



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Rokeby has long been proud of the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided for 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 One – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should straight away contact their son's Form Tutor/Class Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means, to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Tutor/Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with the Head of Pre Prep or the appropriate Year Head.
- Complaints made directly to the Head of Pre Prep or the Year Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor/Class Teacher unless the Head of Pre Prep or Year Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Form Tutor/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 10 working days or in the event that the Form Tutor/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 Two of this procedure.

Stage Two – 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 speak to the parents concerned to discuss the matter, normally within 48 hours of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Parents Complaints Procedure

- 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.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage Three of this procedure.

Stage Three – Panel Hearing

- If parents are not satisfied with the Headmaster's written decision they will need to write to the Headmaster informing him that this is the case within 28 days. The matter will then be referred to a named convenor, who will have already been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. 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. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the board of Governors on behalf of the Panel. The Convenor will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 28 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 five days prior to the hearing.
- 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.
- 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 14 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 Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the individual/s concerned in the complaint.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003; by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, or where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or under other legal authority.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents who have a complaint in respect of the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) should follow the Rokeby School parental complaints procedure and in addition may contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). A record of any complaint in respect of the EYFS, will be kept for at least three years.

All written complaints relating to the EYFS requirements will be fully investigated and within 28 days of having received the complaint, the complainants will be notified of the outcome of the investigation.

Footnotes to Complaints Procedure:

- 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 all documentation.
- In the event of a panel hearing, the teacher will have the right to make representation to the panel.
- The Governor with responsibility for the Safeguarding Children procedures, will, as a matter of course, produce an annual report on the school's effectiveness and compliance with child protection issues and such issues will be an item on the agenda of a formal Governors' meeting.

Convenor: The Bursar

Independent Panel Member: Kath Hayes – Holy Cross Prep School

Safeguarding Children Governor: Mark James

Appendix

Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel

The following guidance comes from a letter sent by the DfES to the ISC General Secretary in 2002. Although dated, the advice is extant.

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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. 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 suitable by schools. Schools will have their own views and may well have other suitable suggestions to make.

You asked if it would be acceptable to appoint former governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member. The regulations do not preclude this since the stipulation is that the person must be independent of the management and running of the school. Clearly former governors or staff would not have any such involvement. However, schools should bear in mind that they may be subject to criticism that such people would remain too close to the school and would not be truly independent.