



**HORNSBY HOUSE**  
SCHOOL

## **Hornsby House School**

# **Policy for Dealing with Complaints**

Hornsby House School aims to be a listening and responsive school. We encourage pupils, parents and staff to inform us of their concerns while they are still minor ones, which can more easily be resolved. There were no formal complaints in 2019/20.

Pupils who have concerns or complaints should talk to their Class Teacher in the first instance. Issues may then be passed on to the Headmaster or his Deputies, if the resolution is more complex. Pupils should always be kept informed, both of how the matter has been investigated and of the resolution.

Parents who have any concerns or complaints about their child's experience at Hornsby House School (including the EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage) should normally contact the Class Teacher by letter in the first instance. Class Teachers will always liaise closely with the Headmaster when dealing with parental concerns and complaints. We will acknowledge such letters within two school working days\* of their receipt and to inform parents of how we intend to investigate the matter. A formal letter will always be written as a "closure", indicating how the issue has been dealt with and what the outcome is. When a parent is dissatisfied with the outcome and has discussed this with the Headmaster, the matter will be referred to the Chairman of Governors.

\* A school working day is defined as a day when school is in session. Complaints received within the school holidays will be acknowledged as soon as possible but may fall outside of the timescale stated.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Hornsby House School prides 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 son's or 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 Senior Deputy Head, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Head.
- Complaints made directly to the Senior Deputy Head, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher, unless the Senior Deputy Head, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Head deem it appropriate for him/her 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 ten school working days, or in the event that the Class Teacher and the parents 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 Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- A meeting will be arranged with parents within three school working days. In most cases, the Head will meet the parents concerned, normally within three school 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 Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head 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 Head will also give reasons for his/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 a Governor, who has been appointed by the Chair of Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
  - The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will provide for a written record to be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. The Panel will consist of at least three persons, one of whom shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors to act as the Chair of the Panel. These members will be chosen from those who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within ten school working days from the initial receipt of the complaint.
- The independent figure is defined as someone, such as the Head of a different school, who would be co-opted onto the panel as and when necessary.
- 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 two school working days prior to the hearing.
- One other person may accompany the parents to the hearing. 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 seven school working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents, informing them of its decision and the reasons for it.

(The decision of the Panel will be final). The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations, will be sent in writing to the Parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

- 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(2)(j) 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, including a request for access from the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. All complaints will be dealt with within twenty-eight school working days of the commencement of formal proceedings.
- All written records following a formal complaint will be kept for a minimum of six years, whether it is resolved following a formal procedure or proceeds to a Panel Hearing. This will include the action taken by the school as a result of that complaint (regardless of whether it is upheld).

## **EYFS**

A statement of the record of complaints will be kept for at least three years. Parents can contact either Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, 0300 123 4234) or ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate, 020 7600 0100) to make a complaint, should they feel the need.

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within twenty-eight days. The record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

## **Appendix: Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel**

The DfE (Department for Education) has supplied the following guidance in a letter to the ISC (Independent Schools Council) General Secretary:

Whilst we do not intend to be prescriptive our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members had some standing in the local community (1).

(1) In this connection serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background – perhaps retired members of the Police Force – might be considered.