



## **Complaints Procedure Policy**

This policy applies to the whole school including EYFS

This policy applies throughout the school from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage One. Annemount 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. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. We aim to bring all concerns about the setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. All correspondence, statements and records relating to a complaint are strictly confidential. All providers must investigate written complaints relating to their fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.

Our setting believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting.

This policy is made available to parents on the School Website and upon request from the school office.

### **Making a complaint**

#### **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 contact the Head Teacher.
- In many cases the matter will be resolved immediately.
- Complaints made directly to the Head Teacher will usually be referred to the relevant staff member unless the Head Teacher deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The Head Teacher will keep an electronic or written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received.
- Should the matter not be resolved within five days or in the event that the relevant staff member, Head Teacher or parent fails 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 Teacher. The Head Teacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Head Teacher will meet the parents concerned, normally within five 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 Teacher to carry out further investigations. The Head teacher will aim to conclude the investigations within seven days. The Head Teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head Teacher 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 Teacher will also give reasons for the decision made.
- Should a parent or guardian have a complaint about the Head Teacher, an approach should first be made to Independent Schools Association, ISA House, 5-7 Court, Great Chesterford, Saffron Walden CB10 1PF. This approach should include the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far.
- The Head Teacher is obliged to investigate the matter, will do everything possible to resolve the issue through a dialogue with all parties.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.
- A written record is kept of all complaints
  - (i) Whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to Stage 3 (a panel hearing) and
  - (ii) Action taken by the school as a result of these complaints, regardless of whether they are upheld and
  - (iii) 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 2008 Act requests access to them.

## **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be invited to a hearing.
- An external Panel will be invited to help settle the complaint. The Panel has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- The Panel will consist of at least three people who have not been directly involved with the matter detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The Panel will schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days of the referral.
- 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 no later than seven 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.
- The panel keeps all discussions confidential. The panel can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel and the staff member, if this is decided to be helpful. The Panel keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice the panel gives.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- The panel hearing will go ahead even if the parent subsequently decides not to attend unless the parent indicates that they do not wish to proceed with the complaint.
- Where further investigation is required and after due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations. A copy of these findings and recommendations should be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person complained about, informing them of its decision and the reasons for it and also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Head Teacher. The decision of the Panel will be final.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

The process with dealing with a complaint in writing from the moment it is received by the school to resolution will take no more than 28 working days, except in circumstances in which the normal time-scales are affected by issues that delay resolution; namely school holidays and other factors.

For any complaint that involves a potential child protection issue, this must be reported immediately to the Head Teacher (See our Child Protection Policy for details of the procedure).

In addition to the Complaints Procedure detailed above, parents may also make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish to, the relevant contact details are: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD. Telephone: 03001231231 Web: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) Additionally, you can raise concerns by writing to ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA, or to [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net).

Complaints relating to the EYFS are made available to Ofsted and ISI upon request.

If concerns relate to bullying or possible child abuse then in the first instance you can contact ISI on [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net) or 020 7710 9900 and they will advise. In addition to ISI and/or the Department for Education, parents can contact the child protection unit of the local authority social services department.

No formal complaints have been received by the school in the year preceding this policy review.

**Date: September 2019**

**Review: July 2020**