

Carrdus School

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Tudor Hall and Carrdus (together The School) has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents¹ do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this procedure. The School makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day, and 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 and of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.
- 1.2 In accordance with Paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014, the School will make available on request, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school.
- 1.3 Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the School. The only exception to this is if the complaint is a review of a decision taken by the Head to exclude or require the removal of a pupil under clause 7 of the School's Terms and Conditions of Contract in which case such a review must be requested by no later than five working days from the date of the decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil.

2. WHAT CONSTITUTES A COMPLAINT?

- 2.1 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 about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. 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.
- 2.2 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 you or your child raises in good faith.

3. TIMEFRAME FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

- 3.1 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

¹ . Parent(s)" means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a current or prospective pupil about whom the complaint relates.

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 25 working days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

- 3.2 Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 25 working days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

4. RECORDING COMPLAINTS

- 4.1 Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of whether complaints are resolved at the formal stage 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). The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice. When dealing with complaints the School (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include 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)
 - Notes of the hearing
 - The Panel's written decision
- 4.2 These records may include 'special category personal data' (as detailed in the School's Privacy Notice), but potentially including sensitive data such as information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessarily owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's Data Protection policy.
- 4.3 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Please refer your complaint to the relevant school

5. STAGE 1 - INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- 5.1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- 5.2 If parents have a complaint they should normally contact the pupil's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Deputy Head/Head².
- 5.3 Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head/Head will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher unless the Deputy Head/ Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

- 5.4 The recipient of the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 5 working days or in the event that the form teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.
- 5.5 If, however, the complaint is against the Head of Carrdus School, parents should make their complaint directly in writing to the Headmistress of Tudor Hall. If it is against the Headmistress of Tudor Hall, parents should make their complaint directly in writing to the Chair of Governors whose contact details are available from the Bursar and Clerk to the Governors on request.

6. STAGE 2 - FORMAL RESOLUTION

- 6.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head². The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- 6.2 In most cases, the Head will meet/speak to the parents concerned, within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 6.3 It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- 6.4 The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 6.5 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. The Head will also give reasons for her/his decision. In most cases the Head will make her/his decision and provide the parents with reasons within 15 working days of the complaint being put in writing.
- 6.6 If the complaint is against the Head of Carrdus School, the Headmistress of Tudor Hall will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Headmistress 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 Headmistress 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 Headmistress will give reasons for her decision.
- 6.7 If the complaint is against the Headmistress of Tudor Hall, the Chair of Governors, or their nominee³, will call for a full report from the Headmistress and for all the relevant documents, and 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, or their nominee, 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, or their nominee, will give reasons for his/her decision.

² . 'Head' refers to the Head of each individual school; the term Headmistress is used for Tudor Hall when differentiating between the two school heads.

³ . The Chair of Governors will normally delegate the investigation and formal hearing to other members of the Board and remain available to chair the Complaints Panel.

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

7. STAGE 3 - PANEL HEARING

- 7.1 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Bursar and Clerk to the Governors who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel, setting out their grounds for appeal in writing. Any supporting evidence which parents wish to rely on should be provided with their grounds for appeal.
- 7.2 The Bursar and Clerk to the Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel, will then refer the appeal to the Complaints Panel for consideration. 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 Complaints Panel will appoint one of the Panel members to act as the Chair of the Panel. The Bursar and Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable within 15 working days.
- 7.3 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, or further investigation be carried out. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- 7.4 The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. The Head shall also be entitled to 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. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.
- 7.5 The remit of the Panel shall be at the discretion of the Chair of Governors and the manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.
- 7.6 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.
- 7.7 After due consideration of the merits of the complaint and all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and decide whether to:
- dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part;
 - uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and
 - make recommendations.
- 7.8 The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 5 working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following 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 parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors/Headmistress and the Head if relevant.

- 7.9 Any complaint of a decision taken by the Head to exclude or require the removal of the pupil under clause 7 of the School's Terms and Conditions will be governed by this Stage 3 of the School's Complaints Procedure. In such circumstances, the Panel may only uphold the complaint and ask the Head to reconsider her/his decision if they consider, having regard to the process followed by the Head, that the Head's decision to exclude / require the removal of the pupil was not a reasonable decision for the Head to have taken.

Number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (2020/2021): None

Notes

WRITTEN COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EYFS:

Parents of EYFS children should follow the three stages of this Complaints Procedure. If parents remain dissatisfied and their complaint is about the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, then parents may take their complaint to the ISI or Ofsted. Parents will be notified by ISI or Ofsted of the outcome of the investigation into their complaint within 28 days of the complaint being received.

Carrdus School will provide Ofsted/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. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.

COMPLAINTS TO OFSTED REGARDING EYFS SERVICE PROVIDERS: Parents may also complain directly to Ofsted if they wish concerning the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements. Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 123 1231, or by email at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or to Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD.

COMPLAINTS TO ISI REGARDING EYFS PROVIDERS: Parents may also complain directly to ISI if they wish concerning the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements. ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100, or by email at concerns@isi.net or to ISI, Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA.