

THE PARK SCHOOL

Complaints Policy (and Procedure)

1. It is the policy of the school that all complaints, serious or otherwise, will be investigated thoroughly, expeditiously and in a manner which is scrupulously fair to both the complainant and the staff member against whom the complaint is made.
2. Any pupil, parent, guardian wishing to take up a complaint concerning any aspect of the school should initially get in touch with the member of staff concerned. All staff are instructed to pass on any information regarding a complaint to their immediate line manager.

In the boarding house, a complaint should normally be presented to the House- parents in the first instance. A Complaints Book is kept in the Boarding House should anyone wish to make a complaint relating to the Boarding House.

3. If a complaint is of a serious nature, however reported initially, it should be reported to the Head teacher for further investigation and the parent or guardian may indeed wish to go direct to the Head teacher in the first place.
4. Pupils in boarding who have concerns may go directly to the Head teacher.
5. The Head teacher will decide how complaints are investigated and on what action to take.
6. Any parent can go direct to a Governor with a complaint and the addresses and telephone of Governors are available from the school office on request. A parent may also wish to complain directly to an outside body. Social Services and the Independent Schools Association, of which the school is a member, are examples of outside bodies that may be helpful. Addresses and telephone numbers are available from the school office.
7. Complaints received directly by Governors would normally be passed to the Head teacher for investigation.
8. Staff complaints should be made to the Head teacher. In the case of non-teaching staff, complaints should be made initially to their line manager, the Bursar. If the complaint is of a serious nature, the Head teacher must be informed and, if appropriate, a Governor.
9. When any investigation is complete, the findings will be presented to the Governors who would conduct a hearing if necessary, the hearing to consist of no more than four Governors. The hearing would consider the relevant evidence and make a decision. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the decision, they can ask for an appeal. An Appeals Committee consisting of no more than four Governors, none of whom sat on the original hearing, would hear the appeal and their decision is final.
10. Teachers and other members of staff, because of their daily contact with children in a variety of situations including the wider caring role, are vulnerable to accusations of abuse. Their relationships with pupils may lead to allegations being made against them by pupils, parents or guardians. Where there are allegations of child physical or sexual abuse, the Head teacher must be informed immediately. The Head teacher is the named member of staff for the investigation of potential child abuse. The Social Services will be consulted as to the appropriate steps to be taken in any investigation of child abuse.
11. If the Head teacher is the subject of a complaint, the allegation will be referred to The Chair of Governors who will instigate an investigation by the Governing Body.

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Complaints Procedure

General

1. For all complaints apart from allegations of physical or sexual abuse, the first contact for the parent or guardian should be the teacher or staff member concerned who will then pass on all relevant to the head of his or her Department. These are named on the annexe attached.
2. Where the complaint is a serious one, the Head teacher will be notified but the parent or guardian may go to the Head teacher or to a Governor directly. They may also complain directly to an outside organisation such as Social services or the Independent Schools Association.
3. With non-teaching staff, the Bursar will be informed and he will decide whether the seriousness of the complaint warrants the Head teacher's involvement.
4. A Governor receiving a complaint will pass it on to the Head teacher for investigation.

Introduction

The Park School has long prided 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. The Park 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.

In accordance with paragraph 25(3)(g) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, The Park School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the ISI for the purposes of section 162A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (as subsequently amended), details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

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, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so 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

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.

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints (and their outcomes) 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 25(3)(g) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required by the ISI under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority.

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 Form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Deputy Head/Senior teacher.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head/Senior teacher will usually be referred to the relevant Form teacher/Housemistress unless the Deputy Head/Senior teacher deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Form teacher/Housemistress 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 28 days or in the event that the Form teacher/Housemistress 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/speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 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 the 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 at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, who will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 28 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 not later than 3 days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. 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 28 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 relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003, by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, or where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or under other legal authority.

Parents should be aware that they may appeal against a decision made by the school about their complaint.

The Park School seeks to ensure that complaints are resolved either to the complainants' satisfaction or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils without unreasonable delay.

EYFS

- The above complaints procedure applies throughout the school including our EYFS provision
- The Park School will provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made 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 3 years
- Complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of the school having received the complaint
- Parents may also complain directly to Ofsted if they wish. Ofsted may be contacted on 08456 014772

Communication of this Document

Reference to this document and where it can be accessed will be notified to all the current Governing Body, teachers and other staff and to all new Governors and members of staff as an integral part of their induction procedure.

This policy will always be available to parents and prospective parents as well as all staff and boarders. It will be mentioned in the School Prospectus that this policy along with many other key policies can be found on the school website www.parkschool.com A hard copy will also be available for inspection on the school premises.

Please read this policy in conjunction with our other policies including policies relating to "OUT OF SCHOOL CARE"

Number of formal complaints received in the previous year;

One (relating to 2008)

Reviewed by Governors

Date 5th March 2010

Chair of Governors Ian Green

Head.....

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Annexe One

Head of Junior Department: Mrs J Ellis
Head of Senior Department: Mr D Ennals
Head of Boarding House: Mrs J Gomez-Perry
Non teaching staff - Bursar: Mrs V Gates

Incidents in school will initially be reported via line management, direct to the Head teacher or to a governor. The Head and the Chairman of Governors should make each other aware that an incident has taken place. This may be as a result of an accident, an incident reported by a teacher, a complaint by a parent or by any other means.

If a member of staff is involved then an inquiry may be set up. The governors may direct the head to take some action or in more complex cases initiate an enquiry. The Head will conduct this and the evidence collected for the Governors to consider in a hearing if necessary.

The governors will consider the evidence presented in a hearing. No more than 4 governors will be present. The member of staff may be accompanied by someone of their choice in such a hearing.

If there is disagreement over the outcome then the member of staff may appeal to the governors. The appeal committee shall be made up of no more than 4 governors, none of whom sat at the original hearing.

This document should be read in conjunction with the individual person's contract and with the school complaints procedure.

The Ofsted address and telephone number is:

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

0300 123 4666 if you want to make a complaint or have a concern about any service Ofsted inspects or regulates (8.00am to 6.00pm)

Boarders and their parents should be aware that they can contact Ofsted regarding any complaints concerning boarding welfare.