

## **PARENTS' COMPLAINTS POLICY**

*This document is available on the School's website.*

The School takes any concerns and complaints raised by parents very seriously, including those of the EYFS. Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school constitutes a complaint. If parents wish to raise a concern or make a complaint, they can expect the School to handle it very carefully and sensitively and in accordance with this procedure. It is in everyone's interests to resolve a concern or complaint as speedily as possible. The School therefore expects that parents who have a concern or complaint will raise it with the School as a matter of urgency.

### **STAGE 1 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

The School expects that most concerns or complaints can be resolved informally and quickly through discussion with the appropriate member of staff. If that individual cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult other members of staff. If informal procedures fail to resolve the issue within 10 working days, the parents should put their complaint in writing in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure. (All time scales in this document refer to working days within term time. During the school holidays, the time scales will be extended if relevant staff are not available).

### **STAGE 2 – FORMAL RESOLUTION**

If the concern or complaint can be neither addressed nor resolved on an informal basis, the parents should write to the Headmistress. The Headmistress may delegate responsibility at this stage to another senior member of staff. All references to the Headmistress under Stage 2 of this procedure should include the Headmistress's nominee. If the concern or complaint is about the Headmistress personally, it should be directed to the Chairman of Governors, c/o the school. In that event, references to the Headmistress in relation to Stage 2 of the procedure should be read as references to the Chairman of Governors.

The Headmistress will decide after considering the concern or complaint on the appropriate course of action and will use best endeavours to send an initial reply to the parents within 10 working days, giving a date by which she will contact the parents again and explain how she intends to proceed. In most cases, this will include discussing the issue with the parents and may include further investigations. Every attempt will be made to reach a resolution at this stage.

Once the Headmistress is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed in writing of the decision and the reasons for it.

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

### STAGE 3 – PANEL HEARING

A panel hearing is a review of the decision(s) taken by the Headmistress under Stage 2 of this procedure. The panel will not consider any new areas of concern or complaint which have not been previously raised as part of the complaints procedure.

If parents wish to invoke Stage 3 of this procedure, they should write within 10 working days of the decision(s) to the chairman of Governors, c/o the School. The letter should include full details of the concern or complaint. Upon receipt of it, the Chairman of Governors will appoint a panel to hear the complaint. The panel will consist of at least three people, none of whom was directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and at least one of whom is a person independent of the management and running of the school. The hearing will take place as soon as is practicable and in any event, within 1 month of the Chairman receiving the complaint. The parents may attend the hearing and may be accompanied at it by one other person if they so wish. If the panel considers it necessary, it may require further information relating to the complaint to be provided in advance of the hearing. Copies of such information shall be supplied to all parties at least 5 working days before the hearing.

The panel will after due consideration, make findings and arrive at its decision, including making such recommendations, if any, as it thinks fit. A copy of the findings and the decision and the reasons for the decision will be sent to the parents, and (if relevant) the person complained about, and will be made available for inspection on the School premises by the Chairman of Governors and the Headmistress. The decision of the panel will be final.

Records will be kept of all concerns and complaints, including those of the EYFS, and as to whether they were resolved at Stage 2 or 3 of this procedure. Written records in relation to each concern or complaint shall include correspondence, statements and records which shall be made by the School of all meetings, interviews and any panel hearing. The action taken by the school as a result of any complaint (regardless of whether they are upheld or not) will also be recorded.

All written records relating to each concern or complaint will be kept securely and 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, or as required by paragraph 25 (k) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards)

Regulations (January 2013) or disclosure otherwise required by law.

This procedure will be used in respect of all concerns or complaints by parents against the School except in respect of:

- a) child protection allegations where a separate policy and procedure applies;
- b) appeals relating to internal assessment decisions for external qualifications where a separate appeals procedure applies.

Written concerns or complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirement will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 days of the complaint. A record of these concerns and complaints will be made available to ISI or OFSTED upon request.

EYFS parents have the right to complain if they think the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements:

Ofsted Royal Exchange Buildings St Ann's Square Manchester M2 7LA	ISI Cap House 9-12 Long Lane London EC1A 9HA
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**For the avoidance of doubt, the School confirms that a concern or complaint involving before/after care provision will be dealt with using this policy and procedure.**

All concerns or complaints regarding peer on peer sexual harassment or abuse will be passed onto the Department for Education.

During the years 2011-2014 no Formal Complaint was registered under this procedure. One was registered during 2014-15, one in 2015 - 2016, one in 2016 - 2017. No Formal Complaint was registered 2017-18 and in 2018 - 2019, two formal complaints were registered. During 2019-2020, no formal complaints were registered under this procedure. During 2020-21, two formal complaints were registered.

A formal complaint is one by parents that reached Stage 2 of this procedure.

This procedure is for the use of parents. However, if others such as grandparents, guardians or a current pupil wish to raise a concern or complaint, they should use this procedure. Where a complaint is raised by a current pupil, the School will

involve the current pupil's parents or guardians.

The Deputy Head and Head of the Junior School are responsible for this policy.

(August 2021)