



DANES HILL SCHOOL  
STRONG & SAGACIOUS

Date: 14 JULY 2021

Review Date: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

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## Complaints procedure



Vernon Educational Trust Ltd

**THIS POLICY APPLIES TO THE MAIN SCHOOL, THE EARLY YEARS  
FOUNDATION STAGE AND THE PRE-PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**DANES HILL SCHOOL  
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Introduction

Danes Hill has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

- This complaints procedure is available to all parents currently attending the school.
- The complaints procedure does not apply to prospective pupils, and therefore, it does not have to cover failure to admit such pupils.
- The procedure only applies in relation to complaints from parents of pupils, i.e. persons for whom education is being provided at the school. Therefore, the process does not cover complaints from parents of pupils who have left voluntarily or as a result of being excluded (except in cases where the complaints process was started when the pupil was still being educated at the school).
- A written record is kept of all formal complaints including whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to panel hearing and action taken by the school as a result of these complaints.
- All records of formal complaints will be kept for three years.
- Parents are entitled to view the number of formal complaints made during the previous academic year and the stage of the procedure at which the complaint was resolved.
- All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to 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 them.

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 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 the parent to consult the Head of Year, Head of Department or Head of Section.

- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, Head of Year or Head of Section will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher or tutor unless the Head of Year, Head of Department or Head of Section deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The form teacher or tutor 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 seven working days or in the event that the form teacher or tutor 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 – Contacting the Head

- A Stage 1 concern becomes a Stage 2 complaint when the parents seek a formal meeting with the Head, or raise issues through a formal letter, which may require a written response from the school. This would normally be regarded as a formal complaint. Also, if a concern about a more minor matter is repeated and the parent is clearly not satisfied with the school's original response, it should be regarded as a complaint.
- 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, within ten working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It is not expected that the parents would be accompanied or represented by another person at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations. *The manner and procedure in which this will be done will be at his discretion.*
- 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 within seven working days from speaking with the parents. The Head will also give reasons for his decision.
- *Following this ruling, if parents are still not satisfied then they should proceed to the Stage 3 Panel Hearing.*

### Stage 3 – Formal complaint Panel Hearing

- *If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 they will be referred to the Chairman of Governors, who will appoint a panel.*

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of 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 Chairman of Trustees, who, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within twenty working days of the parents informing the School, after receiving the Stage 2 report, that they wish to invoke Stage 3. However if a complaint has been received about the Head it will be dealt with within twenty working days from receiving the initial 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 not later than seven working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. If parents wish to be accompanied they should notify the Chairman of Trustees in advance of the hearing of the name of the person who will be attending and the capacity in which he or she will do so.
- The provision requiring a complaints procedure to allow a parent to be accompanied at a panel hearing does not confer a right on a parent to have a legal representative to make representations on their behalf at the hearing, although the school can allow this if it wishes.
- 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 and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within ten working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, regardless of whether the complaint is upheld. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing or via electronic mail to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.
- Any action taken as a result of a formal complaint should be recorded.
- If a parent does not exercise the right to attend a panel hearing, this does not remove the school's obligation to hold the hearing in conformity with its complaints policy. The school's arrangements for the panel hearing should be reasonable in order to facilitate the parent(s) exercising the right of attendance.
- 'Working days' means working days during school term time. Any complaint received during the school holidays will be dealt with as soon as practicable or when school returns.

- A copy of the findings and recommendations of the hearing will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Head.

It will normally be in the interests of any child or children involved in the subject matter of the complaint that the fact of a complaint being made, its subject matter and the outcome of the complaints procedure should be kept confidential. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially by the school. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential by the school except to the extent required by Part 7, Paragraph 33 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, or where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or under other legal authority.

Parents are required to maintain the confidentiality of the complaints procedure in the interests of the child or children concerned.

All complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements are investigated and complainants will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. Where parents do not believe that an early years complaint has been resolved they can raise this with Ofsted. Parents of EYFS children have the right to complain to Ofsted/ISI if their complaint is concerned with the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and not any provision outside those requirements.

Ofsted can be contacted on:

Phone: 0300 123 1231/0300 123 4666 8am – 6pm

Address: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

#### Vexatious Complaints

There may be exceptional occasions when, despite the following of all stages of the procedure, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the School reserves the right to inform the complainant in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. Where a complainant seeks to raise a subsequent complaint matter which is otherwise different to the original complaint at Stage 3, this matter in itself would be treated as a new informal complaint.

ISI can be contacted on:

Phone: 020 7600 0100

Address: CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

**Please note that 3 formal complaints were made during the school year.**