SOLIHULL

Parental Complaints Procedure

Owner: Executive Headmaster
Reviewer: Bursar
Last Reviewed: September 2026

Version 10

Introduction

Solihull is committed to providing the best teaching and pastoral care it can for all pupils. We recognise the right of a parent to raise their concerns and the value to all concerned of dealing fairly, speedily and effectively with any such concerns. Solihull will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.

Although this Complaints Procedure is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them; it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the School. The only exception to this is if the complaint is a review of a decision taken by the Executive Headmaster to permanently exclude under clause 7 of the Parent Contract in which case such a review must be requested by no later than fifteen days from the date of the decision to exclude a pupil.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, Solihull will make details of this complaints procedure available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), the Departments of Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The School will also make available the number of complaints registered under the procedure during the preceding school year to Ofsted, the DfE and ISI.

Solihull is conscious that where complaints are lodged at or near the end of a school term, it can often be difficult to progress investigations quickly when the relevant parties are unavailable. Consequently, the timescales for responses set out below will be adhered to wherever possible, but are not to be taken as absolute.

"Parent(s)" means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a pupil about whom the complaint relates.

What Constitutes a Complaint?

Many issues and concerns can arise on a day to day basis that can usually be resolved quickly and informally through discussion and liaison with a child's Form Tutor.

A complaint is a formal 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 may arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and 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 raise in good faith.

When dealing with complaints, the School (including any panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information which may include special category personal data. All data processing is carried out in accordance with the School's Privacy

Notice. 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 Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at the Stage 1 (informal stage), the formal stage (Stage 2) or proceed to a panel hearing (Stage 3) and any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

If parents do have a complaint, the following procedure will be followed.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- As with day to day issues and concerns, it is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.

- If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their child's Form Tutor. The Form Tutor will aim to resolve the issue with the parents and is likely to consult the Head of Year and/or the Head of Section and/or Head of relevant Department.

- If the matter cannot be resolved straightaway, the Form Tutor and, where appropriate, the Head of Year, Head of Section or Head of Department will meet the parents as soon as is reasonably practicable (and, where possible, within ten working days of the complaint) to attempt to provide a satisfactory resolution.

- If parents believe that the complaint is of a more serious nature, they may make their complaint directly to the Head of Section, one of the Deputy Heads or Head of the Senior School or Head of the Prep School. The appropriate senior member of staff will meet the parents as soon as is reasonably practicable (and, where possible, within ten working days of the complaint) to attempt to provide a satisfactory resolution.

- Complaints made directly to another member of staff will normally, in the first instance, be promptly referred to the Form Tutor unless the member of staff believes that the complaint is of a more serious nature such that the complaint should be referred directly to the Head of Section, one of the Deputy Heads or Head of the Senior School or Head of the Prep School. As above, the appropriate senior member of staff will meet the parents as soon as is reasonably practicable (and, where possible, within ten working days of the complaint) to attempt to provide a satisfactory resolution.

- A written record of all complaints will be maintained. A record of all complaints dealt with by a member of the School Leadership Team is kept for periodic review.

- If the complaint is against the Executive Headmaster, parents should make their complaint to the Chair of the Governors, via the Clerk to the Governors.

- Each of the resolution processes noted above is intended to conclude the informal resolution stage. However, if, after Stage 1, there is no satisfactory resolution, parents are advised to proceed to Stage 2 of the procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Executive Headmaster within five working days of their meeting with the Form Tutor (or the appropriate senior member of staff). It may also be the case that parents may believe a matter to be of such seriousness that they want to deal directly with the Executive Headmaster in the first instance, rather than proceed through Stage 1.

- On receipt of the complaint, the Executive Headmaster will meet/speak to the parents concerned, as soon as is reasonably practicable (and, where possible, within five working days of receiving the complaint), to discuss the matter. Sometimes, the Executive Headmaster will appoint another senior member of staff to meet with parents. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. If the complaint is made against a specific member of staff, that member of staff may be present at this meeting. The Executive Headmaster will have the right to decide whether the member of staff's presence is appropriate at this stage.

