

Heathfield Knoll School

Complaints Policy

This policy is supported and complemented by the following policies:

- Admissions
- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour and Discipline
- Drugs and Drug Testing
- Safeguarding and Child Protection

Key personnel:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| • Headmaster | Lawrence Collins |
| • Deputy Headmaster | Mark Stubbs |
| • Chairman of the Trust | Douglas Jackson |

This document is reviewed annually by L Collins, Headmaster or as events or legislation change require.

Reviewed August 2018

Updated August 2018

Next review due: July 2019



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1. Policy Statement

Heathfield Knoll School prides itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils, however, it recognises that parents will, from time to time, have normal and legitimate complaints about the progress, achievement, behaviour or welfare of their son or daughter. Parents are encouraged to make those complaints known to staff so that they can be addressed in partnership with the school.

Heathfield Knoll School will take all complaints seriously and will make every effort to deal with complaints informally, at an early stage, in the spirit of continued respect and partnership.

At Heathfield Knoll School we MUST:

- Resolve all complaints within 28 working days of the complaint being received, particularly in the Early Years setting.
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with in line with the procedures set out in this document.
- Ensure that complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.
- Ensure that, where appropriate, a full and fair investigation of the issue is undertaken.
- Ensure that no-one, including a pupil, is penalised for making a complaint in good faith.
- Keep a written record, for at least three years, of all complaints, the action taken and at what stage they were resolved, regardless of whether they are upheld. (Note: EYFS -This information is provided to Ofsted at their request).
- Regularly review the record of all written complaints and their outcomes to identify whether review or change in practice is needed or so that patterns can be identified and appropriate interventions made. This review will be carried out by the Head (or a designated senior leader).
- Keep confidential all records relating to individual complaints except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act, as amended, requests access to them.
- Any appeals against exclusion are dealt with following the complaints procedure.

A record of formal complaints and their outcomes are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Headmaster's office and is reviewed regularly by the Head.

The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the last school year (2017 to 2018) was 0. There were 0 complaints registered under the formal procedure in the EYFS.

Parents are also free to make a complaint to ISI if concerning the EYFS, or OFSTED if they believe the provider / school is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Relevant contact details are set out below.

ISI: CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA
Phone: 0207 7768849 or e-mail via the ISI website: www.isi.net

OFSTED: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M21 2WD
Phone: 0300 123 1231 or e-mail enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

- This policy applies to all members of our school community, including those in our EYFS setting
- This document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the main school office.

2. Procedures

2.1. Informal Resolution

At Heathfield Knoll School we recognise that, all most invariably, the sooner complaints are raised the easier it is for an appropriate resolution to be found. In the first instance, you are encouraged to raise your complaint with any member of staff. This would normally be your child's Form Teacher.

That person will try to identify areas of agreement and clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred. They will make a written record of your complaint, the date on which it was received, and then try to resolve the matter themselves or refer you to the appropriate person.

If the matter cannot be resolved within 6 working days, or in the event that you are not satisfied, you may make a formal complaint to the Deputy Head or the Head of EYFS (as appropriate). If the complaint concerns the Headmaster, then you will be referred to the Chairman of the Heathfield Educational Trust.

2.2. Formal Resolution

There are 3 stages to the formal complaints procedure at Heathfield Knoll School:

- Stage 1:** A complaint is dealt with by the Deputy Head, or the Head of EYFS.
Stage 2: A complaint is dealt with by the Headmaster.
Stage 3: A complaint is dealt with by the Heathfield Educational Trust

2.2.1. Stage one:

Complaint is dealt with by the Deputy Head or the Head of EYFS

Formal complaints should be in writing and sent to the Deputy Head or the Head of EYFS (as appropriate)

In most instances, there will need to be an investigation in order to understand the circumstances surrounding the complaint. That investigation will normally be overseen by the Deputy Head or the Head of EYFS (as appropriate)

If an investigation is needed, the investigating member of staff will:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or if further information is necessary)
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or against whom the complaint has been made, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
- Keep notes of any interviews

The relevant heads of school will make a written record of the complaint, the date on which it was received, the date on which the matter was dealt with and the outcome of the procedure. You will receive a copy of this written record within 3 working days following this process.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this stage, if you feel that your complaint is sufficiently serious, or if you are dissatisfied with the way in which your complaint has been handled, you may take your complaint to the second stage of this procedure.

**2.2.2. Stage two:
Complaint is dealt with by the Headmaster**

If you wish to take your complaint to this stage you should put your complaint in writing to the Headmaster.

The Headmaster may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. The Headmaster also decides whether it would be helpful to meet with you to discuss your complaint.

The decision in respect of the resolution of your complaint will normally be made within 6 working days of the Headmaster receiving the complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this stage or if you are dissatisfied with the way in which your complaint has been handled by the Headmaster you may take your complaint to the third stage of this procedure.

**2.2.3. Stage three:
Complaint is dealt with by the Heathfield Educational Trust Complaints Panel**

The third stage of the formal complaints procedure is the Complaints Panel. If you wish to take your complaint to this stage you are required to put your complaint in writing to the Chairman of the Trust. It is important that you set the matter out in sufficient detail.

On receiving a written complaint, a hearing by a Complaints Panel will be arranged within 10 working days. You may attend the hearing in person and may be accompanied if you so wish; in which case you are required to notify the school of the name and occupation of such a person.

3. Panel Hearing

- The panel will consist of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Terry Gibbons has been chosen as an independent person (he is a local magistrate). Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Trust on behalf of the panel, which will then acknowledge the complaint, and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable, normally within fourteen working days.
- The parent/s 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.

The hearing is held in private and, acknowledging that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting, the proceedings are made as welcoming as possible. Care is taken to ensure the setting is not adversarial and is as informal as possible. Extra care in this respect is taken where the complainant is a child.

The aim of the hearing is always to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it is recognised that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. Therefore, it may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations that will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.

After due consideration the panel will decide to do one or more of the following:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the school's/systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

The Chair of the panel ensures that the Trust, the Headmaster, the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, are notified in writing of the panel's findings and recommendations within 3 working days of the hearing taking place.

A copy of the panel's findings are also made available for inspection in the school premises by the Trust and Headmaster.

The decision of the LGB Complaints Panel is final.