



SHERFIELD  
SCHOOL

# Complaints Procedure

This policy applies all pupils in the school, including in the EYFS

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Head of School	Caroline Taylor

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# SHERFIELD SCHOOL

## Complaints Procedure

### Guidance

The complaints procedure at Sherfield School has three stages, to be covered in a period of 28 days, excluding school holidays and weekends between the complaint being made and the final resolution. Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements are investigated, and the complainant is notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The DfE does not distinguish between a 'concern' and a 'complaint'. Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action from the school is considered a complaint and will be addressed in accordance with this policy. In this respect, it is anticipated that the large majority of complaints will be resolved at the informal stage. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

The school will keep records of complaints that are resolved at the informal stage for management purposes, for example, to enable patterns or trends to be monitored. A formal written and/or electronic record of complaints made to the school that reaches the formal stage is kept. Details will be recorded of;

- whether the complaint was resolved following the formal stage or proceeded to a panel hearing;
- action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).

Records are kept for at least three years. The school will provide ISI and Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action taken as a result of each complaint.

### **Stage 1 - Informal complaint (Resolution within five working days)**

All complaints may be made initially on an informal basis, verbally or in writing. Sections A-F deal with any informal complaints. In many instances, issues will be dealt with immediately. Where further information is required, every effort will be made to make an initial response within 24 hours of the issue being raised.

#### **A Complaint by parents about a member of staff**

- i. Direct discussion with parents and the Head of School
- ii. Direct discussion with a member of staff followed by a conversation between a member of staff and parents and aggrieved parties
- iii. Action on points raised agreed
- iv. Review the situation

#### **B Complaints by parents about another child.**

- i. The class teacher was involved immediately.
- ii. If necessary, playground supervisors should be involved, and class teachers should observe the playground.
- iii. All teachers are informed at staff meetings for classroom awareness.
- iv. "Complaining" parents telephoned; procedures explained; offered opportunity to talk further and asked to telephone immediately with any further/future concerns.

- v. Conflict noted on children's profiles and SMT ensure where possible that class teacher/tutor mitigates conflicts.
- vi. In instances of bullying, the procedure is outlined in our anti-bullying policy
- vii. Where necessary, steps will be taken in accordance with the school Behaviour and Exclusions policy

#### C Complaints by a child about a child.

- i. Staff separately see all parties as a fact-collecting exercise.
- ii. Staff are informed in staff meetings.
- iii. Parents are informed
- iv. In instances of bullying, the procedure is outlined in our anti-bullying policy
- v. Where necessary, steps will be taken in accordance with the school Behaviour and Exclusions policies

D Complaint by a member of staff about a colleague. Will replicate the structure of the Grievance Process in the Employment Manual.

## **Stage 2 - Formal Complaint (Resolution within ten working days)**

Where the complainant(s) are not satisfied with the school's response, they may register a formal complaint through the procedures outlined above. This should be done in writing to the head, including,

- The nature of the complaint
- The reasons for their dissatisfaction with the school's response

The head will meet with the complainant as soon as is practical, to discuss the matter and, if possible, to reach a resolution at this stage. Where a complaint is received during a school holiday, it will be deemed to have reached the school on the first full school day following its arrival. It may be necessary to carry out further investigations. The head will keep written records of all complaints, and of meetings held in relation to them.

Once the head is satisfied that all the relevant facts have been established, a response to the complaint will be made, and the complainant will be informed in writing within ten school days: the nature of the response will depend on the nature of the complaint, but it will always give a judgement whether and to what extent, if at all, the complaint is justified, and reasons; the response may include actions which the school intends to take or a decision. A complainant who is not satisfied should proceed to the next stage.

In the event the complaint is against the Head, governance will deal with the formal stage.

## **Stage 3 - Independent Resolution - Panel Hearing (Resolution within 13 working days)**

If Stage 2 has not resolved a complaint satisfactorily, the complainant should write within five school days to the head, requesting a hearing before the complaints panel, who will acknowledge the letter of complaint.

At this point, the school will liaise with EiM Head Office to -

- a) Convene a panel of one of the proprietors, a member of the SLT not involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (this may include members of other EiM Schools), and either one or two-panel members who are independent of the management and running of the school; these may be representatives of ISA (Independent Schools Association), depending upon the particular circumstances.
- b) Send a letter to the parents inviting them to attend the panel, along with someone to accompany them if they wish
- c) Provide that the panel is able to make findings and recommendations; and ensure that minutes and recommended actions of the panel are kept for three years.
- d) Ensure that a copy of the panel's findings and recommendations is -
  - (i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
  - (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
- e) Ensure all correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential - unless the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them
- f) Show how the findings and recommendations of the panel have been responded to
- g) Seek to complete this stage of the procedure within 13 working days.

Parents of EYFS children can, if they wish, complain to Ofsted or ISI if they believe the school is not meeting EYFS requirements - contact details are found below **in Appendix 2**.

The school will notify complainants of the outcome of any investigation of a written complaint relating to the school's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements within 28 days of having received the complaint.

## **Appendix 1: Number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the year 2023-24**

Schools are required to publish the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

The number of complaints dealt with at this stage in 2023-24 was one.

## **Appendix 2: Contact details**

**ISI**  
**Independent Schools Inspectorate**  
CAP House  
9 - 12 Long Lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA  
Telephone 020 7600 0100  
Fax 020 7776 8849  
info@isi.net

**OFSTED**

**By email**

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

**By telephone**

The following helplines are open from 8.00am to 6.45pm, Monday to Friday:

general helpline **0300 123 1231**

**By post**

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Links to other policies - [Anti-Bullying](#), [Behaviour](#), [Appraisal](#), [Child Protection](#)