

COVENTRY SCHOOL FOUNDATION PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

1. The Coventry School Foundation prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. Any complaint made to any of the Foundation's Schools will be regarded as important and will be treated in accordance with this Procedure save where the complaint is referred at any stage to the Police or outside agency at which point the Procedure will be suspended.
2. Confidentiality will be maintained save where exceptionally disclosure is required by overriding legal obligations or where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162(A) of the Education Act 2002 as amended, requires access to them. Throughout the duration of any complaint the relevant teacher at the School will keep a dated and contemporaneous record of all matters relevant to the complaint including details of any enquiries made in relation to it.
3. A complaint made against the Head personally must be made in writing to the Chairman of the Governors. Such a complaint will be dealt with under the Procedure's 'Formal Resolution', the Chairman of the particular school's Academic and Resource Committee taking the place of the Head.
4. Anonymous complaints will always be referred to the Head for him/her to take such action as he/she thinks fit and will not be dealt with under this procedure. For the avoidance of doubt, where the Procedure refers to 'days' it means Mondays to Fridays between the hours of 8.30 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. excluding all public holidays. If a complaint is raised close to or during a school holiday, it may not be possible to meet response times as stated in this procedure.
5. This procedure applies to all schools within the Coventry School Foundation, including those with Early Years Foundation Stage departments. The procedure is only applicable if the complaint relates to a pupil on a Coventry School Foundation school roll.
6. Records of all complaints are kept for at least three years.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

7. 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 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them.
8. A record of complaints is to be kept by the school for at least three years.
9. The Coventry School Foundation Complaints Policy is to be available to all parents on request from the School or may be downloaded from the schools' websites.
10. A written record is to be kept of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

11. Any complaint whether made orally, in writing or by email ¹ should be made initially to the student's Form Tutor, Year Head or Deputy Head/Head depending on its nature and seriousness.

¹ A read receipt will be requested on all such emails

Where a complaint is made to another teacher it will be referred to the appropriate teacher in the first instance. If the appropriate teacher is not available then the complaint will be dealt with by the next in seniority of those named above.

12. The teacher dealing with a verbal complaint will endeavour to resolve it quickly and if practical within two days of him/her being asked to deal with it. Any written complaint will be acknowledged by a teacher within two days of it being received by him/her. If that teacher deems it necessary he/she will not make an immediate response but make such enquiries as are necessary to enable a reasoned reply to be given.

13. The complainant(s) will be contacted by that teacher informally and a meeting arranged with them at the School on a date and at a time mutually convenient usually within 7 days. At that meeting the complaint will be discussed and the teacher dealing with the complaint will endeavour to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant(s). If the complainant(s) request it, that teacher will confirm an agreed resolution in writing.

14. If, for whatever reason, a meeting cannot take place then the teacher will send a written or email response to the complainant(s). Thus a reply will normally be given in relation to any complaint within 7 days from the date of it being received. It is anticipated that the majority of complaints will be resolved informally in this way.

15. Where at any stage the teacher dealing with the complaint considers that it is so serious that he/she should not deal with it, he/she will refer it immediately to the Head for Formal Resolution and inform the complainant(s) that he/she has done so and the Procedure from paragraph 16 of 'Formal Resolution' will then be followed.

FORMAL RESOLUTION

16. Where the teacher dealing with the complaint initially has not been able to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant(s) within 14 days from the date he/she received the complaint then he/she will send a letter/email to the complainant(s) advising them of their right to proceed to formal resolution by the Head whether or not the Head dealt with the complaint informally.

17. Such a letter will inform them that if they wish to proceed to formal resolution they should immediately send their complaint in writing to the Head. If no notification in writing is received within 7 days of that letter then the complaint shall be deemed to be closed and no further action will be taken upon it.

18. The teacher who initially dealt with the complaint will report to the Head the steps that have already been taken informally to resolve the complaint and provide him/her with the written record that he/she has made of those steps.

19. The Head will contact the complainant(s) and arrange a meeting with them at the School on a date and at a time mutually convenient. The meeting will take place usually within 14 days of the complaint being referred to the Head or within 14 days of the complaint in writing being received by the Head, whichever event is the later.

20. At that meeting the Head may be able to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant(s). Where the complaint is resolved at the meeting then the Head will confirm the details of what was agreed in writing to the complainant(s) within 7 days.

21. Where after discussion with the complainant(s) the Head decides that it is necessary for him/her to make further enquiries before attempting to resolve the complaint then the meeting will be

adjourned to another date within a reasonable time. The length of time of such an adjournment will be determined by the Head according to the nature of the complaint.

22. If the complaint is not resolved in the meeting(s) with the Head then the complainant(s) will be informed in writing within 14 days of their final meeting with the Head of his/her decision. If, for whatever reason, a meeting cannot take place then the Head will send his/her decision in writing to the complainant(s).

23. It is anticipated that the Head will give his/her written decision usually within a period of 28 days of him/her having had the complaint referred to him/her or him/her having received it in writing whichever is the later event. His/her written decision will advise the complainant(s) that if they are not satisfied with his/her decision they may proceed to a Panel Hearing.

