



## **Salterford House School Parents Complaint Policy and Procedures**

Salterford House School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes seriously complaints and concerns they may raise. These guidelines will show you how to use our complaints system.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that needs a response.

Please note that a concern or complaint whether in writing or verbally is not always assumed to be a formal complaint. The procedure for informal and formal complaints is set out below.

We wish to ensure that:

- Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so.
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way.
- Parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously.
- We take action where appropriate.

### Ways of making a complaint.

There are two forms that a complaint may take:

1. Informal
2. Formal

#### 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. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it will be necessary for him/her to consult a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or the designated lead professional within the EYFS.

The members of the Senior Leadership Team are:

- The Headteacher
- The Deputy Headteacher

- The class Teacher or Senior Leadership Team member will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. We aim to resolve the matter within 10 working days but should the matter not be resolved within ten working days or in the event that the class Teacher / Senior Leadership Team member and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage Two of this Procedure.

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

Parents may prefer at the initial stage of the complaint, to deal directly with the head teacher. This will not be seen as a formal complaint at this stage. The headteacher will usually meet with the **parents within 5 working days** of the informal complaint to the head. It may be necessary for the Head to carry out investigations and then report back at a second meeting once all the relevant facts have been established.. The reporting back procedure may also take the form of a letter directly to the parents if this is preferred by the parent.

We usually aim to resolve the informal complaint within 10 working days.

### 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 speak to the parents concerned, within five working 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, **actions taken** and interviews held in relation to the complaint. These will be kept for three years.

Once the Head is satisfied that, so as 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.

**The School will take all reasonable steps to resolve and respond to a formal complaint at stage 2 within 10 working days of notification.**

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

### Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

In the unlikely event that the school's response to your complaint is unsatisfactory, then provision may be made for a hearing before a panel, appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor. The panel will consist of at least 3 people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (one of whom will be independent of the running and the management of the school). Parents/staff have the right to attend the hearing and be accompanied by one other person if they so wish. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The hearing will take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days.. All documentation will be stored confidentially.

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 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, the Head and where relevant, the person complained of.

All parties will be given a copy of documentation regarding any finding and/or recommendations by the Panel.

The complainant will receive all documentation relevant to the complaint process, not just the panel findings.

Parents should be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. As a transparent process the School will make available to parents the number of Stage 2 and 3 formal complaints within an academic year. No details of individual complaints would ever be shared on our website – it is purely to ensure parents and prospective parents are able to assess the levels of complaints received.

The Head will keep written records of all meetings, **actions taken** and interviews held in relation to the complaint. These will be kept for three years.

### **All stage 3 complaints will be dealt with within 28 working days.**

#### We are here to help.

Therefore :

- You can talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter, or telephone. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you.

- Any member of staff will be happy to help. It is often best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue - for example, the class teacher or member of staff taking your child for a particular activity. They may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example, the Deputy Head or the Head.

#### What if you don't want to complain as such, but there is something bothering you?

- The School is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Contact a member of staff, as described above.

#### What if you are not sure whether to complain or not.

- If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to complain. If in doubt you should contact the School as we are here to help.

#### Confidentiality

- Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential matter and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Head and those directly involved. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

- We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the School aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. You would be fully informed.

- 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.

- While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

- Complaints made by parents will be available for an inspectorate to see should they wish to do so.
- Action, which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints, would be handled confidentially within the School.
- The record of all complaints and actions taken is kept for at least three years.

## EYFS COMPLAINTS

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted and ISI.

The School recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children in our care.

## OFSTED

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD Tel: 0300 123 1231

## Independent Schools Inspectorate

Parents can make a complaint to the Independent Schools Inspectorate should they so wish. The contact details are as follows:

Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House,  
9 - 12 Long Lane,  
London.  
EC1A 9HA  
Telephone 020 7600 0100

NOTE: Definition of working days: Monday -Friday 8am-5pm during term time.