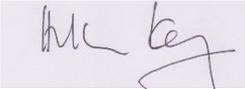




## The Flagship School

### Complaints Policy

Last review	25/1/21
Next review	25/1/22
Review frequency	Annually or as required according to statutory changes
Approved	25/1/21
Name	Helen Kay
Signature	
Capacity	Chair of Trustees
Date	25/1/21

## **Vision:**

We aim to provide an holistic learning environment which has high aspirations for all of our children and where they can realise their full potential: personally, emotionally, socially and academically.

Whatever their starting point, each child will be supported to:

- understand their strengths and develop their skills to enable them to maximise their potential;
- feel valued, safe and happy in their learning;
- make their best possible progress;
- move on successfully to further education or work.
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Our vision for our school is one where empowered and well supported teachers, therapists, learning support assistants and support staff work in partnership with parents and carers to enable children to experience a high quality, exciting and integrated curriculum designed to meet their individual needs and learning styles. Therapeutic interventions, tailored to address each child's communication, social and additional needs will be embedded within all aspects of the curriculum and wider life of the school.

This document adheres to the following legislation:

[The Education Act 2002: Section 29.](#)

[The Education \(Independent Schools Standards\) Regulations 2010.](#)

[The Education \(Non-maintained Special Schools\) Regulations 2011.](#)

The Flagship School will publish the complaints policy on the internet thus making it freely available to all parents.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a concern or complaint by a parent/carer is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at an appropriate level as soon as possible.

The Flagship School takes any complaint very seriously and, when considering such a complaint, will address the following principles:

- Complaints will be welcomed, together with other comments from parents, carers and others.
- Every attempt will be made to resolve complaints informally in the first instance.
- The process of complaining will not be difficult. Concerns or complaints can be received by letter, telephone or in person, but a written record of a complaint must be made to the Headteacher or Chair of Trustees depending on the type of complaint (see Stage 3 in the process chart below). Support is available to help write a complaint if required.
- Independent advice and support to help with any aspect of the complaints process is available to parents/carers if required – see Section 3.

- A record of recognised complaints will be kept by the Headteacher. Complaints will be handled as speedily as possible and in line with the policy timescales.
- Conciliatory language will be used at all times.
- Where there are communication difficulties, recording devices can be used to ensure the complainant is able to access and review discussions at a later point.
- Complainants will be assured of confidentiality and that pupils will not be victimised.
- For some issues the procedure for handling complaints is defined by statutory provisions rather than via the school. These include:
  - Special education needs, child protection / safeguarding, school admissions, the school curriculum, school exclusions.

See Appendix 1 for further details. Complaints by staff will be dealt through other policies and procedures, ie Whistleblowing Policy and Grievance Policy.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use the school premises or facilities will follow their own complaints procedures.

### **Stage 1 - Informal Resolution**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. If parents/carers have a complaint they should normally contact their daughter/son's form tutor in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents'/carers' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for her/him to consult a member of the SLT or the headteacher before returning to the parent.

Complaints made directly to a head of department, an SLT member or the form tutor will usually be referred to the headteacher unless the recipient of the complaint deems it appropriate for her/him to deal with the matter personally. The recipient of the complaint will make a written record for the child's file of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 2 days or in the event that the headteacher and the parent/carer fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents/carers will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of the Procedure. Records of each complaint are kept in a central Complaints Book.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents/carers should put their complaint in writing to the headteacher.

If the complaint is about the headteacher, the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of Trustees.

Normally, the headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the headteacher will meet with the parents/carers concerned, within seven days of receiving the formal complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. In the case of school holidays this will be acknowledged as soon as is practicable.

It may be necessary for the headteacher to carry out further investigations.

The headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Once the headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents/carers will be informed of this decision in writing within 15 days. The headteacher will also give reasons for the decision. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure and the Trustees should be informed within 10 days.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

The complaint will only be reviewed at a Panel Hearing if the processes of Stage 1 and Stage 2 have been held.

If parents/carers seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) the complaint may be renewed by writing to the Clerk of Trustees within five working days of receiving the decision at Stage 2. The complaint will be acknowledged within five working days and the matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three people who were not involved in the complaint. At least one person on the panel must be independent of the management and running of the school. The chair of the panel will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within seven days. The Clerk to the Trustees will supply the parent/carer with written particulars of date, time and place of the hearing as well as the names of panel members.

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.

If an adjournment of the hearing is required for further investigations, parents/carers will be informed in writing with particulars of the new timescale. Written copies of all evidence the parent/carer wishes the panel to consider shall be supplied to all parties not later than three days prior to the hearing. The parents/carers may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person.

If possible, the panel will resolve the parents'/carers' 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 the parents/carers 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 by email or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and be available for inspection on the school premises by the trustees and, where relevant, the headteacher.

Parents/carers can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by the Secretary of State or body conducting and inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act.

The Flagship School will keep a record of all complaints reaching Stage 2 or Stage 3, indicating how they were resolved. Details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure in the preceding academic year are available on request. The stage at which the complaint is concluded is recorded, whether at Stage 2 or Stage 3 and how resolved.

### **Unresolved Complaints**

You must complain through The Flagship School's complaints procedure first. The Department for Education (DfE) has certain powers as a regulator, if the school is not meeting standards set by them for:

- education
- pupil welfare and health and safety
- school premises
- staff suitability
- making information available to parents

The DfE will consider any reports of a major failure to meet the standards. It can arrange an emergency inspection to make sure that pupil welfare and health and safety are safeguarded and that serious failings are dealt with. For minor complaints, DfE can ask the school inspectorates to take these into account when the school is next inspected. For more information visit their website: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

There is also an Ofsted Whistleblower Hotline:

WBHL

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm)

Email: [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)

### **APPENDIX 1**

### **See Whistleblowing Policy**