PANEL HEARING

24. Any parent not satisfied with the Head's formal resolution of their complaint may seek a Panel Hearing. Any Panel Hearing will be conducted by three persons not directly involved in the dispute. One of them will be a person independent of the management and running of the School; that person may act as the Chairman of the Panel. The other two will be Governors of the School.

25. A complainant(s) seeking a Panel Hearing shall within 7 days of receipt of the Head's decision notify the Convenor in writing that they seek a Panel Hearing. If no notification in writing is received within that period of time then the complaint shall be deemed to be closed and no further action will be taken upon it.

26. However, where the Convenor receives such notification from the complainant(s) within the requisite time the Convenor shall establish as soon as is reasonably practicable the membership of the Panel and the date on which the Panel Hearing can take place.

27. Usually the Panel Hearing will take place at the School within 28 days from the date on which the notification was received by the Convenor. As soon as reasonably practicable the Convenor shall send to the Chairman and members of the Panel photocopies of all records made by the relevant teacher and the Head in relation to their investigation and attempted resolution of the complaint. Unless the Chairman decides it is inappropriate in the particular circumstances of the complaint, the Convenor will also disclose copies of those records to the complainant(s).

28. The person appointed to Chair the Panel shall decide the timetable and procedure which shall be adopted prior to and at the Panel Hearing. In consultation with the other two Panel members he/she may seek further information relevant to the complaint through the Convenor from the complainant(s) and/or the School.

29. Such information or details shall be provided within the timescale set by the Chairman unless he/she agrees to an extension of time which shall only be given in exceptional circumstances. The Convenor will place all such information at the earliest opportunity before the Chairman. Unless the Chairman decides it is inappropriate in the particular circumstances of the complaint, the Convenor will disclose copies of all such information to each of the parties.

30. At the Panel Hearing, the complainant(s) may be accompanied by one other person eg a relative or friend. Legal representation will only be permitted if the Chairman considers it appropriate. If it is considered appropriate the Chairman will direct the Convenor to inform the complainant(s) to that effect so that they may choose to be legally represented at the Panel Hearing if they so wish. Should they decide to be so represented they shall inform the Convenor at least 14 days before the date set for the Panel Hearing that that is their intention. If the complainant(s) chooses to be legally represented the Convenor will notify the other parties of that decision to enable them to have legal representation at the Panel Hearing should they so wish.

31. The Hearing Panel will hear the complaint and receive such evidence that the Chairman decides is appropriate. The Panel will hear any representations that the parties may wish to make at the end of any such evidence. The Panel will make their findings and recommendations known to both the complainant and, where relevant the person complained about, in writing within 14 days of its completion. The findings of the Panel will also be made available to the Governors and the Head.

32. In the exceptional circumstance of a Panel Hearing having to be adjourned for further enquires to be made and/or for further evidence to be heard or otherwise put before the Panel then the Chairman shall give directions as to the timetable by which the enquiries must be conducted and/or the evidence put before the Panel and in what form. Unless the Chairman decides it is inappropriate in the particular circumstances of the complaint, the Convenor will disclose copies of all such further evidence and/or information to each of the parties.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (AGED 3 – 5)

33. Parents of children in the EYFS stage have the right to make a complaint about the school direct to OFSTED. In the event of a complaint made to the school the provisions of the policy as laid out will apply such that Within 28 days of a complaint being made, any findings and action the school intends to take will be explained to the complainant and relevant staff at the school. See Appendix 2 for contact details.

THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

34. Notwithstanding the procedures explained in this document any parents has the right to address complaints to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). See Appendix 2 for contact details.

In the academic year 2010-11, there were six complaints registered under this procedure at Bablake School, all of which were resolved at the preliminary stage.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

The Appointed Convenor:

Mr VG Iwanek OBE
Bursar & Clerk to the Governors

Appendix 2

Relevant Addresses and Contact Numbers

Mr VG Iwanek OBE
Bursar & Clerk to the Governors
Foundation Office
Queens House
Queens Road
Coventry CV1 3EG
024 76 271300

Mr J Watson
Headmaster
Bablake Senior School
Coundon Road
Coventry
CV1 4AU
024 76 271203

Mr J Slack
Headmaster
King Henry VIII Senior School
Warwick Road
Coventry
CV3 6AQ
024 76 271100

Mr N Price
Headmaster
Bablake Junior School & Bablake Pre Prep(Cheshunt)School
Coundon Road
Coventry
CV1 4AU
024 76 271260

Mr N Lovell

Headmaster
King Henry VIII Preparatory School
Kenilworth Road
Coventry
CV3 6PT
024 76 271307

OFSTED CONTACT DETAILS

OFSTED Telephone Number: 0300 1231231

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

OFSTED
National Business Unit,
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester.
M1 2WD

THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE CONTACT DETAILS

Telephone Number: 020 7600 0100
Fax Number : 020 7776 8849

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

Website: www.isi.net