COMPLAINTS

POLICY

Contents

Introduction....3
Stage 1 – Informal resolution....3
Stage 2 – Formal Resolution....4
Stage 3 – Panel Hearing....5
Parents of Early Years Foundation Stage (EFYS)....6
Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints....6
Recording Complaints....6
Persistent Correspondence and Unreasonable Complaints....7
Organisations....8
Linked Policies....8
Complaints Procedure Table....9

Introduction

Eaton House Schools Complaints Policy applies to parents of all current pupils including those in the EYFS.

The complaints policy does not apply to prospective parents of pupils nor pupils who have left voluntarily or as a result of being excluded.

Eaton House Schools has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. We welcome suggestions and feedback from parents and we take both complaints and concerns seriously. If parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the Schools with care in accordance with this policy.

Eaton House Schools makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day. Eaton House Schools will ensure that parents of pupils, who request it, are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.

Eaton House Schools endeavor to resolve complaints on an informal basis. In accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Eaton House Schools will record any complaint not resolved informally, and follows the formal procedure or proceeds to a panel hearing. All complaints are kept confidential except where inspected by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you, or your child raises.

Stage 1 – Informal resolution

- It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their child's form teacher (or, where applicable, form tutor). This can be in person, by letter, telephone or email. In

many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by these means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher (or Form Tutor) cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Head Teacher.

- Complaints made directly to the Head Teacher at this stage will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher (or Form Tutor), unless the Head Teacher deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

- The form teacher (or Form Tutor) will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days, or in the event that the Form Teacher (or Form Tutor) and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents may proceed with their complaint (within three working days of receiving the decision) in accordance with Stage 2 of this policy.

- If, however, the complaint is against the Head Teacher, parents should make their complaint directly to the Principal.

- If the complaint is against the Principal, parents should make their complaint directly to the Governor.

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 Teacher. The Head Teacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

- In most cases, the Head Teacher will meet or speak to the parents, normally within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. If it is not possible to meet this time frame then an initial telephone conversation will be arranged.

- It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations.

- The Head Teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

- Once the Head Teacher 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 5 working days. The Head Teacher will give reasons for his or her decision.

- If the complaint is against the Head, the Principal will call for a full report from the Head Teacher and for all the relevant documents. The Principal may also call for a briefing

from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing within 5 working days. The Principal will give reasons for the decision.

- If, within three working days of receiving the decision, the parents are not satisfied with the decision, they may proceed in accordance with Stage 3 of this policy.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they must put their complaint in writing to the Principal.

- 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 of the running of the school.

- The Principal, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within ten 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 working days prior to the hearing.

- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not be appropriate and the companion should not be a lawyer. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.

- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint 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 considered relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.

- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within five working days of the hearing, although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing. The decision of the panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Principal and Head Teacher**.** A copy of the

Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Principal and the Head.

Parents of Early Years Foundation Stage (EFYS)

Parents of EFYS children should follow the three stages of the complaints procedure. If the complaint is regarding the school's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and the parents remain dissatisfied, then parents may take their complaint to the ISI or Ofsted.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school will complete the first two stages of the procedure within 20 working days during term time and as soon as reasonably practicable during holiday periods. Stage three, the Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days.

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 calendar days.

Recording Complaints

The school will keep a written record of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the informal stage**,** the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld)**.** At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)

- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

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 the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Written complaints relating to the requirements under the Statutory Framework for the EYFS: Eaton House Schools will provide ISI or Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.

Records of formal complaints stage two and above shall be published on the schools' website. Complaints records shall be kept for a minimum of seven years. However, if the complaint is of a safeguarding concern, records shall be kept until normal pension age or for ten years from the date of the allegation if longer.

Persistent Correspondence and Unreasonable Complaints

A complaint may be defined as vexatious where it is:

- Obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- Insists upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- Insists upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner;
- Is designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
- Demands redress that lacks any serious purpose or value.

Eaton House Schools ensure that every step is taken to resolve complaints via our three stage complaint process in its entirety.

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this will be regarded by the Schools as vexatious and outside the scope of this policy.

For complainants who excessively contact the schools, causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing.

Organisations

Eaton House Schools are part of Dukes Education, registered address: Dukes House, 58 Buckingham Gate, London, SW1E 6AJ.

