

COMPLAINTS POLICY



Blundell's

PREPARATORY SCHOOL



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**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
(INCLUDING EYFS)**

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Policy Review Amendments

Date of Amendment	Amendment
March 2019	Change in number of formal complaints
Aug 2019	Change in number of formal complaints
Jan 2020	Change in number of formal complaints
April 2020	Following Governors Review the following amendments were made to Stage 3 of the policy: Addition of points 3 and 4. Additional explanatory comments added to points 5, 7-10.
January 2021	Change in number of formal complaints
January 2022	Change in number of formal complaints and clarification as to where the Complaints Log is held
November 2022	Ofsted address and telephone number added. Amendment made to the complaints record re retention
January 2023	Change in number of formal complaints



Complaints Procedures (including EYFS)

It should be remembered that all complaints should be recorded on file.

Staff:

Academic staff have a direct line through the Deputy Head, Head of Pre-Prep through to the Head Master. These complaints may concern the specific behaviour of a pupil or pupils, or could be related to unprofessional conduct by colleagues. There is a duty for all matters to be fully investigated and recorded. Staff contracts include a grievance procedure and colleagues should remember that there is a staff governor representative. Where a member of staff feels aggrieved with a Senior Leadership decision, he/she is encouraged to talk to the staff governor representative or any of the other governors initially. Subsequently there is a full grievance procedure which can be followed.

Parents:

See the Parental Complaints procedure that follows.

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Blundell's 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. The aim of this policy is to ensure that a complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level, and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practice, it is fair to those concerned, and it helps to promote parents' confidence in our ability to safeguard and promote welfare. We will try to resolve every concern in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, reviewing our systems and procedures in light of the circumstances.

Timescales: We aim to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. When we refer to Working Days, we mean Monday to Friday, when the School is open during term time. The dates of terms are published on the School's website.

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 their son/daughter's form teacher. In many cases the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Head of Pre-Prep, Deputy Head or Head.

- We will acknowledge a written notification by telephone, e-mail or letter within two working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the holidays. A matter raised orally will not necessarily be acknowledged in writing.
- Complaints made directly to the Head of Pre-Prep, Deputy Head or Head will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher unless the Head of Pre-Prep, Deputy Head or Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The form teacher 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 three weeks or in the event that the form teacher 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

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will meet the parents concerned, normally within four working 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 to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head 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 within 20 working days of the receipt of the complaint. The Head will also give reasons for the decision.
- Please note that any complaint received within two weeks of the end of term is likely to take longer to resolve owing to the presence of school holidays and the unavailability of personnel required for the investigation to be properly undertaken however an overall timeframe of three months for resolution will be enforced.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

1. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the member of the Governing Body appointed to request the Clerk to the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
2. The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least 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.

Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors - the Clerk to the Governors will then acknowledge the complaint within two working days and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within ten days.

3. The Panel will be supplied with all documents relevant to the complaint by the parties at least 4 working days before the commencement of the hearing. A record of any meeting or interview between the Head and the parents shall be circulated to the Panel and the parents as part of the documents relevant to the complaint.
4. If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further documents or information relating to the particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such information, as may be requested, shall be supplied to all parties not later than two working days prior to the hearing.
5. 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. Names of those attending the hearing shall be supplied to the panel at least two days prior to the hearing.
6. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
7. In any circumstance, and especially where further investigation or inquiry is required, the Panel will be empowered in the following ways: either (i) to adjourn the hearing; and/or (ii) to decide on how the investigation or enquiry should succeed; and/or (iii) to give directions as to how any further investigation or inquiry should be carried out.
8. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within ten days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final.
9. The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel will, within two working days of the conclusion of the hearing or any adjourned hearing, write to the parents enclosing a copy of the Panel's decision and if it sees fit a brief summary of the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final.
10. The Panel's full reasons and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about within ten working days of the hearing or adjourned hearing.
11. Private proceeding: A hearing before the Complaints Panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media.
12. Record Keeping and Confidentiality: A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at Stage 1, Stage 2 or proceed to a panel hearing, including the action taken by the School as a result of the complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. In the case of a panel hearing, the findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Governors and the Head.

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 to be kept

confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Records of complaints are maintained for three years after the pupil has left the school.

Complaints Record

A written record is kept of formal complaints, their outcomes, and whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. This record is for regular review by the Head or a senior member of staff. Records of Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications will be retained for a minimum of 7 years. Where there are safeguarding implications the records must be retained for a minimum of 10 years

Two formal complaints were made between January 2022 and January 2023. All are recorded, and reviewed within the Complaints Log which is held securely in the School Office.

EYFS

Additional requirements apply for the EYFS setting beyond those which apply to the rest of the school. Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements are investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints will be made available to ISI on request. Details of how to contact ISI will be made available if the parent believes that the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

If a parent wishes to contact Ofsted they may do so by emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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