

MOON HALL SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

This policy applies to the whole school.

This policy incorporates the manner in which complaints are to be handled according to the DfE Regulatory Requirements, standard 7.

This policy will be available to parents, staff and pupils on the Moon Hall School. It is currently also available to parents staff and pupils, upon request to the school office, at the school's premises during the school day. The policy is clearly identified in the information for prospective pupils and parents which accompany the school prospectus when a parent makes an enquiry for admission to the school.

Introduction

The School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. The School's aims are concerned with meeting the needs of the pupils, parents and other stakeholders. Constant communication and feedback are crucial in monitoring standards and improving provision. Those who have concerns or complaints should feel these can be voiced and that they will be taken seriously. There is a difference between a concern and a complaint: concerns may be aired less formally, and the process of discussion may resolve the issue. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response from the school - either to explain its position or to put right what may be wrong.

We will seek to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible. A complaint is likely to arise when there are issues of physical or emotional well-being and security at stake, or when the school's stated aims or values are being ignored. A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint. If parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure. Investigations will be thorough, fair and completed in a reasonable time-frame. The complainant may not be entitled to all information regarding the investigation, but will be kept informed of the process and of the decisions reached.

Informal resolution of complaints and concerns notwithstanding, the following should be noted:

- Parents, staff and pupils (including boarders) may make a complaint to Ofsted if they so wish. In particular those who are boarders or parents of boarders may wish to comment on concerns regarding boarding welfare.
- Pupils and staff are not penalised for making a complaint in good faith. The school welcomes and is open to feedback on the services that it provides.
- Complaints will be resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.

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 the most appropriate member of staff, such as their child's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff contacted cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to consult the Headteacher.
- Complaints made directly to the Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher, unless the Headteacher deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The member of staff who is dealing with the matter 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 five (5) working days or in the event that the member of staff 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

- The process of dealing with a formal complaint in writing from the moment that it is received by the school to resolution will take no more than twenty eight (28) working days.

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- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headteacher will speak or write/ e-mail parents to the parents, within five (5) days of receiving the complaint with a view to discussing the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headteacher 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 Headteacher will also give reasons for the decision. The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to parents within ten (10) days.
- References to numbers of days relate to term time only.

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 Convenor, who will be 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 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. All members of the Panel will be appointed by the Governors. The Panel Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within ten (10) working 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 five (5) days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person of their choice.
- 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 normally within five (5) working 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 Headteacher, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.
- References to numbers of days relate to term time only.

Confidentiality

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are 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.

Monitoring and review

- The Headteacher monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. They examine this log on an annual basis.

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- The Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any necessary modifications to this policy.

Signed: Headteacher

Date: September 2010

To be reviewed by no later than two years after the date shown or earlier if there are changes in regulations.

Appendix to the Complaints Procedure

For contacting external complaints bodies:

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

The complaint to ISI should state:

“I want to complain about a school” and may alternatively be communicated by telephone to 02077768830 or by email to durell.barnes@isi.net

Ofsted,

Royal Exchange Building, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA

Telephone: 08456 404045 Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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