



FOUNDED 1879

HALLFIELD SCHOOL
COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY
FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARERS



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COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARERS

SCOPE

This policy sets out the Complaints and Grievance procedure for parents, guardians and carers. All Staff must be aware of its provisions.

AIMS

We wish to ensure that:

- parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- we respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously;
- we take action where appropriate.

POLICY STATEMENT

Hallfield School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns they may raise.

This policy will be made available to all parents. This is made clear to parents on admission to the School and on the School's website.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response.

Complaints from pupils and members of the public will be treated in a similar way to complaints from parents/guardians/carers, although most complaints from pupils and the public would be referred directly to the Headmaster or a senior member of staff.

Complaints will be dealt with within a clear and pre-determined time frame.

We would hope to deal with the majority of concerns in an informal way, but proper procedures are in place if a formal complaint is made. These are to be clearly outlined in the School's procedures

Person Responsible For Policy

The Headmaster

Policy First Written

July 1996

Date of most recent policy review

25th January 2012



COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES PROCEDURES

If a parent/guardian/carer wants to make any kind of complaint or to raise a concern they should follow the procedures set out below.

1. RAISING A CONCERN OR MAKING AN INFORMAL COMPLAINT

Parents/guardians/carers who wish to raise a concern can talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter or telephone. Any member of staff will be happy to help but it may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue, e.g. academic matters with the form or subject teacher; sports concerns with the Head of P.E.; After School Care concerns with the After School Care Leader. They may be able to resolve matters quickly with the minimum of fuss.

In many instances it may be necessary for the member of staff contacted to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. A date will be given by which time the parent/guardian/carer will receive a response. If a detailed explanation of the issues is needed, a letter or report will be sent as quickly as possible and will inform the parent/guardian/carer of the outcome of the complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

2. WHAT TO DO NEXT IF A PROBLEM IS NOT RESOLVED

If the complainant is not satisfied with the way their concern has been dealt with by the member of staff concerned they have one of two options available to them. Firstly, they can ask to meet with the appropriate Senior Manager to discuss the issue and attempt to resolve the problem.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting they should write a letter to the Headmaster.

Following receipt of the letter there will be a further period where the Headmaster and any Senior Manager concerned will consult with other members of staff as necessary and make a full investigation into the issues. Following this consultation, full and frank feedback will be given to the complainant and an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the area of concern, along with information regarding any measures that the School intends to take in response. This feedback must be given with five working days of the receipt of the written complaint and this timescale will be made clear to the complainant.

3. MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT

If the complainant expresses dissatisfaction with the outcome, the Headmaster will offer to refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors. Alternatively, the complainant may wish to write directly to the Chairman of Governors. The Chairman will call for a full report from the Headmaster and will examine the matters thoroughly before responding. In any case, the Chairman will respond to the complainant within 14 days of his receipt of the letter. This may result in a positive solution but, if it does not, the Chairman will invite the complainant to a meeting. The complainant may wish to be supported by a friend but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.

If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter would be referred to the School's Conciliation Committee, an ad hoc Committee comprising:

- Two Governors who have no connection with the complaint and no knowledge of the details of the complaint, and
- A member of the Hallfield Parents' Association who, in accordance with ISI Guidelines is used in analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments. Examples of people likely to be suitable include
 - Retired business people,
 - Civil servants,
 - Head of Senior Staff members at other Schools,
 - People with a legal background,
 - Retired police officers.

It is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Governor will invite the complainant to a meeting. The complainant will be asked if there are any papers that he/she wishes to be circulated beforehand. As with the Chairman's meeting, the complainant will be invited to bring a friend. There must be at least one person present at this hearing who is independent of the management and running of the School.

If the complainant is still not satisfied, they may wish to seek independent legal advice. There are certain circumstances in which the Secretary of State has an interest and the complainant could contact him directly or through a lawyer or MP. The Secretary of State would then ask the Registrar of Independent Schools to investigate, usually through HM Inspector of Schools.

NB. Responses to complaints concerning Holiday Clubs may take longer due to staff being unavailable but will be dealt with within five working days of the recommencement of the School term.

4. COMPLAINTS IN EYFS

We also make the following provisions when dealing with complaints in EYFS:

- A record of the complaint is kept for at least three years.
- We will notify complainants of the outcome of any investigation into a complaint within 28 days of receiving the complaint.
- Written records of any complaints will be made available to Ofsted or ISI on request.
- Parents are given details of how to contact Ofsted and ISI on request, and it is explained to them that they are entitled to make a complaint directly to those bodies should they wish to. This information is also permanently displayed on the parents' noticeboard.

5. RECORD KEEPING

Written records will be kept of all complaints and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a committee hearing. 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 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Complaints will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Headmaster and/or Deputy Head/Head of Pre-Prep. as appropriate and those directly involved. The Chairman of Governors may also need to be informed. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties, outside the School, aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it becomes necessary to refer matters to the police. Parents/guardians/carers would be fully informed in such circumstances.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, anonymous complaints may not be pursued. Action which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of a complaint will be handled confidentially within the School.