



AYSGARTH SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**Responsibility of Ed Canning
Reviewed September 2024
To be reviewed October 2025**

AYSGARTH SCHOOL
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints Procedure for Parents

Introduction

The School 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.

The complaints policy applies to Parents of pupils in the school (Prep and Pre-Prep including EYFS) and parents of past pupils, only if the complaint was an issue raised when the pupil was still registered. It is made available on the policies page of the school's website and on request from the School Office.

What constitutes a complaint?

Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is a complaint. It may be about the school as a whole, about a specific department, about the provision of boarding or an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done, or acted unfairly.

Making a complaint

There are three stages in this 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 child'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 Deputy Heads or the Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Heads or the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Form teacher unless the Deputy Heads or the Headmaster 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 14 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.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors, whose contact details are available from the School Office on request.
- An appropriate record of informal complaints and concerns, and the date on which they were made, will be recorded on a separate record and held by the Deputy Head.

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 Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or speak to the parents concerned, within 14 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. If after 14 days no resolution has been made then the matter should be taken to stage 3.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster 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 Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.
- This written decision should be issued within fourteen working days of the Headmaster receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, The Headmaster will write to the parents within the fourteen-day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why they are unable to issue a decision and informing the parents when he will

do so, which will be within twenty-eight days of the original receipt of 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 Chair of the Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The Chair of the Governors will acknowledge the complaint within three working days.
- 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 Governors. The Chair of the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 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 7 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- 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 14 working 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, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about.

Recording complaints

In accordance with Regulation Part 7, paragraph 33(j), written records of formal complaints, whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or 3 of this procedure, and the actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint has been upheld) will be kept for six years after the date of the resolution of the complaint. These will be separated into:-

- Formal Complaints
- Formal Complaints Early Years (EYFS)
- Formal Complaints Boarding (NMS14)

There were **no** Stage 2 or 3 Formal Complaints for the academic years 2017/2018/2019/2020/2021/2022/2023/2024.

The school will investigate complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and will notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. Details of any Formal complaint will be held on record for three years.

We also record informal complaints as good practice with concerns, complaints and grievances a standing agenda item in all SMT meetings. These are minuted for management purposes to enable patterns of concern to be monitored.

Confidentiality

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. 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 access to them. Findings and recommendations will be kept on the school premises and available for inspection by the Board of Governors and the Headmaster.

Should parents have concerns about the welfare of their child, they can contact the:

Independent Schools Inspectorate,

Ground Floor,

CAP House,

9-12 Long Lane,

London

EC1A 9HA

Telephone 0207 6000 100.

Department for Education:

Independent and Boarding Team

Department for Education, Level 3, Bishopsgate House, Feethams, Darlington,
DL1 5QE

Telephone: 0370 000 2288

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Or for Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS):

The record of complaints for Early Years is available to Ofsted on request.

Ofsted,

Piccadilly Gate,

Store Street,

Manchester

M1 2WD

General helpline 0300 123 1231

Complaints Procedure for Pupils

These notes are for your benefit so read them carefully. They explain what you can do if you feel worried about something and what you may do if you wish to complain about how you are, or have been, treated. If you do not understand anything in these notes, get a member of staff or a friend to explain it to you.

There are three things to remember :

- a) you may just wish to talk to someone or
 - b) you may wish to make a complaint
- either way, these notes will assist you to decide what to do.
- c) no pupil will ever be penalised for making a complaint.

What do I do if I just want to talk to someone?

Remember you have close friends who may be able to help or an older pupil to whom you feel you can turn to. Your Form teacher, the Headmaster, the Deputy Heads, the Housemaster, a Matron, or any other member of staff is always ready to help. Just ask if you may have a word in private.

We want to help you.

There may be a time when you feel that you cannot talk with a member of staff – this is perfectly natural. Talk, telephone or write to any of the following:

- your parents
- the school doctor (surgery Tel: 01677 422616)
- Childline (Tel: 0800 1111)
- Independent Listener (07808 144535)
- Office of the Children's Commissioner (0800 5280731)

What happens if I want to make a complaint about something?

Sometimes you may feel that you would like to complain about something that is worrying you. This might be about how you are being treated. The first thing you should do is talk to your Form teacher, the Housemaster, the Headmaster, the Headmaster's wife, the Deputy Heads, a Matron or any member of staff you feel you can trust.

If the matter cannot be easily settled to your satisfaction then you can make a formal complaint. You will need to do this by:

- a) writing to the Deputy Heads, the Housemaster, or your Form Tutor or telling one of them you wish to make a formal complaint and placing the note in the 'Suggestions and Complaints Box'.

b) he or she will then inform the Headmaster.

c) you will be told by the Headmaster that he is aware of the complaint and that it will be dealt with as soon as possible.

d) you will then be asked to talk the matter through with the Headmaster and you can have a friend with you. This friend may be another pupil or a member of staff.

If, within two more days, you have not had the matter satisfactorily resolved, you may contact any of the people listed above.

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO INFORM STAFF OR ANYONE ELSE YOU ARE COMPLAINING ABOUT THEM.

e) Whoever you contact will speak to you at the school and again you can have a friend with you. You will be advised as to what course seems sensible and it will be up to you to make a decision acting on his or her advice.

Things that might make you unhappy or upset :

- you feel that you have been treated unfairly by a member of staff.
- you feel that a punishment is unjust.
- a prefect or senior has treated you unkindly.
- you are being bullied.
- you feel that no one understands the difficulties that you are having with some of your work.
- someone has hurt or abused you or has made suggestions you think are not right.
- someone is always teasing you.
- someone has taken something of yours and has not returned it.
- there is bad news from home.

OR THERE MAY BE SOMETHING ELSE YOU THINK IS WRONG

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO COMPLAIN

IT IS YOUR RIGHT TO BE TREATED PROPERLY

WE DO CARE AND WE WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY