

Date: September 2019

Review Date: September 2020

Responsibility: SMT (Principal)



Dame Allan's Schools

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Number of formal complaints received in academic year 2018 - 2019: 1

INTRODUCTION

Dame Allan's Schools welcome suggestions and comments from parents of pupils currently registered at the Schools, and take seriously any complaints which they may raise. A complaint is defined as any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the Schools. This policy does not apply to parents of prospective pupils. It applies to parents of former pupils only where the original complaint was raised whilst the pupil was still registered. Where the complaint is related to a pupil's exclusion from the Schools, a separate procedure is set out in the Whole School Behaviour Policy.

A copy of this policy is posted on the Schools' website and hard copies may be provided on request from the school office at either site.

The Schools wish to ensure that:

- parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- complaints are responded to within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- parents realise that the Schools listen and take complaints seriously;
- action is taken where appropriate.

STAGE 1 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION

It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally. If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's form teacher or tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher or tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department, a pastoral manager or a member of the Schools' management team, including the Principal.

Complaints made directly to a pastoral manager or senior member of staff including the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher or tutor unless the pastoral manager or senior member of staff deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

Concerns dealt with in this informal manner are not regarded as formal complaints and are not necessarily logged or recorded.

Should the matter not be resolved within ten working (term time) days or in the event that the form teacher or tutor (or pastoral manager where applicable) 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. Parents may also proceed to this stage directly if they deem the complaint sufficiently serious or if the complaint concerns safeguarding issues.

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 Principal. In addition, if parents have raised a concern about a more minor matter, which is subsequently repeated, and the parents are not satisfied with the Schools' original response, they should put their complaint in writing to the Principal.

All such complaints will be recorded as formal complaints in the Complaints Register. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

Once the Principal 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, within fifteen working (term time) days of receipt of the complaint. The Principal will also give reasons for his decision. The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

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 Clerk to the Governors, who has been given the responsibility 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 Schools. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the governors. The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within fifteen working (term time) days of receipt of the complaint.

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 prior to the hearing.

The parents will be invited to attend the panel and may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The panel will meet notwithstanding that the parents may, subsequent to expressing dissatisfaction with the outcome of stage 2, decide not to attend the meeting. Under these circumstances, the panel will reach its decisions and make recommendations in the absence of the parents. The panel hearing will only be cancelled should the parents indicate that they are satisfied with the outcome of stage 2 of the process.

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 they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision within five working (term time) days of the hearing.

The Panel will then write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Principal, the governors and, where relevant, the person complained about. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings will be available for inspection on the Schools' premises by the Chairman of Governors and Principal.

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. A written record is kept of all formal complaints including those which proceed to a Panel hearing.

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

This policy applies to parents of all children within the Dame Allan's Foundation, though separate arrangements for those pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage follow below.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

If a complaint is made by a parent to the member of the Early Years Department, this is recorded and put in the child's file by the members of staff and reported to the Head of Early Years who will investigate the complaint and deal with it appropriately as set out at Stage 1 above.

Specific complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements will always be investigated.

All conversations are recorded and filed in the Early Years complaints file which will be stored confidentially as outlined above.

Information about the complaint is also passed to the Head and his/her deputy. Should the matter not be resolved within ten working (term time) days or in the event that the Head of Early Years 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 as detailed above and may, if appropriate, also proceed to Stage 3.

In any event, the parent will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days.

If parents are still dissatisfied after following the Schools' complaints procedure, as described above, then they may contact the Schools' inspecting bodies with regard to their complaint. These are:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>

Independent Schools Inspectorate

Ground Floor

CAP House

9-12 Long Lane

London

EC1A 9HA

Tel: 020 7600 0100

Email: concerns@isi.net

<https://www.isi.net/>