



# Oakhill

faith stronger than the oak

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

This policy has been prepared in accordance with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014 updated 2019). Copies are available on the school website [www.oakhillschool.co.uk](http://www.oakhillschool.co.uk) and from the school office on request from parents and prospective parents.

### Introduction

Oakhill prides itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. We welcome suggestions and comments from parents and take seriously any concerns you may have. These will be treated in a professional and appropriate manner in accordance with this procedure. Oakhill will make details of this policy available to parents and prospective parents (as above) and will also provide details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. The whole school policy applies as well to the EYFS and Out of School care.

### Stage 1- Informal Resolution

- It is hoped most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If a parent/parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's class/form teacher or key worker. In many cases the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter themselves it may be necessary to contact a senior member of staff or the Principal.
- Complaints made directly to a senior member of staff or the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless they deem it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The member of staff 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 member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the 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 parents should put their complaint in writing to the Principal. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate action to take.
- The Principal will respond to parents **within 5 working days** of receiving the complaint. 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 all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing normally **within 28 days** of receiving the written complaint. The Principal will also give reasons for her/his decision.
- If the parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.
- Where the parent is not satisfied with the school's response to their complaint at stage two and indicates a wish to continue to stage three, a panel hearing should take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. If a parent does not exercise the right to attend a panel hearing, this does not remove the school's obligation to hold the hearing in conformity with its complaints policy. The school's arrangements for the panel hearing should be reasonable in order to facilitate the parents exercising the right of attendance

## 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 Chair of Governors who will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel.
- The Complaints Panel will consist of 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. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The Chair of 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 not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation would 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 the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will form a decision and may make recommendations which it shall complete within 7 days of the Hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final.
- The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent, normally **within 21 days of the Hearing**, in writing or electronic mail or otherwise to the complainant, and, where relevant, the person complained about. These findings will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Governors and the Principal.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a Panel hearing. Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications will be retained for a minimum of 7 years. Where there is a safeguarding angle, records concerning allegations of abuse will be preserved for the term of the Independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.

If repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this will be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of this policy.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State, or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the @002 Act as amended, requests access to them, or where other legal obligation prevails.

### **EYFS and Out of School Provision**

This policy applies to the EYFS and Out of School setting with the following additions:

- Each record of complaint is kept for 3 years
- Oakhill acknowledges the requirement to notify complainants of the outcome of a complaint within 28 days of receipt
- Oakhill acknowledged that the record of complaints is made available to Ofsted on request

Parents can make a complaint to the ISI or Ofsted, whose contact details are:

Email: [info@isi.net](mailto:info@isi.net)  
Telephone: 020 7600 0100  
Address: Independent Schools Inspectorate  
CAP House  
9-12 Long Lane  
London EC1A 9HA

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 030 0123 1231  
Address: Ofsted National Business Unit  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD

### **Monitoring and Review**

These procedures will be monitored by the Principal and the Governing Body annually and updated as necessary.

**Revised: September 2020**

**APPENDIX A  
COMPLAINT RECORD FORM  
(To be used for Stage 1 and Stage 2)**

**PART A - RECORD OF COMPLAINT**

**Complainant's Name:**

**Address:**

**Telephone:**

**Details of the Complaint:**

**Date Complaint Made:**

**Action Already Taken to Resolve the Matter:**

**Complainant's View of what might resolve the issue:**

**PART B ACTION TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**Complaint Investigated By:**

**Action (with dates):**

**Date of formal meeting with complainant:**

**Outcome of the Meeting:**