

# Complaints Procedure

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This policy applies to EYFS, Junior School and Senior School.

Hollygirt School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents. It takes seriously concerns they raise and the complaints where they or the pupil are unhappy and for which school action is sought. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or a perceived problem. Anonymous complaints cannot normally be pursued, although allegations of child abuse will be dealt with in line with safeguarding procedures. So far as is possible, the school will try to bring about a satisfactory outcome to any complaints.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are 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.

## **Procedure**

This procedure aims to:

- Encourage the resolution of problems within the school community by informal means wherever possible.
- Encourage parents to know the school takes complaints seriously.
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with quickly, fully and fairly within clearly defined limits and time frames.
- Maintains good working relationships between all members of the school community.

### **Stage 1 - Informal Resolution Stage**

It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally between the parties most closely concerned with the issue. The school will take all reasonable steps to resolve an informal complaint within 10 working days of notification (where 10 days means Monday to Friday/term time only).

A concern of a specific academic nature should be addressed to the pupil's class teacher (Junior School) or subject teacher (Senior School) and of a pastoral nature to the pupil's form tutor. Contact to the specific teacher should be made directly by email, phone call or letter. All concerns/complaints will be acknowledged and any detail pertaining to it and its resolution will be logged on the school's database by the contacted individual.

In many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher above is unable to resolve the matter alone they may consult with the Deputy Head of Juniors or Senior Teacher (Pastoral) to resolve the matter.

If a concern or complaint needs to be taken further, if it refers to a member of staff or to a more complex range of issues it should be raised with the Head of Juniors or the Deputy Head (Seniors). Should a concern refer to a member of ELT it should be made to the Headmistress. In the event of a complaint about the Headmistress, the Chair of Trustees will decide on an appropriate course of action for the informal resolution and other stages of the complaints process below.

The Chair of Trustees can be contacted by letter to the school marked FAO Dr D Costley (Chair of the Trustees). Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days or the parent fail to receive a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed to Stage 2 of this procedure.

### **Stage 2 - Formal Resolution Stage**

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then parents must put their complaint in writing addressed to the Headmistress, stating that they wish the matter to be dealt with under Stage 2 of the formal procedures. The investigation and information gathering will be delegated to an appropriate senior member of staff. The Headmistress will decide after considering the complaint the course of action to be taken.

The school will take all reasonable steps to resolve and respond to a formal complaint at this stage within 10 working days.

The Headmistress will meet with and speak to the parents/carers concerned. If further investigations are required, parents will be informed of its progress and when they can expect a decision. A written account will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. These will be provided to the panel should the complaint reach Stage 3 of the procedures.

The Headmistress will communicate the outcome of the complaint in writing to the parents, once all the relevant facts have been established. Reasons for the decision will be provided. Should the timescale be exceeded parents will be notified, within the 10 days, when they can expect the decision to be made.

If parents are not satisfied with the decision of the Headmistress, they should proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure.

### **Stage 3 - Panel Hearing**

If the complaint is unresolved at Stage 2, they will be referred to the Chair of Trustees who will convene a meeting of the complaints panel. It is not possible to move to this stage without having written to and met with the Headmistress as part of Stage 2. The intention to move to this stage must be expressed within 5 working days of receipt of the Headmistress's letter under Stage 2.

The Chair of Trustees will acknowledge the complaint and will schedule a panel hearing as soon as practicable within 28 working days (the time frame for resolving the issue).

The complaints panel will consider the complaint. The panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel will be appointed by the Board of Trustees. Further information may be sought by the panel in advance of the meeting. Parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person, who may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible the panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately and without need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations. They will communicate their response within 5 working days of the hearing to the complainant, the Headmistress and the Chair of Trustees and where relevant to the person complained against. The decision of the panel is final. The findings of the panel will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Trustees and the Headmistress. The records will 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.

If a parent believes that Hollygirt School does not meet the EYFS requirements they may contact the Independent School's Inspectorate on 0207 600 0100 (email [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)) or Ofsted on 0300 123 1231 (email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)).

### **EYFS Complaints**

Written complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS Requirements will be thoroughly investigated and complainants will be notified of the outcome of investigation within 28 days of receipt. The record of complaints will be available to Ofsted and any other body conducting an inspection on request.

### **Registered Complaints**

A written record is kept of all complaints and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. A copy is also kept of actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure in the academic year 2020-21 is zero.