



Parental Concerns and Complaints Procedure

This policy is inclusive of all pupils in the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Reviewed: October 2024

Reviewed by: K Beardall

Like all schools, Moulsford prides itself on the quality of its teaching and the pastoral care it provides for its pupils. However, no school is ever perfect and if a parent does have a concern or complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure.

The school adheres to the requirements under Part 7 of The Independent School Standards and the following general principles apply to this procedure:

- A record of all concerns and complaints is kept for at least 25 years.
- Parents of boarders are informed by the school how they can contact ISI regarding any complaints regarding boarding welfare but only after they have gone through the school's concerns and complaint procedure.
- A written record is kept of serious complaints and their outcomes, for regular review by the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Concerns and complaints are resolved either to the parent(s) satisfaction or with an otherwise appropriate outcome, which balances the rights and duties of pupils, without unreasonable delay.
- Pupils or their parents are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith.
- The policy does not apply to complaints relating to prospective pupils or to past pupils unless their parent(s) initially made the complaint whilst their child was still registered at the school.
- Complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 20 working days.
- Any action taken by the school as a result of a concern or complaint will be recorded, whether the complaint is upheld or not.
- Parents may appeal against a decision made by the school about their complaint; details of how to do this are outlined below.
- Financial compensation cannot be sought or awarded via this procedure – complaints will either be upheld or dismissed in whole or in part and recommendations may be made as to the future handling of such matters by the school or as to the future conduct of the pupil or parents as appropriate.
- For the purposes of this complaints procedure, working days are Monday to Friday during school term time. The formal process for complaints received when the school is closed (e.g. during the school holidays) will start when the school re-opens.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage may make a complaint directly to Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester. M1 2WD (0300 123 1231, or The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA (020 7600 0100) if they have a complaint about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements.

LEVEL 1 – ‘INFORMAL’ (CONCERN)

It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. If parents have a concern, they may contact their child's Form Head or another member of staff. All staff are required to acknowledge a parent's concern within one working day. The member of staff will make a written record of all concerns and the date on which they were received. In many cases, the matter can be resolved straight away and to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for the member of staff to refer it to the Headteacher or the Senior Leadership Team.

Concerns raised directly with the Headteacher will usually result in discussions with the Senior Leadership Team and the members of staff involved. If the complaint is against the Headteacher, parents should direct their complaint to the Chair of Governors whose contact details are available from the School Office on request.

A record of the concern is filed in the 'concerns' folder. In almost all cases this is an annotated copy of the email stream between the parent and teacher concerned. The school will aim to resolve the concern within five working days. Should that not be possible, or in the event the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised (if they so wish) to raise their 'concern' to a 'complaint', in accordance with Level 2 of this procedure. If parents wish to raise a Level 2 complaint they must do so in a timely manner, e.g. within 10 working days of the failure to reach a satisfactory informal resolution.

LEVEL 2 – ‘FORMAL’ (COMPLAINT)

If the concern cannot be resolved informally, the parents should, within the 10 working day period referred to above, put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher on the 'Level 2 - Formal Complaint' form. Copies are available from the school office on request. Parents may choose not to use the form itself, but where they do not they will be expected to set out their complaint succinctly and address the information sought by the form attached. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. The Headteacher will seek to meet the parents concerned within three working days of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter. It may be necessary for the Headteacher to commission further investigations after this meeting but this will be completed within a further 10 working days or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable. The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Headteacher is satisfied, so far as is practical, that all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headteacher will also give reasons for their decision.

The Headteacher will contact the parents with the decision within 10 working days of his meeting with them or of the conclusion of any further investigation, if later. If for any reason this is not possible, the Headteacher will write to the parents within the 10 working day period referred to above, stating the reason for the delay and informing the parents when a decision will be issued.

If the complaint is against the Headteacher then, as per the informal stage above, the complaint should be directed to the Chair of Governors whose contact details are available from the school office on request. The Chair of Governors will nominate someone to determine the Level 2 complaint and the process described above will be followed as if references to the Headteacher is to the individual nominated by the Chair of Governors to determine the complaint.

If, at the conclusion of Level 2, parents are still not satisfied with the outcome, they should indicate their wish to proceed to Level 3 as below within 10 working days of communication of the outcome of Level 2.

LEVEL 3 – ‘PANEL HEARING’

Level 3 complaints should be submitted to the Chair of Governors whose contact details are available from the school office. The Chair of Governors will acknowledge the complaint and convene a panel to consider it as a formal ‘Complaints Panel’. The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration.

The panel will normally convene within 10 working days of receipt of the parents’ decision to proceed to Level 3, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so. The panel will consist of at least three persons 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 Chair of Governors.

It is expected that one or both parents will attend a hearing of the Complaints Panel. One other person may accompany the parent(s) to the hearing; this may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be permitted. If parent(s) do not exercise their right to attend a panel hearing, the panel may proceed with the hearing in the parent(s) absence. 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 the facts, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall communicate to the parents within five working days of the hearing.

The panel will write to the parents within five working days of the hearing, informing them of its decision and recommendations, and the reasons for them. The decision of the panel will be final. The panel’s findings and any recommendations will be sent, in writing, to the Headteacher, the Governors and, where relevant, to the person complained about.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except insofar as required of the school by section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act, where disclosure is required in the course of the school’s inspection and where any other legal obligation prevails.

Number of complaints registered under this formal procedure in the previous academic year - ONE



Level 2 - Formal Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Mr Beardmore-Gray who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name (if relevant):

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint.

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: