



# Caversham Preparatory School

## Policies and Procedures

### 803 Complaints Policy

## Complaints Policy and Procedures

### Introduction

The school has procedures in place to handle complaints from parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

In the academic year 2021/22 we have had no complaints logged.

### Aims and Objectives

The school is committed to being fair, open and honest when dealing with complaints. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

### Matters of Concern

Matters of 'concern' are dealt with as a 'complaint' under the Independent Schools Regulatory Requirements.

### Scope of the Complaints Process

This procedure applies only to current registered pupils or parents who raised a complaint before the child left the School. It does not apply to parents of prospective pupils.

### Record of Complaints

A written record of complaints is limited to all those made in writing under the formal part of the procedure (i.e. Stages 2 and 3)

We record:

1. Date when the issue was raised
2. Name of the parent and pupil
3. Description of the complaint
4. Records of investigations where appropriate, witness statements as appropriate
5. Copies of any correspondence in writing or email regarding the complaint
6. Names of the staff members handling the complaint at each stage.
7. Whether the complaint was resolved following a formal procedure, or proceeded to a Panel Hearing
8. The action taken by the School as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld or not).

All concerned will be given a copy of any findings and recommendations.

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## Timeframe for Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitivity. Received concerns and complaints will normally be acknowledged within 24 hours. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as quickly as possible.

Stage 1 Complaints: Within a week (during term time)

Stage 2 Complaints: A further two weeks (during term time) after the conclusion of stage 1.

Stage 3 Complaints: A further four weeks after the conclusion of stage 2.

You will be informed if this will take longer for any reason.

## Complaints made during Holiday Periods

If a formal complaint is received during a school holiday, the School will try to deal with it in the usual manner and within the normal timeframes, if the staff are on site and able to do so. However, as stated in our terms and conditions, if there is no-one who can deal with the complaint, any written complaint will be dealt with at the commencement of the new school term. Please refer to the Schools Terms and Conditions for more details.

## The Complaints Process

The process is in three stages: informal, formal and panel hearing.

- If a parent is concerned about any aspect of their child's education, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their class teacher.
- Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. Our teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress. They will always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, parents should make their complaint directly to the proprietors. Contact details are located in Appendix 1.

### Stage 1 – Informal

- An informal meeting can also be set up with the Head Teacher at the parents' convenience. The Head Teacher will aim to see the parent within 24 hours so that the parents and the Head Teacher can discuss the parents' concerns with them in an informal way. If the Head Teacher is not available a senior member of staff, a member of the Senior Management Team, (SMT) will meet with the parents and discuss their concerns. This discussion will be of an informal nature and will be reported to the Head Teacher on her return.
- Informal Complaints are recorded by staff and the Head Teacher to monitor patterns of low level concern.
- Although all formal complaints are made in writing (Stage 2), this does not mean that the formal stage is automatically triggered whenever a concern is expressed in writing, for example, by email. Complaints will usually only progress to the formal stage after first being



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considered at Stage 1, and only then if the complainant intends to escalate the matter to the formal stage.

### Stage 2 – Formal

- Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Head Teacher or write to the Head Teacher (email will suffice). The Head Teacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly.
- The Head Teacher will investigate the complaint and gather evidence at this stage and will meet again with the parents within a week of the complaint being received.
- The meeting will be minuted and the parents will be given the minutes of the meeting within two days of the meeting to agree and approve. Again, if the Head Teacher is not available a member of the SMT will chair the meeting and report back to the Head Teacher as soon as possible. If the Head Teacher is not available within a reasonable time to deal with the complaint, the senior member of staff has the authority to investigate, gather evidence and meet again with the parent/s within a week of the complaint being made.
- Written complaints under the formal part of the procedure will be recorded.
- Formal complaints cannot be made after written notice has been given if fee accounts are outstanding.

### Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- If the complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily, the school will make provision for a hearing before a Panel.
- The Head Teacher invites the person making the complaint to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain their complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.
- The panel members will be given all relevant information about the complaint, any evidence gathered by the school and by the complainant to review.
- The meeting will have sufficient time allotted to review all paper evidence provided and any verbal evidence and questions at the panel meeting.
- The meeting will be held at the School.
- The meeting will be minuted.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, and normally within 5 working days of the hearing they will meet again to review.
- The Panel will consider their decision and inform the parent(s) and Head Teacher about it in writing within 5 working days. The Panel will do all they can to resolve the complaint in a fair and just manner.
- A Panel Hearing will take place, unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further.
- The School will do its best to try to accommodate parental and panel availability and consider comments concerning panel composition.
- The Panel Hearing will proceed, notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend.



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- The Panel will consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint to bring the matter to a conclusion.
- The complainant(s) may be accompanied to the panel hearing if they wish. This may be a relative or friend.
- The panel's findings and recommendation will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, and be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher.

#### The Members of the Complaints Panel

The panel will be made up of three people:

- 1) The Chair of the Board of Governors of Caversham Prep.
- 2) A non-executive member of the Board
- 3) An independent member of the panel will have no connection to management and running of the school.

The Chair and the non-executive member of the board will not have any prior knowledge of the detail of the complaint prior to the panel meeting.

#### Unresolved Complaints

If in the opinion of the complainant, the complaint has not been properly heard and/or is of a serious nature, the parents must inform ISI at [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net) where they will be asked to provide details of the circumstances and nature of the complaint, and its resolution. Contact details are below in Appendix 1.

#### Early Years Foundation Stage

There are additional requirements for our EYFS setting beyond those which apply to the rest of the school. Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

Parents who believe the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements and have any concerns about their child/children in the EYFS should contact Ofsted, and/or ISI directly. Their contact details below in Appendix 1

#### Data Protection

- The school is very careful to support parents who are making a complaint, be it formal or informal. The school is mindful of GDPR 2018 and will in all circumstances will do its utmost to protect the confidentiality of the child/children and the parents involved.
- All 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 Act requests access to them.



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## Monitoring and Review

- The Head Teacher logs all written complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. This log is reviewed on an annual basis by the Board, for best practice.
- The Board monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly.
- All parents receive a copy of the complaints procedure, if requested. The School Complaints Procedure is published on the School's Website.
- The Board takes into account any changes in the Independent Schools Statutory Regulations that affect the complaints process, and in the event will make any modifications necessary to this policy.

## Appendix 1: Contact Details

### Headmaster

Mr Dan Slape  
Caversham Preparatory School  
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Caversham  
Reading  
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Email: [head@cavershamschool.com](mailto:head@cavershamschool.com)  
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### Governors

The Chair of Governors, Mr Ian Lawson  
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### ISI

Cap House  
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London  
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Phone: 0207 600 0100

### Ofsted

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Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Phone: 0300 123 4666,



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## Policy Administration

### Linked Policies

This policy also needs to be in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

None

### Quoted Legislation and Guidance

- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)

### Review Schedule

This policy is reviewed by the Head Teacher on an annual basis, and any changes are reviewed by the Board of Governors.

### Update and Review Log

Updated/ Reviewed By	Date	Notes
I Lawson	Historical Updates	First written by I Lawson (Chairman) to reflect the School's Terms and Conditions. Reviewed annually by J Lawson and changed for the ISI Inspection 2014 then reviewed annually by J Lawson until:
J Lawson	Jan 2019	Author(s): J Lawson Date: Jan 2019 Review Frequency: Annually Next Review Date: Jan 2020 Board Sign Off: Jan 2020 Changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope Section added</li> <li>• Reference to Exclusion Policy</li> <li>• Data Protection and reference to GDPR</li> <li>• Section on Unresolved Complaints added</li> <li>• Formal Stage split into 2 sections</li> <li>• Matters of Concern Section added</li> </ul> Other new statements added: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The School will do its best to try to accommodate parental and panel availability and consider comments concerning panel composition.</li> <li>• The Panel Hearing will proceed,</li> </ul>



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		notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend. The Panel will consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint to bring the matter to a conclusion.
Board of Governors	Jan 2019	Review and Approval
A Lawson	April 2021	Formatting and Updating Links Removed A Lawson from the review panel Updated Headings to explicitly refer to stages
A Lawson	January 2023	Updated throughout