

# LION HOUSE — A HURLINGHAM SCHOOL

## Complaints Procedure Policy

This policy is made available to all parents, prospective parents, staff and prospective employees of Lion House – a Hurlingham School on our website, and a hard copy can also be viewed at our School Office. Lion House – a Hurlingham School will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the forms in which it is published or available.

This Complaints Procedure applies to all aspects of Lion House – a Hurlingham School's work, including the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### Introduction

Lion House – a Hurlingham School has long prided 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. We actively encourage parents to talk to us whenever they have a worry or concern about their child and or his or her life at Lion House – a Hurlingham School. All concerns are taken seriously, discussed thoroughly and recorded by Heads of Sections so that any patterns can be detected in the weekly SLT meeting. We aim to find a good solution to all matters. However, were this ever not to satisfy a parent so that concern remains, the parent would be asked to put the matter in writing to the head or principal and, within that letter, to request that the complaints procedure be put into action.

We will investigate all written complaints relating to fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- We hope that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Headmaster and, in any case, should inform him of the outcome of the complaint.
- Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher unless the Head deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally.
- The form 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 5 working days or in the event that the form 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.

### 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 Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet the parents concerned within 5 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 Headmaster to carry out further investigations. These will be completed in 7 working days or as soon as is practicable.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster 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 Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Principal.
- The written decision will be issued within fourteen working days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the Headmaster will write to the parents within the fourteen working day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why he is unable to issue his decision and

informing the parents when he will do so, which will be within twenty-eight working days of the receipt of the complaint in any event.

- If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure where a panel hearing will take place unless the parents later indicate that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further.
- The panel hearing should proceed whether the parent attends or not. If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion. The requirement for the panel to proceed does not prevent the school from accommodating reasonable parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning panel composition.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they are to write to the Headmaster informing him of their decision to do so within 28 working days, whereupon the matter will be referred to the School Principal. The School Principal will then take responsibility for the organisation of a Complaints Panel hearing.
- 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, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The School Principal, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within 21 working days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require (in writing) 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. Any such further particulars received within 5 working days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it will not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.
- The parents 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. However should the panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required, the panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded.
- If necessary, the panel will reconvene and, after due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, will reach a decision and may make recommendations.
- **The decision of the Panel will be final.**
- A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations will (if any) be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy will also be made available for inspection on the School premises by the proprietor and the Headmaster.

A written record will be kept of all complaints made under the formal part of the procedure and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a Panel hearing. This will include details of any action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

A further record is kept of 'concerns' or informal complaints and this is reviewed regularly by the SLT to enable any patterns of concern to be identified and monitored.

Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as it is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 (as subsequently amended), by the Secretary 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.

**Footnotes:**

1. In the event that a complaint involves or relates to a teacher, then the teacher will be kept fully informed in writing of the procedure being adopted in relation to the management of the complaint and supplied with copies of the documentation.
2. In the event of a panel hearing, the teacher will have the right to make representations to the panel.
3. In the event that a complaint is made against the management of the School, it may be deemed appropriate for the School Principal to appoint two additional panel members to support Mr Michael Taylor (Headmaster of Fairley House School), or the Head of a nearby school, who are independent of the management and running of Hurlingham School. The independent panel member(s) will be a person who has held a position of responsibility and is used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments.
4. Records of any complaints are kept by the School for a minimum of three years.
5. Parents should be aware that they are entitled to direct their complaint to Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD (telephone: 0300 1231231) if their complaint is about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements and then only if the matter has not been resolved to a satisfactory solution by the school within 28 days.
6. We will provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints relating to the requirements under the statutory framework for the EYFS made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least 3 years.

No 'formal' complaints were received to necessitate the implementation of the Complaints Procedure Policy during the academic year 2016-17.

Date of last review: October 2017

Date of next review: June 2018