



Hornsby House School Policy for Dealing with Complaints

Hornsby House School aims to be a listening and responsive school. We encourage pupils, parents and staff to inform us of their concerns while they are still minor ones which can more easily be resolved. There were no formal complaints 2008/9.

Pupils who have concerns or complaints should talk to their Class Teacher, in the first instance. Issues may then be passed on to the Headmaster or his Deputy, if the resolution is more complex. Pupils should always be kept informed, both of how the matter has been investigated and of the resolution.

Parents who have any concerns or complaints about their child's experience at Hornsby House School (including the EYFS) should normally contact the Class Teacher, in the first instance, by letter. Class Teachers will always liaise closely with the Headmaster when dealing with parental concerns and complaints. We will endeavour to acknowledge such letters within 2 school days of their receipt and to inform parents of how we intend to investigate the matter. A formal letter will always be written as a "closure", indicating how the issue has been dealt with and what the outcome is. When a parent is dissatisfied with the outcome and has discussed this with the Headmaster the matter will be referred to the Chairman of Governors.

Staff who have any complaint or cause for concern should speak to a member of the Senior Management Team, in the first instance. If this is not appropriate they should bring the matter to the attention of the Deputy Head, the Headmaster or the Bursar. All complaints will be investigated and a formal letter will always be written as a "closure", indicating how the issue has been dealt with and what the outcome is. When a member of staff is dissatisfied with the outcome and has discussed this with the Headmaster or Bursar, the matter should be referred to the Staff Representative Governor. In the case of a contractual employment grievance, the procedures outlined in staff contracts should be followed.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Hornsby House School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

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 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 Deputy Head or the Head.*
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head or the Head will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher unless the Deputy Head or the Head deem it appropriate for him/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 two weeks, 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 Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.*
- In most cases, the Head will meet the parents concerned, normally within 3 school days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.*
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.*
- The Head will keep written records 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. The Head will also give reasons for his/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 will be referred to a Governor, who has been appointed by the other Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.*
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will provide for a written record to be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. The Panel will consist of at least three persons, who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent* of the management and running of the school. The Board of Governors shall appoint each of the Panel members. The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 school days.*

** The independent figure is most likely to be Adrian Floyd, Headmaster or Finton House School.*

- 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 not later than two school days prior to the hearing.*
- One other person may accompany the parents to the hearing. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.*
- 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 7 school 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, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.*

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails including a request for access from the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 act, as amended. All complaints will be dealt within 28 school days of the commencement of formal proceedings.

EYFS

A statement of the record of complaints will be kept for at least three years. Parents can contact either Ofsted (0300 123 4234) and ISI (020 7600 0100) to make a complaint should they feel the need.

Appendix: Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel

The DCSF has supplied the following guidance in a letter to the ISC General Secretary:

Whilst we do not intend to be prescriptive our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members had some standing in the local community (1).

(1) In this connection serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background – perhaps retired members of the Police Force – might be considered.