

Beech Hall School



Complaints Policy

Beech Hall 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 the procedure set out below.

This policy is available to parents on the website and as a hard copy from the School Office,

Policy statement

1. This policy aims to ensure that:

- Parents/guardians know that the Beech Hall School and Little Griffins Nursery takes complaints seriously and will respond in a courteous and efficient manner
- An effective procedure for making and adjudicating complaints (including appeals) from parents/guardians is established
- Parents/guardians wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
- There is a separate procedure for dealing with parental concerns which fall short of a formal complaint
- All those involved in handling a complaint make every effort to resolve matters quickly and amicably
- Responses to complaints will be made within a reasonable period of time
- Where necessary, appropriate action will be taken
- Parents with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) know that they may also make a complaint to Ofsted and/or the Independent Schools' Inspectorate

Raising concerns informally

2. Parents/guardians can raise a concern informally by contacting the relevant member of staff (see para.s 3-4)

3. by telephone, email or letter. Parents/guardians are reminded that, by raising something via a telephone conversation, it is normally possible to resolve matters quickly and to their satisfaction.

4. In the vast majority of cases, it is anticipated that, initially at least, the relevant member of staff will be the child/pupil's Room Supervisor (Nursery), Form Tutor (Junior School) or Housemaster/mistress (Senior School) . However, where a

parent/guardian wishes to refer the matter to a more senior member of staff, the relevant person is the appropriate Head of Section.

Nursery: Miss S Middleton

Junior School: Mrs. H Roberts

Senior School: Mr. J Hardwick

Staff will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received and whether they were resolved at this preliminary stage. Should the matter not be resolved within a week, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmistress. The procedure followed at this stage will be as outlined below (see para. 8 onwards)

Making a complaint

5. In serious cases, however, a formal complaint should be made in writing and referred directly to the Headmistress - Mrs G A Yandell. This provision will typically apply where:

(a) the parent/guardian does not believe that the matter is suitable for informal resolution;

(b) where informal resolution has failed to satisfy the person making the complaint.

6. Parents/guardians should note that, where the Headmistress is the subject of the complaint, a separate procedure applies, details of which can be found in para.s 31-34 below.

7. Complaints made anonymously will not be pursued.

Investigating complaints

8. The Headmistress will speak to the parents/guardians concerned, within 3 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. However, it may be necessary for the Headmistress to carry out further investigations. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

9. Once the Headmistress is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents/guardians will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.

10. It is School policy that complaints made by parents/guardians will not adversely affect their children's interests.

11. Beech Hall School hopes that a parent/guardian making a complaint will be satisfied with the outcome. Certainly, it will make every reasonable effort to ensure that each complaint is fully and properly investigated and that the issues raised are considered in a fair and professional manner.

12. However, where the parent/guardian is dissatisfied either with the outcome of an investigation or the manner in which the complaint was handled, (s)he should inform the Headmistress in writing who will refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors. Alternatively, the Chairman of Governors can be contacted directly by letter, addressed in the first instance to Mr. I. Percival, Clerk to the Governors. This should be done within three months of receipt of a letter issued in accordance with para. 9 above.

13. It is particularly important that the parent/guardian states as clearly and fully as possible the reasons for the appeal.

Appeal

14. Upon receipt of this information, the Chairman of Governors will request from the Headmistress a full report on the complaint and the subsequent investigation, together with the outcome and the reasons for it. The Chairman will then consider this report before responding to the parent/guardian in writing. If the Chairman's response does not satisfy the parent/guardian, (s)he will be invited to a meeting with the Chairman to discuss the matter with him directly. The parent/guardian has the option to be accompanied to this meeting by a friend.

The appeal panel

15. Where the meeting with the Chairman of Governors fails to bring about a resolution, the complainant has the further option of referring the matter to an appeal panel. Where this is the wish of the parent/guardian, (s)he should inform the Chairman of Governors within fourteen days of any meeting held under para. 14.

16. The composition of the panel will be determined by the Chairman of Governors. However, it will consist of at least three people, none of whom will have been directly involved either in the matters detailed in the complaint or its investigation and adjudication prior to this point. Further, at least one member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of School.

17. The complaint will be acknowledged and a hearing will be scheduled to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 days.

18. The appeal panel will have access to all relevant documentation. 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 7 days prior to the hearing.

19. The parent/guardian will be invited to attend the panel hearing. They 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.

20. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

21. 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 reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 21 days of the hearing.

22. 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 Headmistress, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Confidentiality

24. Any complaint or concern, viewpoint, etcetera raised by parents/guardians will be treated as confidential.

25. As a result, knowledge of the above will be restricted to those who, for various reasons, need to know about it. This will include the Headmaster, the member(s) of staff investigating the complaint and any other member of staff otherwise involved. In addition, there are circumstances where the Chairman of Governors may need to be informed.

26. On occasion, however, it may be necessary to inform third parties of the complaint and, possibly, the identities of those involved. The most obvious example of this is where an investigation suggests that a criminal offence has taken place. In such circumstances, School would cease its investigation and refer the matter to the relevant external agencies.

Written records

27. In order to comply with School's obligations under Standard 7(j) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 a written record will be kept of all complaints, including information as to whether or not they were resolved at a preliminary stage or proceeded to a formal hearing. The written record will also include all correspondence and statements gathered in the course of an investigation. In the case of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) a record of complaints is kept for at least three years.

28. Written records will be treated as confidential and processed in accordance with School's data protection policy. The exception to this is where the Secretary of State, or a body conducting an investigation under s. 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), requests access to them. Beech Hall will provide Ofsted and/or The Independent Schools' Inspectorate, upon request, a written record of all complaints made during a specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Disciplinary action taken against staff

29. It may be the case that, as a result of a complaint made by a parent/guardian, disciplinary action may be taken against a member of staff employed at the Beech Hall School.

30. Where this occurs, any such action will be taken in accordance with the official staff Discipline and Dismissal Policy and handled confidentially within School.

Complaints against the Headmistress

31. Where the Headmistress is the subject of the complaint, including cases where the complaint also extends to other members of staff, the matter should be referred directly and in writing to the Chairman of Governors, via the Clerk to the Governors – Mr I Percival. The Chairman will then contact the parent/guardian in order to explain how the complaint will be investigated, how long an investigation is likely to take and when (s)he might expect a final response. Where, in the course of an investigation it becomes clear that this date is likely to be exceeded, the parent/guardian will be informed of a new response date.

32. Where the Chairman of Governors believes that the complaint merits it, he will appoint a person to investigate the complaint and report his/her findings to him. After considering this report, the Chairman of Governors will then write to the parent/guardian. This letter will include the conclusion reached, the reasons for it and any action taken or proposed.

33. If the parent/guardian is dissatisfied with this response, (s)he should write to the Chairman of Governors within fourteen days of receiving this letter, requested that the matter be referred to an appeal panel.

34. The composition of the panel, its purpose and procedure are set out in para.s 16 - 22 above.

Addresses

The Chairman of Governors, the Clerk to the Governors and the Headmistress may be written to care of Beech Hall School, Beech Hall Drive, Tytherington, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 2EG

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)

ISC schools in England are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the agency responsible for the inspection of schools in membership of the Independent Schools Council Associations. ISI is a body approved for the purpose of inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2005. As such, they report to the Department for Children, Schools and Families ([DCSF](#)) on the extent to which schools meet statutory requirements. The quality of its service is monitored by [Ofsted](#) on behalf of the DCSF.

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Mrs G A Yandell August 2011