

# RAMILLIES HALL SCHOOL AND NURSERY



## PARENTS COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This policy is applicable to all pupils in the School including those in the Nursery.
- 1.2. Ramillies Hall School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, we do realise that things do not always go as expected and if parents do have a complaint, it will be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure.
- 1.3. Ramillies makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents, including parents of prospective pupils, by putting this policy on the school's website and in the school offices during the school day.
- 1.4. A central written record will be kept of all complaints, showing whether they are resolved at preliminary or formal stage.
- 1.5. In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Ramillies will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.
- 1.6. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be dealt with seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by Regulation 25 of [The Education \(Independent Schools Standards\) Regulations 2010](#); where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.
- 1.7. This procedure ensures that where necessary the appropriate remedial action is taken to try to prevent such complaints arising again in the future.
- 1.8. The School will keep the complaint confidential and only inform third parties in circumstances which involves allegations of criminal activity or potential safeguarding issues.
- 1.9. All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the timelines set out below, however during school holidays or when a relevant person is absent the complaint will be dealt with as soon as reasonably practicable.

### 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, failed to do something that it should have done or has 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. STAGE 1- INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

- 3.1. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- 3.2. If parents have a complaint they should contact their son/daughter's Form Teacher. In many cases, this will result in the matter being resolved straightaway to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Joint Headteachers.
- 3.3. If a complaint is made directly to one of the Joint Headteachers, she will establish who is the most appropriate person to deal with the complaint, usually this will be the relevant Form Teacher, unless the Joint Headteacher considers it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- 3.4. The Form Teacher will make a written record of a concern or complaint, and the date on which it was received. If the matter is not resolved within 1 week, or if the Form Teacher and the parent cannot reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 below.
- 3.5. If, however, the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Principal/Bursar.

### **4. STAGE 2 – FORMAL RESOLUTION**

- 4.1. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put it in writing to the Joint Headteacher, who will give due consideration to the matter and decide how the complaint is to be resolved.
- 4.2. In most cases, the Joint Headteacher will meet the parents, normally within 7 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 4.3. It may be necessary for the matter to be investigated further. Once the Joint Headteachers are satisfied that as far as practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made. Parents will be informed of this in writing, together with the reasons for the decision.
- 4.4. The Joint Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 4.5. If the complaint is against one of the Headteachers, the Principal/Bursar will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Principal/Bursar 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 Principal/Bursar 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 Principal/Bursar will give reasons for her decision.

4.6. If parents are still not satisfied, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

## **5. STAGE 3 – PANEL HEARING**

5.1. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, they should indicate this in writing to the Principal. The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration.

5.2. The Panel will consist of three persons, appointed by the Joint Headteachers. Two will be members of the teaching staff, who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and the third will be a person who is independent of the management and running of the School. The complaint will be acknowledged and a hearing scheduled to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.

5.3. Records of the previous meetings and decisions, at Stages 1 and 2 above, will be made available to the Panel. If the Panel considers 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 will be supplied to all parties no later than 7 days prior to the hearing.

5.4. The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person, who may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

5.5. 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.

5.6. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will, within 7 working days of the hearing, reach a decision and may make recommendations. The Panel will write to the parents, the Joint Headteachers and if relevant, the person complained of, informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final.

5.7. Please note as an alternative to this complaints procedure, or if a matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, you have the right to complain to Ofsted at the following address;

**Ofsted** (Our Ofsted reference number is EY 288201)  
The National Business Unit  
Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
Telephone number; 0300 123 1231

## **6. TIMEFRAME FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS**

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

**Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.**

## **7. RECORDING COMPLAINTS**

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain 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)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 33(k) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014.

Ramillies will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made within its EYFS setting 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.

## **8. POLICY REVIEW**

- 8.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Joint Headteachers. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in the policy, procedures or arrangements will be remedied without delay.

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| Written By     | Denise Anthony and Diana Patterson |
| Reviewed       | April 2016                         |
| To be Reviewed | April 2017                         |