



Complaints Procedure (Parents)

The Full Board of Governors is responsible for this policy.

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Approved by

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Headmaster	Chair of Governors
	
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The school has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to all its pupils including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (E.Y.F.S.). However, if parents do have a complaint either regarding their child or against a member of staff, including the Headteacher, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. In the case of a complaint against the Headteacher, parents should contact the Chair via the school and the same procedures will be followed.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head or Deputy Head in the Head's absence.
- Complaints made directly to the Head/Deputy Head will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher unless the Head/Deputy Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The form teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 working days

or in the event that the form teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chair of Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. 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 Board of Governors, who will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working 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 2 working days prior to the hearing.
- Parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied by one other person, such as a relative or friend. As the panel hearing is not a legal proceeding, neither the parents nor the school should normally be legally represented. Any request for legal representation will be considered in advance by the Chair of the Panel, taking account of fairness, reasonable adjustments and the particular circumstances of the complaint.
- 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 facts it considers relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 14 working days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decisions of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing, by email or post, to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about.

Complaints About Data Protection Handling

Concerns specifically relating to the handling of personal data must be submitted to the DPO (Data Protection Officer) in the first instance.

The DPO (Tilly Cottom, SBM@highfieldpriory.co.uk) oversees complaint-related data processing and ensures compliance.

If unresolved, complaints may be escalated to:

- The Headteacher
- The Chair of Governors

Individuals also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at any stage.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Additional requirements apply to complaints concerning the school's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

Written complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of the school receiving the complaint.

The school will maintain a written record of these complaints and their outcomes. The record will be made available to Ofsted and any body authorised to inspect the school on request.

Parents should normally complete the school's complaints procedure before referring a matter externally. However, parents may contact Ofsted where a complaint concerns registered childcare or the school's compliance with the EYFS registration requirements.

Ofsted cannot resolve individual disagreements between parents and the school. It may consider whether registration requirements are being met and determine whether any regulatory action is necessary.

Ofsted

Telephone: 0300 123 4666

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-childcare>

Where a concern relates to whether the school is meeting the Independent School Standards, it may be raised with the Department for Education after the school's complaints procedure has been completed.

Department for Education

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-private-school>

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) does not determine individual parental complaints against schools. Concerns that the school may not be meeting the Independent School Standards should be directed to the Department for Education. The Department for Education may share relevant information with ISI or request that it is considered as part of an inspection.

If a child may be at risk of harm, parents should contact the local authority children's social care service or the police rather than waiting for the complaints procedure to be completed. If a child is in immediate danger, they should call 999.

Written records and confidentiality

The school will keep a written record of all complaints made under the formal stages of this procedure. The record will show:

- whether the complaint was resolved at Stage 2 or proceeded to a Stage 3 panel hearing;
- the outcome of the complaint, including whether it was upheld in whole or in part, not upheld or otherwise resolved;
- any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether it was upheld; and
- the date on which the complaint was concluded.

Complaint records will be retained securely and in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and retention arrangements. Records relating to EYFS complaints will be retained for at least three years from the date on which the record was made.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where:

- access is requested by the Secretary of State;
- access is requested by a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008;
- disclosure is required by law;
- disclosure is necessary to meet the school's safeguarding obligations; or
- an individual is entitled to access information under data-protection legislation.

Information disclosed under any of these circumstances will be limited to what is necessary and lawful.

During the academic year 2025–2026, the school registered three formal complaints under this Complaints Procedure.

Of these:

3 were resolved at Stage 2 – Formal Resolution; and
0 proceeded to Stage 3 – Panel Hearing.

Authority

The Full Board of Governors, by delegation to sub-committees, is responsible for formulating the policies and procedures that will ensure the school continue to achieve the aims of the overall school strategy. Hence, each sub-committee has Terms of Reference and assigned responsibility for policies within that scope. The sub-committees are: Audit and Compliance Committee, Education Committee, Finance and General Purposes Committee, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, Safeguarding and Child Protection Committee and Sales and Marketing Committee.