



Devonshire House Preparatory School

Complaints Policy

This is for the whole school including EYFS

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| Written by: Mr Henry Keighley Elstub | September 2022 |
| This Policy is the responsibility of the Head, in consultation with the school Governance. | |
| Reviewed: | July 2023 |
| Next review: | July 2024 |

This policy is made available to parents via the school website and is also available in writing from the school office on request.

This policy does not apply to prospective parents.

Introduction

The School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, it will be treated seriously. The standard and the DFE do not distinguish between, "concerns" and "complaints". Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is a complaint and is in the scope of this procedure whatever the school labels it as. The School has the following procedure, which is for parents of all pupils including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. For parents of pupils in EYFS details for contacting ISI or Ofsted are given at the end of this policy and complaints with regard meeting EYFS requirements can be referred to ISI and/ or Ofsted should they wish.

The complaints procedure does apply to past pupils if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered at the school. It does not cover exclusions (see Behaviour Policy).

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 child's Form Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department / Deputy Head / Head .

- All complaints should be acknowledged within two working days.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department / Deputy Head / Head may be referred to the relevant teacher unless the Head of Department / Deputy Head / Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter directly.
- The Form Teacher will make a note of concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within two weeks, or in the event that the School and the complainants fail to reach a resolution, the parents will be 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 complainants should put their complaint to the Head in writing. Although all formal complaints must be made in writing, this does not mean that the formal stage is automatically triggered whenever a concern is expressed in writing, for example by email. Complaints will usually only progress to the formal stage after first being considered at the preliminary stage and only then if the complainant intends to escalate the matter to a formal stage. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will speak to and/or meet and/or write to the parents concerned, normally within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. (Parents should understand that if a complaint is received outside of the School Term then complaints may take longer to resolve.)
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will make notes of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head 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 within ten working days*. The Head will also give reasons for the decision.
- It is anticipated that the normal timeframe should be sufficient in term time. Should a complaint be made outside of term time, resolution may depend on the availability of relevant members of staff. Should this be the case, parents will be informed and a clear timeframe established for each particular case.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Appeal

- The DfE gives the following guidance on the identity of an independent panel member.

Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered.

- The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School** Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by School Governance. The Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 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.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without need for further investigation.
Should the panel make findings and recommendations, a copy of those findings and recommendations will be
 - (i) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about;
 - (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the School Governance and the Head;
- 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 normally complete within 20 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, if any, recommendations, will be sent in writing to the parents raising the complaint, the Head and, if appropriate, the person complained of.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. 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, as amended, requests access to them.

The written record of all complaints is kept and the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) The record will state whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to panel hearing. The outcome of complaints made with regard to pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage will be made within 28 days of the complaint being received and the complainant will be informed. The School will provide Ofsted and ISI, 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.

*It is anticipated that the normal timeframe should be sufficient in term time. Should a complaint to be made outside of term time, resolution may depend on the availability of relevant members of staff. Should this be the case, parents will be informed and clear timeframe established for each particular case.

** The DFE gives the following guidance on the identity of an independent panel member.

"Our general view is that people who have held the position of responsibility and are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the police force might be considered."

Contact Details

Ofsted unique reference number EY397203

Ofsted
National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone number:
Complaints: 0300 123 4666

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

School Complaints

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| Number of stage 2 formal complaints received in the academic year 2021-2022 before going to stage 3 | 0 |
| Number of formal complaints received in the academic year 2021-2022 going to stage 3 | 0 |