

## Complaints Policy

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Approval Committee	BSAG/GSAG
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1	Related Information.....	3
1.1	Availability of Statutory Policies .....	3
1.2	Statutory Guidance .....	3
1.3	Supporting Documents.....	4
1.4	Terminology .....	4
2	Introduction.....	4
3	Complaints Procedure.....	4
3.1	Stage 1 - Informal Resolution of Complaint or Concern.....	4
3.1.1	Pastoral Matters.....	5
3.1.2	Academic Matters .....	5
3.1.3	General School Matters .....	5
3.2	Stage 2 – Formal Complaint and Resolution .....	5
3.3	Stage 3 – Panel Hearing.....	6
4	Summary of Timescales for Response.....	7
5	ISI and Ofsted .....	7
6	Record of Complaints .....	7

## 1 Related Information

### 1.1 Availability of Statutory Policies

All statutory policies are available on the School's website.

### 1.2 Statutory Guidance

This statutory policy has been reviewed in accordance with the following guidance:

33. The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which—
- (a) is in writing;
  - (b) is made available to parents of pupils;
  - (c) sets out clear time scales for the management of a complaint;
  - (d) allows for a complaint to be made and considered initially on an informal basis;
  - (e) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (d), establishes a formal procedure for the complaint to be made in writing;
  - (f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
  - (g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
  - (h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;
    - (i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is—
      - (i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
      - (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
  - (j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and—
    - (i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
    - (ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
  - (k) provides that 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 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

### 1.3 Supporting Documents

The following related information is referred to in this policy:

Education and Skills Act (2008)

### 1.4 Terminology

**Head**, where not explicitly defined, means either the Head of the Girls' School or the Head of the Boys' School.

**Parents** includes one or both parents, a legal guardian, or education guardian.

**School** means Haberdashers' Aske's Elstree Schools Limited as Trustee of Haberdashers' Aske's Charity trading as Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls **and/or** The Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School, as now or in the future constituted (and any successor).

**School Day** means any day between Monday and Friday during Term Time as published on the School's website.

**Student** or **Students** means any student or students in the School at any age.

## 2 Introduction

This policy applies to the School and is available on the School's website and by request to Parents of current and prospective Students.

The School aims to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. The School days refer to Monday to Friday, when the School is open during term time. The timescales may be extended outside of term time to allow for staff to be contacted. The dates of terms are published on the School's website.

## 3 Complaints Procedure

### 3.1 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution of Complaint or Concern

The Parents should, in the first instance, always approach the School, dealing directly with the appropriate member of staff who will make every effort to find a satisfactory resolution, normally within five School Days.

The appropriate members of staff are responsible for dealing with the following types of concern:

### 3.1.1 *Pastoral Matters*

- The Heads of House at the Boys' School: The Head of Pre-Prep or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) at the Boys' School Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory School
- The Form Tutor at the Girls' School.

### 3.1.2 *Academic Matters*

- The Head of Department: The Head of Pre-Prep or the Deputy Head (Academic) at the Boys' School Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory School

### 3.1.3 *General School Matters*

- The Head of Section.

Should the matter not be resolved within five School Days, or Parents feel that a satisfactory resolution has not been reached, they should proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

## **3.2 Stage 2 – Formal Complaint and Resolution**

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then Parents should set out their complaint in writing to the Head. If the complaint is about the Head of the Girls' School or the Head of the Boys' School, then it should be raised with the Chair, Girls' School Advisory Group or Chair, Boys' School Advisory Group.

At the Boys' School Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory School, Parents should set out their complaint in writing to the Head of the Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory School who will confer with the Head of the Boys' School. If the complaint is about the Head of the Boys' School Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory School, then it should first be raised with the Head of the Boys' School.

In most cases, the Head will meet with or speak to the Parents concerned to discuss the complaint, as soon as is reasonably practicable and within three School Days.

It may be necessary for further investigations to be carried out, in which case the Head will appoint a senior member of staff to investigate the matter. The senior member of staff may wish to speak with the Parents and with others who have knowledge of the circumstances. The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the Head. Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the Parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Head's aim would be to inform the Parents of the outcome of the investigation and resolution of the complaint within one month of the receipt of the complaint (although any complaint received within one month of the School holidays is likely to take longer to resolve owing to the unavailability of personnel).

The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint unless the complaint is about themselves. In which case, records will be kept by the Chair, Boys' School Advisory Group or Chair, Girls' School Advisory Group. Please refer to the section on Record of Complaints.

In the EYFS at the Girls' School, all complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements are always investigated. Records of these types of complaints are available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

If Parents are not satisfied with the decision made by the Head, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **3.3 Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

If Parents are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 of this procedure, they should write to the Chair of the appropriate School Advisory Group within seven School Days of the decision being made. The Chair 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 matter will usually only be considered if Stages 1 and 2 have been completed.

The Panel's task is to establish the facts surrounding the complaint that have been made considering the documents provided by both parties and any representations made by the Parents or the Head.

If, after establishing the facts, the Panel consider that the complaint is valid, they will uphold the complaint. If the Panel consider that the complaint is not valid, they will dismiss the complaint. They will base these decisions on the balance of probabilities.

The Panel will consist of two Governors not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. In addition, the Governing Body will appoint an independent person to sit on the Panel. This person will not be involved in the management of the School, the running of the School or with its Governing Body. The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 School Days of receipt of a request.

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 three School 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. The hearing is not a legal proceeding and there is no need for the parties to be legally represented at the hearing. If the Parents do wish to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, this must be requested within five School Days prior to the hearing and the decision to allow this person to attend sits with the Chair.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the Parents' concern immediately, without the need for further investigation.

Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how to carry out the investigation and may adjourn the hearing if necessary. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will form a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within seven School Days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the Parents 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 in writing to the Parents (by email unless the Parents notify the Panel otherwise), the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person of the complaint concerns. A copy will be kept on the School premises, for inspection by the Chair of Governors and the Head.

## 4 Summary of Timescales for Response

The timescales for a response outlined below are 'within' the period shown but may be longer during the School holiday period to allow time for staff to be contacted:

Complaint Stage	Initial Response	Resolution/Decision
1	24 hours	5 School Days
2	3 School Days	28 School Days
3	14 School Days (Panel Hearing)	7 School Days (After Panel Hearing)

## 5 ISI and Ofsted

If you are dissatisfied with the School's response to the complaint, you may, if you wish, complain to ISI or Ofsted:

ISI: CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA  
Telephone: 020 7600 0100

Ofsted: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD  
General Helpline: 0300 123 1231  
Text phone: 0161 618 8524

## 6 Record of Complaints

The School will maintain a written record of action taken by the School as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. A written record will be kept of all complaints by the Head and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a Panel hearing. 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 109 of the Education and Skills Act (2008) requests access to them.

Record of Stage 2 or Stage 3 complaints:

Academic Year	Girls' School		Boys' Prep and pre-Prep		Boys' Senior	
	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 2	Stage 3
2016/17	0	0	0	0	0	1
2017/18	3	0	0	0	0	0
2018/19	2	0	0	0	1	1
2019/20	2	10	1	0	2	1
2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0