**RISHWORTH HOUSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**COMPLAINTS POLICY 2018-2019**

Date Reviewed by Staff: November 2020

Date Reviewed by Governors: November 2020

Date of Next Review Process: November 2021

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At Rishworth House Preparatory School, we endeavour to provide the best education possible for all our pupils in an open and transparent environment and care about what our pupils, parents and others think about us. We welcome any feedback that we receive from you and we accept that not all of this will be positive. If you have a worry, concern or complaint about any aspect of your child’s life at school, or any of our actions or lack of action please contact a relevant member of staff as soon as possible. We promise that we shall take all such expressions of concern seriously and follow them up promptly. If it is important to you, it is important to us and be assured that our support and respect for you and your child will not lessen in any way.

**Social media:** In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, the school requests the complainants do not discuss complaints publicly via social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter.

**Confidentiality:** The school commits to handling all complaints with utmost confidentiality and expects complainants to uphold the same confidentiality.

**Anonymous complaints:** Complainants are encouraged to make use of the suggestion box located in the school foyer.

**Aims**

In operating this Complaints Procedure, we aim to:

* encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
* address all the points at issue and provide prompt effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary.
* ensure a full and fair investigation;
* have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved;
* respect confidentiality;
* keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
* consider how the complaint can feed into the school’s improvement evaluation processes.

**Your responsibilities as Complainant**

In making your complaint we would expect that you:

* raise issues in a timely manner;
* treat our staff with respect and courtesy;
* provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues you raise; and
* use these procedures fully and engage in them at the appropriate levels.

**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**Who should you contact?** This depends on the nature and seriousness of the concern but the following is a guide:

* At the informal stage, minor day-to-day matters are to be dealt with by the relevant teacher.
* For a more serious concern affecting a child in the Nursery, Reception and Grade 1 to 7, the matter is formally handled by the Head of Department.
* Matters regarding finance, fees and non-academic issues should go to the Finance and Administration Manager.
* If the HoDs or the Principal are the subject of the complaint, the Chair of the Board of Governors will assume responsibility of the process.
* If the complainant is unclear as to who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office.

**INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

**Step 1 - Speaking with the Teacher concerned**

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. The person you contact will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they are received. Should the matter not be resolved within two weeks, or in the event that the teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then you will be advised to proceed with your complaint to Step 2.

**Step 2 - Contact the Head of Department (verbally)**

If your complaint is against a member of staff other than the HoD or the Principal or if your complaint remains unresolved following Step 1 you should arrange a meeting with the Principal to discuss the issue(s) so that he may be in a position to resolve the problem without further delay.

**FORMAL RESOLUTION**

**Step 3 – Writing to the Principal**

If the issue remains unresolved following Steps 1 & 2 then a formal resolution should be sought. A formal complaint should be submitted via the complaints form (attached as Appendix B and downloadable from our website) and should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint.

Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in as far as is required of the school in terms of the Education Act; where disclosure is required in the course of the school’s inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails. In most cases the Principal will arrange a meeting with the complainant, normally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. If not, it may then be necessary for the Principal of the school to carry out further investigations. Once he is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and you will be informed of this in writing (within 20 working days).The Principal will also give reasons for his decision.

**Step 4 - Writing to Chairperson of the Board of Governors**

If at this stage the complaint remains unresolved or it is a case where the complaint is against the Principal, the complainant will write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will acknowledge receipt of the complaint (within 10 working days) and refer the case to a Complaints Panel.

The Panel will be appointed by the school’s Board and will normally consist of two Governors who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one person who is independent of the management and running of the school. The Chairman of the Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as is practicable, normally within 14 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 Complainant may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person who may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate at this stage. If the attendance of any pupil(s) is required at the hearing, parental permission will be sought if they are under the age of 18. Extra care will be taken to consider the vulnerability of children where they are present at a complaints hearing.

If possible, the Panel will resolve your 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 seven days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to you (within 25 working days), informing you 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 you, the Principal, the Board and any other relevant person.

**Unreasonable or vexatious complaints**

Where a complainant raises an issue that has already been dealt with via the school’s complaints procedure, and that procedure has been exhausted, the school will not reinvestigate the complaint except in exceptional circumstances, for example where new evidence has come to light.

If a complainant persists in raising the same issue, the Principal will write to them explaining that the matter has been dealt with fully in line with the school complaints procedure, and therefore the case is now closed.

**Unreasonable complaints include but are not limited to the following scenarios:**

* The complainant refuses to co-operate with the school’s relevant procedures.
* The complainant changes the basis of the complaint as the complaint progresses.
* The complainant seeks an unrealistic outcome.
* Excessive demands are made on the time of staff and school governors and it is clearly intended to aggravate.
* The complainant acts in a way that is abusive or offensive.

Appendix A

**Rishworth House Preparatory School**

**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOW CHART**

Discuss the complaint with the **Teacher**.

Implement any agreements

Complaint resolved - no further action required.

**Chairperson** to acknowledge receipt of letter (**within 10 working days**).

Investigate the complaint / meet with complainant.

Implement any agreements /changes.

Confirm outcomes in writing (**within 25 working days**).

No further action required.

**FORMAL Stage**

**Step 4**

If complaint remains unresolved following **Steps 1-3** or complaint concerns the **Principal** write to **Chairperson of Board of Governors** who will refer matter to the Complaints Panel

**Principal** to acknowledge receipt of letter of complaint and schedule meeting (**within 10 working days**).

Investigate the complaint

Implement any agreements/ changes

**Principal** to confirm outcomes in writing (**within 20 working days**)

No further action required.

Schedule Meeting with the **Principal** to discuss issue.

Discuss the complaint.

Implement any agreements.

**Complaint resolved** - no further action required.

**FORMAL Stage**

**Step 3**

If complaint is unresolved following **Steps 1** and **2** or procedures are to be initiated at **Step 3** write to the **Principal** using complaint form

**INFORMAL Stage**

**Step 2**

If complaint is unresolved following Step 1 contact the **Principal (verbally)** to arrange a meeting.

If complaint is against the **Principal** go to **Step 4.**

**INFORMAL Stage**

**Step 1**

Speak with the **Teacher** concerned (Classroom Teacher)

Appendix B

**Rishworth House Preparatory School**

**COMPLAINTS FORM**

Please complete and return to the Principal who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

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| --- |
| **Your name:**  **Pupil’s name:**  **Your relationship to the pupil:**  **Address:**  **Work telephone number:**  **Home telephone number:**  **Email address:** |
| **Please give details of your complaint (attach extra pages if necessary).** |
| **What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.(Who did you speak to and what was the response?)** |
| **What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?** |
| **Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.** |
| **Signature:**  **Date:** |
| **OFFICIAL USE**  **Date acknowledgement sent:**  **By who:**  **Complaint referred to:**  **Date:** |