Eaton House Schools will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.

ISI

ISI can be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net

ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

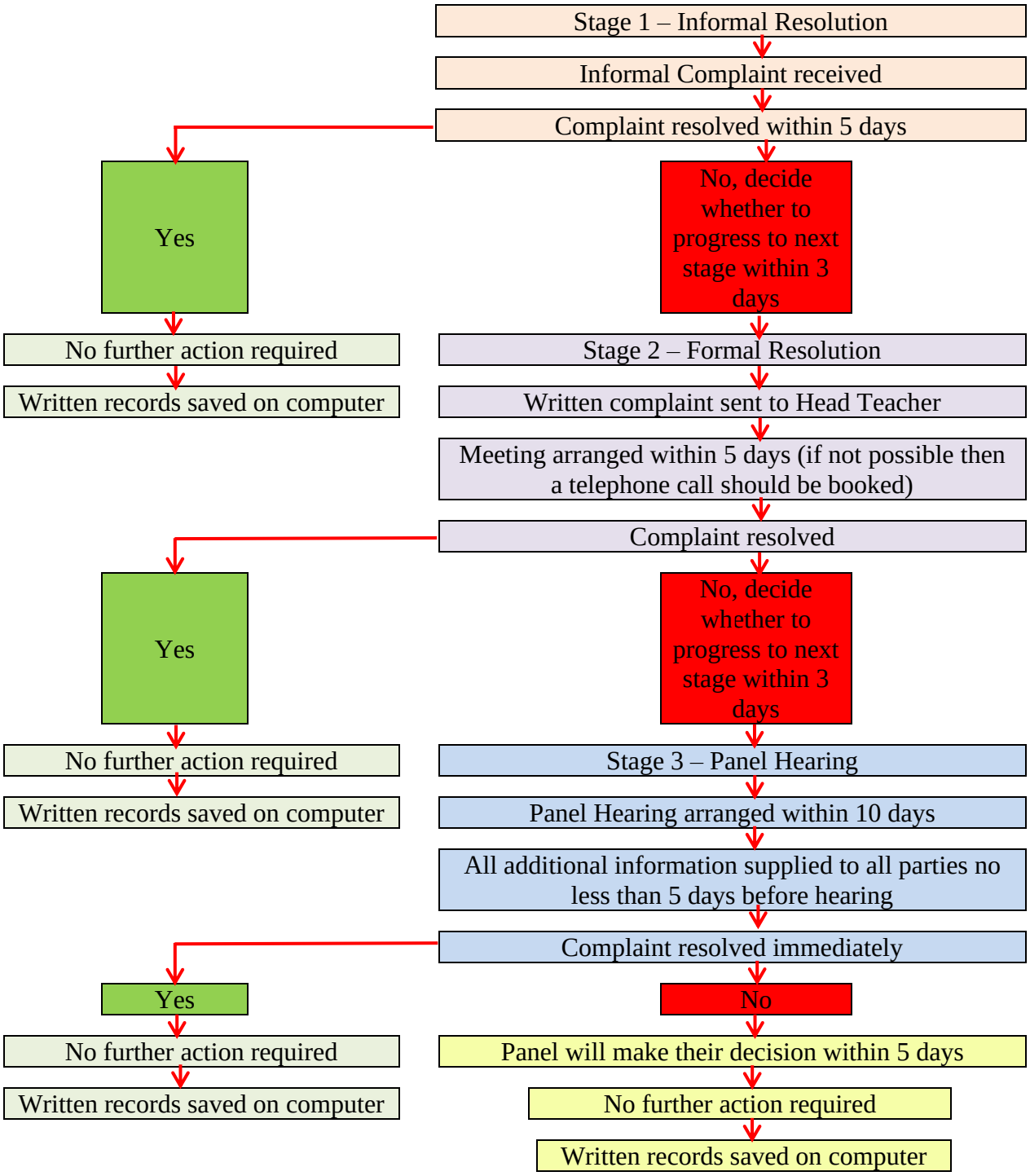
Ofsted (for EYFS parents)

If your complaint is not resolved and concerns the school's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, your complaint can be raised with either ISI or Ofsted.

Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 1231; or by email on enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1` 2WD.

Linked Policies

Admissions
Anti-Bullying
Data Protection
Equality of Opportunity

Complaints Procedure Table