

# Fair Ways School

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

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## **Fair Ways Values**

As a charity we measure our wealth by making a difference, not by making a profit.

By creating a culture that values every individual, we can harness and develop their potential so that they may achieve great things.

1. Make a difference
2. Never give up
3. Value every individual
4. Listen to each other, develop each other, and reach our potential
5. Quality and passion in what we do

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Fair Ways School has long prided itself on the quality of the education and care provided for its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint they can expect it to be treated seriously by the school in accordance with this policy. The school is required under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2003 to make the policy known to all parents.

## **2 Stage 1**

- 2.1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- 2.2 If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son / daughter's teacher. In most cases the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parent's satisfaction. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter it may be necessary for parents to consult the Deputy Head or Head of School.
- 2.3 Complaints made directly to the Head of School will usually be referred to the teacher unless she / he deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally. Concerns relating to Child Protection must be referred directly to the Head of School, unless the concerns relate to her, in which case the Deputy Head will consult with the company proprietor.
- 2.4 The teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. There will also be a record of whether or not the complaint was resolved at the preliminary stage or whether the complaint proceeded to a panel hearing. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 working days, or in the event that the teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint to the next stage of this procedure.
- 2.5 All correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential.

### **3 Categories of Complaint**

- 3.1 **Concerns (Level 1)** - will be discussed by the young person's social worker (if appropriate), the member of staff's Manager and normally dealt with by Fair Ways as an in house matter.
- 3.2 **Complaint (Level 2)** will be discussed with the young person's social worker, their Manager, and normally by a Fair Ways Manager and Senior Manager.
- 3.3 **An Allegation (Level 3)** will be discussed by the young person's social worker, their Manager and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and a Fair Ways Senior Manager and / or Director.
- 3.4 The LADO is independent of both the child and the teaching staff.

### **4 Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- 4.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head of School who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- 4.2 In most cases the Head of School will meet with or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, an agreement will be reached at this stage.
- 4.3 It may be necessary for the Head of School to carry out further investigations. The Head of School will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 4.4 When the Head of School 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 of School will also give reasons for her decision.
- 4.5 If parents are still not satisfied with the decision they should proceed to the final stage of this procedure.

## 5 Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- 5.1 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to one of the Directors of Fair Ways.
- 5.2 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. The Panel members will be appointed by a company director and the Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working days.
- 5.3 If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require further particulars of the complaint or any related matters be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 3 working days prior to the hearing.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 If possible the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation.
- 5.6 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 7 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. A copy will be sent to the person complained about where relevant.
- 5.7 Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(1) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.
- 5.8 The complaints policy / procedures and number of complaints will be made available to the Secretary of State and the inspectors by the Head Teacher and Proprietor.

N.B. For the purposes of this document, a "working day" falls between Monday and Friday.

Evaluation will take place on an annual basis.