- The Executive Headmaster will thereafter investigate the matter himself, or he will appoint another member of staff, who will report back to him. He will provide a response to that complaint in writing as soon as possible. Where possible, this will be provided within ten working days of the Executive Headmaster's meeting with the parents, although this will depend on a number of factors including the extent of any further investigations which the Executive Headmaster considers appropriate before providing a response. That response will give the decision, the reasons for the decision and any action taken or proposed, and will go to all interested parties where appropriate and in line with the School's Privacy Notice.

- A written record of all complaints that are raised under Stage 2 will be kept by the Executive Headmaster. A record will also be kept of whether the matter was resolved at this stage, the resolution (or not) and any action taken or proposed.

- If the complaint is against the Executive Headmaster, the complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors. The Chair, or another governor designated by the Chair, will call for a full report from the Executive Headmaster and for all relevant documents within ten working days of the complaint being received. The Chair (or his/her designate as outlined above) may also call for a briefing from members of staff and may in some cases speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair (or his/her designate) 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 as soon as is reasonably practicable (and, where possible, within fifteen working days of the complaint). The response will give the decision, the reasons for the decision and any action taken or proposed and will go to all interested parties where appropriate and in line with the School's Privacy Notice. A written record will be kept by the Clerk to the Governors.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

- If the parents wish to proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they should do so in writing to the Clerk to the Governors, within fifteen working days after the completion of Stage 2, setting out their grounds of appeal. Any supporting evidence which the parents wish to rely on should also be provided with their grounds of appeal.

- The Clerk, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel will then refer the appeal 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 will be independent of the management and running of the School. The Clerk will ensure one of the Panel members is appointed Chair of the Panel.

- The Clerk to the Governors will acknowledge the complaint promptly (and usually within three working days) and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as possible (and, where possible, within fifteen working days of the stage 3 complaint if the complaint is lodged during term time).

- The Panel may require that all details of the complaint should be supplied in advance. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five working days prior to the hearing.

- If the complaint is made against a member or members of staff, the particulars of the complaint will be made available to the member or members of staff.

- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person who is not directly connected to the complaint. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. This right of accompaniment will also be extended to any member of staff against whom a Stage 3 complaint has been made if they are invited to attend the hearing to give evidence.

- The remit of the Panel shall be at the discretion of the Chair of Governors and the manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel. If possible, the panel will resolve the complaint 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 the merits of the complaint and all facts they consider relevant, the panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and decide whether to:

    - Dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part;
    - Uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and
    - Make recommendations

- Unless further investigation is required, the complainant, the Chair of Governors, the Clerk to the Governors, the Executive Headmaster and, where relevant, the person complained about, will be notified of the findings and recommendations in writing as soon as possible (and, where possible, within fifteen working days of the hearing). The decision of the panel will be final.

- A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the School premises by the Executive Headmaster and the Governors.

- Any complaint about or review of a decision taken by the Executive Headmaster to exclude or require the removal of the pupil under clause 7 of the School's Terms and Conditions will be governed by this Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure. This procedure is also set out in the Exclusion Policy. In such circumstances, the panel may only uphold the complaint and ask the Executive Headmaster to reconsider his decision if they consider, having regard to the process followed by the Executive Headmaster, that the Executive Headmaster's decision to exclude the pupil was not a reasonable decision for the Executive Headmaster to have taken.

Persistent Correspondence

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this may be regarded by the School as vexatious and outside the scope of this procedure.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents of EYFS children should follow the three stages of this Complaints Procedure. If parents remain dissatisfied and their complaint is about the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, then parents may take their complaint to the ISI or Ofsted.

Solihull 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 in accordance with its Privacy Notice.

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

Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

ISI can be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: info@isi.net

ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

Number of Formal Complaints 2024/25: 2
Number of Formal Complaints 2025/26: 1