

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This policy is applicable to all children in the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on the School website www.dodderhill.co.uk or on request.

Introduction

Dodderhill 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 contact their child's Class or Form Teacher or the Nursery Manager. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class or Form Teacher or Nursery Manager cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for her to consult the Headmistress or one of her Deputies.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, a Deputy Headmistress or the Headmistress will usually be referred to the relevant Class or Form Teacher or the Nursery Manager unless the Head of Department, Deputy Headmistress or the Headmistress deems it appropriate for her/him to deal with the matter personally.
- The Class or Form Teacher or Nursery Manager 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 5 working days or in the event that the Class or Form Teacher or Nursery Manager 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 Headmistress. She will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmistress will meet the parents concerned **within 8 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 Headmistress to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmistress will **keep written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to all complaints and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.
- 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 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 Convenor 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 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 Governors.** The Convenor on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and **within 10 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 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- **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.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately 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 they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete **within 10 working days of the Hearing.**
- The Panel will provide the parents with a copy of any findings and recommendations by electronic mail or otherwise and where relevant the person complained of.
- The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be available for inspection at School by the Headmistress and the Governors.
- A written record of all complaints and the action taken as a result of each complaint made during any specified period must be provided, on request, to Ofsted and ISI.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted), the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and the Worcestershire Local Safeguarding Children Board

Parents may approach Ofsted or the ISI directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of our registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the National Standards for Day Care are adhered to.

The address and telephone number for our Ofsted regional centre is:

The National Business Unit
Ofsted
The Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Telephone: 08456 404040

The address and telephone number for ISI is:

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 – 12 Long Lane
London EC 1A 9HA

Telephone: 0207 600 0100

Summary

What to do if you are a parent with a concern or complaints:-

- Where possible speak to your child's Teacher or to the Nursery Manager. They will endeavour to sort out any difficulties
- If you are still concerned please arrange to see the Headmistress or one of her Deputies
- You can also write to the Chairman of Governors.
Chairman of Governors

Mr John Wheatley
Chairman of Governors
Dodderhill School
Crutch Lane
Droitwich Spa
WR9 0BE

- You can contact Ofsted or ISI at the addresses given above

If a child appears to be at risk we will follow our Safeguarding Children Policy in accordance with our local Safeguarding Children Board. This can be found on our website at www.dodderhill.co.uk

Records

A record of complaints against our Early Years Foundation Stage and/or the children and/or the adults working in the School including the EYFS is kept for three years, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

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(3)(f) 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 will also be disclosed on request to the Secretary of State

Complaints made in 2009- 10

No complaints were made under the formal procedure in the academic year 2009 - 2010.

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### Timetable for Complaints Procedure

Initial contact with Class Teacher / Form Teacher or Nursery Manager



Within at least 5 days

Acknowledgement and resolution.  
If no resolution request complainant to write to Headmistress



Complaint to Headmistress in writing from complainant



Within at least 8 days

Meeting or response to complainant in writing. Resolution reached.  
If no resolution, request Panel Hearing with Convenor/Complaints Panel



Within at least 10 days

Response given to complainant

**Complete resolution must take place within 28 days**