



Complaints Procedure

The Complaints Procedure applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Introduction

Farlington 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.

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 in the first instance contact the appropriate person: Nursery Manager (for boys and girls in the Nursery Class), Class Teacher (for girls from Reception to Year 6, inclusive), Form Tutor (for girls in Year 7 – U6th) and Boarding Housemistress (for Boarders). In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If this person cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult, in the Prep School the Deputy Head and in the Senior School the appropriate Head of Year.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Headmistress or the Headmistress in either the Prep or Senior School will usually be referred to the relevant person identified above unless the Deputy Headmistress or Headmistress deems it appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Nursery Manager/Class Teacher/Form Tutor will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. School will attempt to resolve all informal complaints within 3 working days. Should a satisfactory resolution not be achieved 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 Headmistress of either the Prep School or the Senior School. The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases the Headmistress will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 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 Headmistress to carry out further investigations.



- The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmistress 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 Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.
- **If the complaint concerns the Headmistress, then parents should put their complaint in writing to the Chair of the Governors.**
- **If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3** of this procedure.

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 Chairman of the Education Committee, who has been 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 at least two other Governors not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and a specifically appointed member of the Panel independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. A hearing will take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days of referral.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. They may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of this decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmistress, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

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)(j) 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.



Complaints relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- The record of complaints is kept for at least three years.
- Parents can make a complaint to OFSTED and/or ISI if they wish. The contact details are:

OFSTED enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Tel: 08456 014772

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

Tel: 020 7600 0100

A Formal Complaint is defined as one which is not resolved at stage 1 or 2 but goes forward to Governors at stage 3. There were no such complaints in the academic year 2008-2009.



Additional elements apply under National Minimum Standard 5 to the Complaints Procedure regarding Boarders.

The following information is displayed in the Boarding House and given to Parents/Guardians of boarders. It applies specifically to the girls. Parents should follow the procedures above.

If you have any boarding related complaints, please don't bottle them up or think you might get into trouble for raising them. We want to hear from you and we will always work hard to sort things fairly and with your best interests at heart.

In the first instance, we would hope to resolve issues informally but where this is not possible, there is a formal procedure you can follow as well.

How to make an informal complaint

- (i) Speak to Mrs McKinney about it. Alternatively you could speak to any of the Boarding House staff - Mrs Kelly, Mrs Crook, Mrs Humphreys, a Gapper or any of the Head Boarders. If you do not feel able to talk to any of these people, you could speak to Mrs Higgs, Ms Higson or any member of staff to whom you feel comfortable talking.
- (ii) We will take any complaint seriously and will investigate promptly.
- (iii) The member of staff you speak to will let you know what will happen next and try to give an indication of how long the investigation may take.
- (iv) You will get appropriate feedback as soon as possible. If there is a delay, the reasons for this should be explained to you.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this informal complaints procedure, you can make a formal complaint.

How to make a formal complaint

- (i) Write to Mrs Higgs, stating that you are making a formal complaint and explain the matter you have been unable to resolve in any other way.
- (ii) The complaint will then be formally logged in the complaints file held by the Headmistress, then,
- (iii) You will then get a note from Mrs Higgs saying that she has seen the complaint and that it will be attended to within five school days of you making the complaint.
- (iv) You will then be asked to talk the matter through with either your Head of Year or the Deputy Head and you can have a friend with you who may be another pupil, a senior boarder, your tutor or any member of staff. If, within two to five days, you have not had



the matter satisfactorily sorted out within school you may contact any of the people whose names have been listed and whose addresses and telephone numbers appear at the end of this leaflet. You do not have to inform staff or anyone that you are complaining about them.

- (v) A written record is kept of serious complaints and their outcome, in the file held by the Headmistress.
- (vi) Whoever you contact will speak to you at the school - again you can have a friend with you - and will advise you about what seems sensible. At that stage it will be up to you to make a decision acting on his/her advice.

Addresses and Telephone Numbers of People Outside School You May Wish to Contact

School Doctor

Dr Ellis
Village Surgery
Station Road
Southwater
Horsham
RH13 9HQ

Tel: 01403 730016

****Counsellor***

Mrs Jane Cook
Email: janefschool@yahoo.co.uk

Childline

Tel: 0800 1111

Ofsted Helpline

08465 404040

Care Quality Commission (formerly National Care Standards Commission)

National Correspondance
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
NE1 4PA

Tel: 03000616161

Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk



***The Counsellor will be available for confidential consultations in the South Room on a Tuesday lunchtime, where privacy can be ensured. Appointments can be booked directly via email**