

Parental Concerns and Complaints Policy

(Including Early Years Foundation Stage)

The Granville 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. The Granville 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.

Complaints made to The Granville School registered under the formal complaints' procedure

During the school year 2022-2023:

Stage 2: None

Stage 3: None

What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, a specific department, an individual member of staff, another parent or a pupil. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done, or acted unfairly.

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.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

Stage 1: Complaints will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and not more than 5 days after the start of term should the complaint be made during the school holidays. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete Stage 1 of the procedure within 7 days of acknowledging the complaint.

Stage 2: The parents will have a meeting within 7 days of the school receiving the written complaint.

Stage 3: The Appeal Panel Hearing will be completed within a further 21 days of the written response to Stage 2 and the parents have submitted a request for a panel hearing.

If parents would like to bring or escalate their complaint to the next stage they should do this within 10 working days of the meeting. Flexibility may be allowed for extenuating circumstances which might have impeded the parent from taking action.

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the informal stage or proceed to a panel hearing. In addition, the school keeps 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)
- Action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)
- Whether the complaint is at stage, 1, 2 or 3
- Whether the matter has been resolved or is / may prove to be ongoing

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 requests access to them. Records of complaints will be kept for a minimum of 7 years unless it is a record of alleged abuse, where it must be preserved until the accused has reached pensionable age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.

Each year the school undertakes an exercise to scrutinise the complaints logged for patterns or issues that might indicate a wider problem that needs to be remediated.

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 son/daughter's Class Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Headmistress.
- Complaints made directly to the Headmistress will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher unless the Headmistress deems it appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Class Teacher 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 7 days or in the event that the Class 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.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmistress. The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- It is the school's intention that a meeting will take place between the complainant and the Headmistress within 7 days. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. On rare occasions, it may be necessary for the Headmistress to carry out further investigations, in which case the complainant will be notified of the delay and a mutually convenient date set for the delayed meeting.
- The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 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 parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they should write to the Deputy Chair of Governors who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- 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 Deputy Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 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. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties normally not later than 7 days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and 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 should be advised in writing of any attendee.
- 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.
- The school provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing; and action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 days of 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 Chairman of Governors and the Headmistress, and will be available for inspection.

Written complaints relating to the requirements under the statutory framework for the EYFS

Additional requirements apply for EYFS settings beyond those which apply to the main school. Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. To achieve this the panel will meet not later than 7 days instead of the usual 21. The record of complaints must be made available to ISI and Ofsted on request. Parents may also complain directly to Ofsted if they believe the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Ofsted may be contacted on 08456 014772. ISI may be notified on 02076000100. The school will also inform parents if the school is to be inspected by Ofsted and will supply a copy of the report to parents once the inspection is completed.

Unacceptable approach when making a complaint

The Granville School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

The Granville defines complainants with an unreasonable approach as *'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'*. A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints' procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);

- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

An approach may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face to face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

The school will discuss any concerns with the complainant under Stage 1 before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

The Granville School regards all complaints as serious even if an unreasonable marker is applied. Should the complainant wish to follow through to Stage 2 the school will follow their normal procedure.

If the behaviour continues the Headmistress will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact The Granville causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months. In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the school premises.

Although fulfilling an educational function, The Granville is a private place. The public has no automatic right of entry. The Granville will therefore act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, the school will ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Headmistress or governors can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make. We will always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

The decision to bar will then be reviewed by the Chair of Governors, taking into account any representations made by the parent, and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the parent should be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Headmistress or Chair of Governors in accordance with the complaints' procedure. Once the school's own complaints procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.

Linked Policies: None