



## Complaints Policy & Procedure

### Introduction and Aims

This Complaints Policy and Procedure can be found on our website and a copy is included with the Information Pack given to parents of new pupils as they enter the school. Hard copies can be accessed on request via the school office.

This Complaints Policy and Procedure does not apply to prospective pupils but does apply to past pupils if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered. The policy does not cover exclusions.

We are aware of the difference between a '**concern**' and a '**complaint**' and are mindful that taking 'informal concerns' seriously will reduce the likelihood that it will develop into a 'formal complaint'. As a school we operate a rapid action system aiming to deal with parental anxieties, concerns or complaints as soon as they occur. Parents can come into the school at the beginning or end of the day and, when they have a concern or grievance, can almost always have an immediate discussion with their child's Class Teacher (or a member of LT). This approach very often resolves the complaint.

### Receipt of Complaints

All **complaints** are noted in the Class Complaints Log which is stored on the s-drive. The Complaints Log includes a description and whether it was resolved or progressed to Stage 2 or Stage 3 before resolution. There is also a note made of the actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints, regardless of whether a complaint is upheld. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidentially in school unless the Secretary of State or ISI/Ofsted request access to them.

### Stage 1 – Informal Procedure

If a parent feels there has been a failure to deliver what is expected they are entitled to complain. The aim is to ensure that all concerns and complaints are addressed promptly and resolved informally wherever possible.

**What will happen?** Parents are encouraged to speak to their child's Class Teacher or another member of staff immediately. It is important to ask the complainant at this stage what they think might resolve the issue, so that action can be taken.

The member of staff approached will try to deal with the complaint immediately and will make a note in the Complaints Log to this effect. If more investigation is needed or the advice of a more senior member of staff is required, this will be arranged. The parent will be informed of this and that a response will be made within the next **5 working days** and a note made in the Complaints Log. The staff member dealing with the initial complaint in the informal procedure will make sure that parents have the information needed to escalate the matter to the next stage if this become necessary.

### Stage 2 – Formal Procedure

Where a parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with the informal procedure, they may escalate the complaint to the formal procedure and make the complaint in writing.



## Complaints Policy & Procedure

(Although all formal complaints will be made in writing, this does not mean that the formal stage is automatically triggered whenever a concern is expressed in writing, whether by email or hard copy letter. Complaints will usually only progress to the formal stage after first being considered at the preliminary stage and only then if the complainant intends to escalate the matter to the formal stage).

**What will happen?** An interview with a member of LT will often be sufficient to promote the actions that will remedy the complaint.

If not the basis of the complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days. A further written response, usually outlining proposed actions, will be made within **15 working days**. In all cases an appropriate note will be made in the Complaints Log by the member of LT dealing with the complaint.

### Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

Where a parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with the informal procedure and formal procedure, then provision will be made for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Proprietors and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school. This panel hearing stage will always be invoked where a parent remains dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 unless the parent indicates later that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. Therefore, the panel hearing will take place even if a parent subsequently decides not to attend. The complaint should be considered in the parent's absence and the findings issued to bring matters to a conclusion.

The school will acknowledge the parents' written request for a Panel Hearing within **5 working days** of receipt and the Panel Hearing will take place within **15 working days** of the acknowledgment by the school of the parents' written request for a Stage 3 hearing. The school will accommodate parental availability and parental comments on the suitability of the panel members in arranging for the panel hearing. The parent(s) may bring someone with them to the hearing.

The panel will make their findings and recommendations based on their discussions with the Proprietor(s) and the complainants and these findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor(s) and Headteacher.

The Department for Education advises that Panel members should be:  
*'people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments.'*

The suggested independent members of the panel who have no involvement with the day to day running or management of the school are:

Mrs Ro Kaye

Retired Senior Housemistress and Teacher of Physics,  
The Cheltenham Ladies' College



## Complaints Policy & Procedure

Dr Terri Passenger  
Mr Andrew Judge  
Dr Alan Day

Educational Psychologist  
Retired Deputy Headteacher at Dean Close Prep.  
Retired Consultant Paediatrician – Cheltenham  
General Hospital

For the academic year 2017-2018 there were **no Stage 2 complaints** and **no Stage 3 complaints**.

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### Complaints in the EYFS:

With regard to the EYFS at Airthrie School, written complaints about the **fulfilment of the EYFS requirements** form an additional part of this policy and are separate from the requirement regarding complaints which apply to the main school. This type of complaint must be investigated, and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The Complaints Log must be made available to ISI/Ofsted on request in this instance.

### Other options open to parents with a complaint

- 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) or telephoning 020 7600 0100.
- You can also contact the Department for Education [online](#) or on **0370 000 2288**.
- 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**. In addition to ISI and/or the Department for Education, parents can contact the child protection unit of the local authority social services department.

**What will ISI do in response to my complaint?** - It is not the role of the inspectorate to investigate individual cases, disputes about fees or complaints about pupils no longer at the school. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Department for Education may instruct ISI to visit the school before its inspection. This may be without notice where they consider children's welfare or safety to be at risk. All letters to ISI expressing concerns will be logged for action or reference at the next inspection.

Parents may also indicate any concerns in their responses to a confidential survey, carried out prior to inspection. Inspectors will take account of parents' comments, follow them up during the inspection and report on any significant issues. Individual respondents are not identified or discussed with the school and inspectors will not become involved in individual disputes.

**Appealing to the Secretary of State for Education/Ofsted** - If you believe that the ISI has not dealt with your complaint against a school reasonably, you can appeal in writing to the:

**Secretary of State for Education**  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BT

**Ofsted**  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD



## Complaints Policy & Procedure

The Secretary of State can take action if a Leadership Team or the ISI has not carried out or fulfilled a statutory duty or has acted unreasonably. The Secretary of State cannot do anything until the school and the ISI has finished looking into the complaint.