



OLD BUCKENHAM HALL

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

## What happens if something goes wrong?

Old Buckenham Hall has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, it will be dealt with by the school in accordance with this procedure. This procedure applies to all pupils in the school including those in the EYFS.

### Stage 1: Informal Resolution:

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- Some parents may wish to raise a complaint or concern through the Headmaster's Forum in which case, this should be via the PSL of the Year Group.
- If parents have a complaint, they should contact their son/daughter's Form Teacher or Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parent's satisfaction. If the Form Teacher or Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a member of the Senior Management Team, or Boarding staff as appropriate.
- Complaints made directly to a member of the Senior Management Team or Heads of Boarding will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless the 'line manager' concerned deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally. In this event, the 'line manager' will resolve the matter in five days or as soon as is practicable.
- The relevant teacher will make a written record of all complaints and concerns and the date on which they were received. A pro-forma is available on the intranet or from the school office. The completed pro-forma will be kept on file in the Headmaster's study. Should a matter not be resolved within five days, or in the event that the relevant teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, the parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of the procedure.

### Stage 2: Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents will be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Head, who will decide after considering the complaint, the appropriate action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will speak to the parents concerned within forty-eight hours of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.



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- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations. These will be completed in seven days or as soon as is practicable.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents informed of this decision in writing. The Head will give reasons for the decision.
- The written decision will be issued within fourteen days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the Head will write to the parents within the fourteen day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why he is unable to issue his decision and informing the parents when he will do so, which will be within twenty-eight days of receipt of the complaint in any event.
- If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they may take the opportunity to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

## **Stage 3: Panel Hearing:**

- Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents seek to invoke Stage 3 of this procedure, they are to write to the Head informing him of their decision to do so within 28 days, whereupon the matter will be referred to a named governor. The named governor will then take responsibility for the organisation of a complaints panel hearing.
- The panel will consist of at least three persons; two of whom shall be governors and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.
- Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the board of governors.
- The named governor, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.
- If the named governor and/or members of the panel deem it necessary, they may require (in writing) that further particulars of the complaint or any other related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five days before the hearing. Any such further particulars received within five days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it will not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.



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- 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 parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However, should the panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required the panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded. The panel will reconvene and, after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, will reach a decision and may make recommendations. This procedure will be completed within fourteen days of the first hearing wherever possible but within twenty-eight days in any event unless otherwise agreed with the parents. The panel will write to the parents informing them of their decision together with their reasons. The decision of the panel will be final.
- The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the Head, governors and, where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual.
- When a complaint has been resolved at Stage 3, the school will ensure that all related records and correspondence (including copies of emails) are retained for three years from the date of the matter being resolved.
- Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as required of the school by paragraph 6 (2) j of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003 or where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligations prevails.

### Further Actions

The school hopes that it will be able to satisfy parents' concerns. However, if having followed the above procedure, parents remain dissatisfied in relation to a complaint about the welfare of boarders or the EYFS then they may wish to contact OFSTED or the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) to seek advice or to take their complaint further:

OFSTED  
Royal Exchange Buildings  
St. Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA  
Tel: 08456 404040

Independent Schools' Inspectorate  
CAP House  
9-12 Long Lane  
London EC1A 9HA  
Tel: 020 7600 0100



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## Footnotes to Complaints Procedure:

1. In the event that a complaint involves or relates to a teacher then the teacher will kept fully informed in writing of the procedure being adopted in relation to management of the complaint and supplied with copies of all documentation.
2. In the event of a panel hearing, the teacher will have the right to make representations to the panel.
3. The governor with responsibility for Child Protection procedures, will, as a matter of course, produce an annual report on the school's effectiveness and compliance with child protection issues and such issues will be an item on the agenda of all formal governors' meetings.
4. In addition to the procedures above:

This policy is available to all staff and boarders.

Boarders and their parents are informed how to contact OFSTED regarding boarding welfare by information displayed prominently around the school and in the pupils' planners.

Complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.

Pupils are not penalised for making a complaint in good faith.

**Person responsible for the Complaints Procedure Policy: The Head**

**Complaints log is monitored half termly by the Head and Chairman of Governors**

**Date of next Review of the Policy: September 2010**