

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Richmond House School aims to provide the highest quality of teaching and pastoral care to its pupils. Parents or guardians can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. It is our intention to deal with such complaints fairly and quickly in accordance with this procedure.

We wish to ensure that

- All parents/guardians wishing to make a complaint know how to do so.
- We will respond to all complaints within a reasonable time.
- Parents realise that we listen and will take all complaints seriously.
- We will take action where appropriate.

The following provides clear and stepped procedures that we use for handling complaints from parents/guardians of children at Richmond House School.

Stage 1 Informal

An informal complaint can be made to the relevant member of staff, (outlined below), by the Parent/Guardian by speaking to them directly, written note or email, or a phone call, giving a clear indication of the complaint. We would hope that most complaints will be capable of being resolved in this manner. However, the Parent/Guardian may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff who will refer this to the relevant class teacher unless it is deemed inappropriate. If the individual teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for a consultation with the subject co-ordinators, Deputy or Head of the School. The complaint will be fully investigated and it will be dealt with **within 10 school days of receipt of the complaint**. A written record of the complaint will be stored by a member of the SLT which will give clear indication of whether the matter has been resolved at Stage 1 or if it has passed to Stage 2, a Formal Complaint.

Who to contact?

1. A concern related to Safeguarding should follow the Safeguarding policy a copy of which can be found on our website. Contact the Designated Persons, the Head or Deputy if in doubt.
2. If an initial concern is regarding an educational issue, relating to either the classroom or curriculum, please speak or write to the Class Teacher, Subject teacher or Department Co-ordinator or Director of Studies, (Camilla Mullis).
3. For concerns relating to matters outside the classroom, or of a pastoral nature, the Class Teacher, Head of Section or Deputy Head can be contacted. A concern about the safety of your child should be notified immediately to the person you believe is best placed to take urgent action.
4. Financial matters, queries relating to fees, etc, should be directed to the Bursar (Gill Newsome)

5. A concern about child protection should be directed to the Deputy (Paul Oldham) or the Head (Helen Stiles) directly

Stage 2 – Formal

If the Parent/Guardian is not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, they may write to the Head teacher (Helen Stiles) to request to make the complaint formal. This must be **within 14 school days** of receipt of the outcome of Stage 1. The complaint should contain the grounds of the complaint, and include any supporting evidence. The Head will respond **within 7 school days** of the formal complaint being made and a formal meeting with the Head and other relevant staff will be arranged. If a resolution cannot be reached at this stage, then the complaint will be fully investigated and a decision will be reached and communicated in writing **within 5 school days** of the meeting (if it occurs in term time). If out of term time, the timescale will be given at the meeting. Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established and considered, a decision will be made and parents or guardians will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for any decision. A written record of the complaint at this stage and any actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint will be kept by the school, regardless of whether the complaint was upheld, and will include whether the complaint has been resolved or is proceeding to Stage 3. This will be retained by the Head in the Complaints File.

If the complaint is against the Head, then the complaint should be put in writing to the Chair of Governors, currently Ms C Shuttleworth. Correspondence for Ms Shuttleworth should be labelled “confidential” and be delivered to the School Office.

If the Parents/Guardians are not satisfied at this point, they can proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If the Parent/Guardian is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, a written request should be made to go to Stage 3 within **14 school days** of receiving the decision at Stage 2. This should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, currently Ms C Shuttleworth, labelled “confidential” and be delivered to the School Office. It should contain the grounds of the complaint, full contact details and the outcome desired. The Chair of Governors will respond **within 7 School days** of receipt of the letter to acknowledge the escalation of the complaint and confirm the process, and will arrange for the complaint to be referred to a panel. The panel will comprise of at least 3 members appointed by the Governors, who are not directly related to the matters raised in the complaint. One of the panel will be independent of the current management and running of the school who will likely have held a position of responsibility and is used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments.

A panel hearing will be arranged **within 14 school days of receiving the letter** assuming the availability of the panel members and the Parent/Guardian can be confirmed. The Parent/Guardian will be invited to attend the panel meeting and may be accompanied by a friend or family member, if they wish. The Head will also normally attend as the representative of the School. The panel will not normally sit during school holidays.

If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaints or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. A full copy of papers for the hearing encompassing the original complaint, all correspondence and the Stage 2 decision, together with any further particulars

requested, will be sent to all parties attending the panel hearing no later than **3 school days** prior to the hearing.

The hearing will be chaired by one member of the Panel (chosen by the Governors) and will be conducted in an informal manner. All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chairman of the Panel. If terminated, the original Stage 2 decision will stand. Such panel hearings are private proceedings and no notes or other recordings or oral statements may be made available to any third party.

The considered decision of the panel will be communicated to the Parent/Guardian **within 7 school days** from the panel hearing and will be final and binding and will formally close the complaint. A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will be made available to the subject(s) of the complaint, the Head and the Governors. A written record will be kept in the school's Complaints File which details the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether the complaint was upheld.

All complaints are handled confidentially, and the correspondence and written evidence relating to them will be kept confidentially by the school except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Provision for Children in EYFS

Ofsted (The Office for Standards in education – a government body) and the ISI (the Independent Schools Inspectorate) have particular responsibility for monitoring standards regarding the provision of care and services for children under 5 years of age as required by the EYFS Framework.

Written complaints at the EYFS age group about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the Parent/Guardian will be notified **within 28 school days** of the outcome of these investigations. The record of complaints in EYFS will be available to Ofsted and ISI on request. Parents with a complaint about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirement for children under 5 years of age may wish to contact Ofsted/ ISI directly;

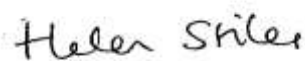
Ofsted - enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk, Telephone 0300 1231231 for general enquiries, 0300 1234666 about concerns.

ISI - <http://www.isi.net/home/>, Telephone 020 7600 0100

Number of Formal Complaints made in the year 2015-2016

There were no formal complaints

Policy Updated February 2017



Signed Headteacher



Signed (Chair of Governors)