



FARLINGTON

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Complaints Procedure applies to the Whole School including the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Introduction

Farlington 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 with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. Farlington makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website and in the School Office during the school day, and Farlington will ensure that parents of current pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available, and the form in which it is published or available. This procedure is not, however, available for use by prospective parents – it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

In accordance with paragraph 32(10)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Farlington will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. 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 has acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The School is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you [or your child] raise in good faith.

The Three-Stage Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally, in the first instance, contact the appropriate person: Class Teacher (for children from Reception to Prep 6, inclusive), Form Tutor (for girls in Year 7 – U6th) and the appropriate Boarding Housemistress (for Boarders). In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means, to the parents' satisfaction. If this person cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for

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him/her to consult, the Assistant Head (Prep) and in the Senior School the appropriate Head of Year or Head of Department.

- Complaints made directly to the Assistant Head or the Headmistress will usually be referred to the relevant person identified above unless the Assistant Head or Headmistresses deem it appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Class Teacher/Form Tutor/Housemistress 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 5 working days, or in the event that the Class Teacher/Form Tutor/Housemistress 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 Complaints Procedure.
- If, however, the complaint is against the Headmistress, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors, via Kerry Harper (Admin Clerk to the Governors) : kh@farlingtonschool.com

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 Headmistress. The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases the Headmistress will meet or speak to the parents concerned, within 5 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 Headmistress to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmistress is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made, and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.
- If the complaint concerns the Headmistress, the Chair of Governors (or another Governor appointed by the Chair of Governors) will call for a full report from the Headmistress and for all the relevant documents. The Chair (or designated person) may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair (or designated person) is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair (or designated person) will give reasons for his/her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure. Parents would be expected to make this request within 20 working days in writing to the Chair of Governors.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), the Chair of Governors will nominate a Governor to act as Convenor who will then convene a Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of two Governors not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and a specifically appointed member of the Panel who is independent of the management and running of the School. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within 10 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 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This person may be a relative, teacher 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 the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.

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- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 5 working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Headmistress. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will also be available for inspection on the School's premises by the Chairman of Governors and the Headmistress.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the School's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 20 working days. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days.

Please note that for the purposes of this procedure, working days refer to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding Bank Holidays.

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing, and any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the School's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

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.

During the academic year 2017-2018, there was 1 complaint at Stage 2 and 0 at Stage 3.

Written Complaints Relating To The Requirements Under The Statutory Framework For The EYFS:

Farlington will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.

Complaints To Ofsted Regarding EYFS Service Providers:

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Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe Farlington is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 123 4234 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net

Compliants to ISI:

Parents may complain directly to ISI for areas of the school not including EYFS.

ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net

Additional elements apply under National Minimum Standard 18 to the Complaints Procedure regarding Boarders.

The following information is displayed in the Boarding Houses and given to Parents/Guardians of boarders. It applies specifically to the pupils. Parents should follow the procedures above.

“If you have any boarding related complaints, please don’t bottle them up or think you might get into trouble for raising them. We want to hear from you and we will always work hard to sort things fairly and with your best interests at heart.”

In the first instance, we would hope to resolve issues informally, but where this is not possible, there is a formal procedure you can follow as well.

How to make an informal complaint

- (i) Speak to Mrs Wragg or Mrs Prichard about it. Alternatively you could speak to any of the Boarding House staff - Mrs Kelly, Mrs Colson, Mrs Crook, Mrs Burrows, a Gapper or any of the Head Boarders. If you do not feel able to talk to any of these people, you could speak to Mrs Higgs, Ms Higson or any member of staff to whom you feel comfortable talking.
- (ii) We will take any complaint seriously and will investigate promptly.
- (iii) The member of staff you speak to will let you know what will happen next and try to give an indication of how long the investigation may take.
- (iv) You will get appropriate feedback as soon as possible. If there is a delay, the reasons for this should be explained to you.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this informal complaints procedure, you can make a formal complaint.

How to make a formal complaint

- (i) Write to Mrs Higgs, stating that you are making a formal complaint and explain the matter you have been unable to resolve in any other way.
- (ii) The complaint will then be formally logged in the complaints file held by the Headmistress.
- (iii) You will then get a note from Mrs Higgs saying that she has seen the complaint and that it will be attended to within five school days of you making the complaint.
- (iv) You will be asked to talk the matter through with either your Head of Year or Assistant Head and you can have someone with you who may be another pupil, a senior boarder, your tutor or any member of staff. If, within two to five school days, you have not had the matter satisfactorily sorted out within school you may contact any of the people whose names have been listed and whose addresses and telephone numbers

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appear at the end of this leaflet. You do not have to inform staff or anyone that you are complaining about them.

- (v) A written record is kept of serious complaints and their outcome, in the file held by the Headmistress.
- (vi) Whoever you contact will speak to you at the school - again you can have a friend with you - and will advise you about what seems sensible. At that stage it will be up to you to make a decision acting on his/her advice.

Addresses and Telephone Numbers of People Outside School You May Wish to Contact:

School Doctor

Village Surgery
Station Road
Southwater
Horsham
RH13 9HQ
Tel: 01403 730016

Independent Listeners

Martin Ward
martin.ward@farlingtonschool.com

Revd Sandra Hall
Tel: 01403 790197
Email: sandra.richard@tiscali.co.uk

Ms Bonnie Zheng
Email: putaobonnie@gmail.com

Childline

Tel: 0800 1111

ISI

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA
Email: concerns@isi.net
Tel: 020 7600 0100

The Children's Commissioner

Email: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 0800 528 0731

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