

**Complaints Procedure Policy**

**Introduction**

This policy applies across the whole school and to the Early Years Foundation Stage and is only applicable to current parents whose children are attending Whitehall School.

Whitehall School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and wellbeing care provided to its pupils. However, if parents of children at any stage from the Nursery through the school to Year 6 do have a complaint or concern, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this policy. The Proprietors ensure that this policy is effectively implemented and deal with the handling of complaints in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy.

Whitehall School will ensure that a written procedure for dealing with complaints and concerns from parents and/or carers is in place and that a written record is kept of any complaints and their outcomes.

Whitehall School will investigate written complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of having received a complaint.

The record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted on request.

Whitehall School will make available to parents and/or carers details about how to contact Ofsted if they believe we are not meeting the EYFS requirements.

**Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints**

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five 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 28 days notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within that timeframe.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

**Recording Complaints**

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. This written record will include any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, whether it was upheld or not. 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 to the extent required by paragraph (k) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, by the Manager of State or where disclosure is required by the ISI under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority.

**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 son/daughter's Class Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If

the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Principal.

• Complaints made directly to the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher unless the Principal deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

• The Class Teacher 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 7 days or in the event that the Class Teacher 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.

• If, however, the complaint is against the Principal, parents should make their complaint directly to the Board of Directors, addressed to Mrs D Hutley by email: **dh@whitehallschool.com**

**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 Principal who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

• In most cases, the Principal will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 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 Principal to carry out further investigations.

• The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

• Once the Principal 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 Principal will also give reasons for the decision.

• If the complaint is against the Principal, the Chairman of Board of Directors will call for a full report from the Principal and for all the relevant documents. The Chairman 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 Chairman 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. The Chairman will give reasons for his 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 Chairman of the Board of Directors, to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

• The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Chairman of the Board of Directors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 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 normally not later than 7 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 normally be appropriate.

• 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 they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations which will be made available to the complainant and where relevant, to the person complained about. The panel will ensure that these findings and recommendations are available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and Principal.

• The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 days of 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 Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Principal.

N.B. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Principal, the Directors will be informed of the complaint. The Chairman will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of one of the Directors, the member will be informed of the complaint.

The Directors’ appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

If, at any stage, a parent wishes to make a complaint to Ofsted or ISI, they should contact:

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| ISI  (Independent Schools Inspectorate)  CAP House  9-12 Long Lane  London  EC1A 9HA  Tel: 020 7600 0100 | OFSTED  Picadilly Gate  Store St  Manchester  M1 2WD  Tel: 0300 123 1231 |

**Number of Complaints**

Whitehall School has received 0 complaints in the last 3 years having to be resolved at the panel hearing stage.

**Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed as necessary and after a period of no more than 3 years.

*Last reviewed: September 2019*

***Next review: September 2020***