or for further evidence to be heard or otherwise put before the Panel then the Chairman shall give directions as to the timetable by which the enquiries must be conducted and/or the evidence put before the Panel and in what form. The Convenor will also disclose copies of the evidence to the complainant(s), unless, on advice, the Chairman decides it is inappropriate in the particular circumstances of the complaint. (This may be because the evidence is of a sensitive nature and it is not in the interests of the complainant to see it).

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure ('Formal Resolution'), or proceed to a panel hearing, and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the Foundation and school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following:

- 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)
- Outcome of complaint (if resolved).

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 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Prospective and current parents can, upon request, have information about the number of complaints registered under the formal complaints procedure during the preceding school year.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate

Notwithstanding the procedures explained in this document any parents have the right to address complaints to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). See Annex A for contact details. Further, the Foundation will provide Ofsted and ISI, on request, details of all complaints.

Early Years Foundation Stage (Aged 3 – 5)

Written Complaints Relating to the Requirements under the Statutory Framework for the EYFS

The Foundation will provide Ofsted, on request, with a 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.

Complaints to ISI Regarding EYFS Service Providers

Parents may also complain to ISI if they wish. ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net.

Complaints to Ofsted Regarding EYFS Service Providers

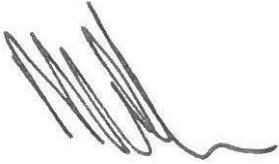
Parents may also complain directly to Ofsted if they wish. Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 123 4234 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 3rd September 2016 or on change of related policies.

Drafted By:

Endorsed By:



Mr Shaw
Bursar

Signed On Original

Mrs J McNaney
Chair of Governors

Annex:

A. Relevant Contact Details

THE APPOINTED CONVENOR:

Mr Shaw
Bursar & Clerk to the Governors

RELEVANT ADDRESSES AND CONTACT NUMBERS

Mr Shaw
Bursar & Clerk to the Governors
Foundation Office
Queens House
Queens Road
Coventry CV1 3EG
024 76 271300

Mr J Watson
Headmaster
Bablake Senior School
Coundon Road
Coventry
CV1 4AU
024 76 271203

Mr J Slack
Headmaster
King Henry VIII Senior School
Warwick Road
Coventry
CV3 6AQ
024 76 271100

Mr N Price
Headmaster
Bablake Junior School & Bablake Pre Prep School
Coundon Road
Coventry
CV1 4AU
024 76 271260

Mrs G Bowser
Headteacher
King Henry VIII Preparatory School
Kenilworth Road
Coventry
CV3 6PT
024 76 271307

THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE CONTACT DETAILS

Telephone Number: 020 7600 0100
Fax Number: 020 7776 8849
Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

Website: www.isi.net

OFSTED CONTACT DETAILS

OFSTED Telephone Number: 0300 1231231

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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