

# **Moon Hall School, Reigate**

## **Complaints policy and procedure for parents**

Governor Responsibility	Full Governing Body
Governor Lead	Chair of Governors
Status & review cycle	Statutory annual
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## **Complaints from parents**

Moon Hall School, Reigate aims to provide the best quality academic and pastoral care at all times. However, we recognise that there are occasions when a parent may wish to make a complaint.

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly to parents the procedure which will be followed by the school when a complaint is received.

Moon Hall School, Reigate will make this policy available on the school website and also on request from the school office.

### **What constitutes a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be about the school as a whole, a specific department or an individual member of staff.

Complaints regarding staff (when necessary) will also be dealt with in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy.

If the complaint relates to the Head, parents should forward their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors. Any written correspondence to the Chair of Governors or members of the Governing Body should use the school address.

Complaints received in writing (for example, by email) will usually only progress to the formal stage after due consideration in the informal stage. If the complaint cannot be resolved at the informal stage, it will then progress to the formal stage 2 part of the procedure as per the policy.

## **THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

### **Stage 1 Informal Resolution**

- If a parent of a pupil wishes to make a complaint, they should usually contact the teacher concerned in the first instance. Many concerns arise from misunderstandings and can be resolved by simple clarification. However, if the teacher is unable to resolve the matter alone, they will consult with their relevant Head of School (junior, middle or senior) to determine the appropriate course of action. Complaints made directly to the Headmistress will usually be referred to one of the Deputy Head's for initial investigation. However, when deemed more serious the Headmistress will be directly involved in resolving the complaint.
- The member of staff will make a written record of the complaint and the date on which it was received and note whether the Deputy Head was also involved. Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days or in the event that a satisfactory resolution is not reached, then the complainant will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

## Stage 2 Formal Resolution

- Complaints which have not been possible to resolve informally should be addressed 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 arrange to speak to the parents concerned, within 10 working days of receiving the complaint to resolve the matter. Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days or in the event that a satisfactory resolution is not reached, then the complainant will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 3 of this Procedure.
- All formal complaints which are received by the School will be logged in a confidential file which will contain the name of the parent, date of the complaint, a clear statement of the issue including names of pupils involved, the member(s) of staff dealing with the issue, a clear statement of the outcome with actions taken and the stage the complaint was resolved.
- Complaints against members of the teaching and non-teaching staff will initially be investigated by the Headmistress. Where appropriate this may be delegated to the line manager to investigate. If the complaint is against the Headmistress, parents should address their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors. However, if any of the complaints relate to safeguarding then the safeguarding policy and its procedures must also be followed.
- The person making the complaint will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation, although details of any action which may result in the use of disciplinary or other formal procedures will normally remain confidential.
- The Headmistress will seek advice and assistance from the Chair of Governors, or another Governor, if necessary when dealing with a complaint. The Governor consulted on this basis will be excluded from taking part in any formal procedure including the panel hearing, which may result from the complaint.

### Stage 3 Panel Hearing

- Whilst it is hoped that all complaints will be resolved internally, people who make formal complaints and who feel that they have not been adequately dealt with by the School may appeal in writing to the Board of Governors and must include the reasons why they are dissatisfied with the School's response to their complaint.
- The Chair of Governors will appoint a Panel of three members of the Board of Governors who have not previously been involved in discussions about the complaint in question. One of the panel members should be independent of the management and running of the School.
- DfE guidance of persons likely to be suitable as independent Panel members are 'serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior staff from other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the police force'
- The Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a Hearing to take place as soon as is practicable and normally within 10 working days.
- Evidence collected at any previous stages of the complaint will be made available to the Panel on a confidential basis at least working 5 days before the panel hearing. The complainant(s) may also submit additional evidence and will be invited to meet the Panel to explain their dissatisfaction. The complainant(s) may be accompanied to the Hearing by one other person, this may be a relative, teacher or friend.
- The Headmistress will be provided with copies of all relevant documents given to the Panel and will be invited to give written and/or oral evidence to the Panel.
- 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 10 working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and the recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmistress, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises.

## **Recording complaints**

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be stored safely in the school office and kept confidential by the school. The records will be available for the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act.

The following format (whether at informal or formal stage) will be used for record keeping purposes using the template provided (appendix 1).

- Date issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name(s) of any pupil(s) involved
- Clear statement of issue
- Member of staff dealing with the issue
- Clear statement of outcome and actions taken
- The stage the complaint was resolved
- Informal or formal stage (2 / 3)

## **Monitoring of complaints**

Complaints will be regularly reviewed by the governing body and the headmistress with the senior team to check for any emerging patterns which can then be acted upon to improve the school's provision.

Date issue was raised	Name of parent	Name(s) of any pupil(s) involved	Clear statement of issue	Member of staff dealing with the issue	Clear statement of outcome and actions taken	The stage the complaint was resolved;  Informal / Formal Stage 2 or 3	Monitoring notes from SMT / Governors