



SOMPTING ABBOTTS SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND POLICY

applicable to all parents including parents of EYFS children

Please note: the action(s) taken by the school, as a result of a formal or informal complaint, and all related communications, will be recorded regardless of whether it is upheld.

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.

A complaint is any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action whether this be a real or perceived problem. It may be made about:

- The school as a whole
- A department
- A specific member of staff

We recognize that it is right for a parent to make a complaint if they believe the school has:

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something it should have done
- Acted unreasonably or unfairly

The aim of this policy is to ensure all complaints are managed:

- Seriously
- Sympathetically
- Efficiently
- At the appropriate level
- As swiftly as possible
- With no adverse effect on their children.
- Confidentially
- Positively and without resentment

Records and Statements of all complaint processes-their start and finish- will be kept in the School Office in a file. This will include: what the complaint was, the action taken by the school and the stage the official complaint was resolved at.

We encourage parents and staff to work through any issues using the following stages, beginning with Stage 1.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Staff are encouraged to resolve issues immediately or offer to refer the matter to the Head. Staff must log all complaints received, verbal or written. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

Begin by Contacting the Form Teacher

If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their son or daughter's Form Teacher. This will be dealt with, within a 24-hour time-frame. 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 Head, or another member of the School's Senior Leadership Team. The Head should be informed of any initial discussion that takes place with parents.

Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher unless the Head deems it appropriate for him 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 7 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 the accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure. All EYFS staff must investigate written complaints relating to the EYFS requirements.

Timeframes and Contacting Staff

Staff are in school from 8.15 am at the latest and finish teaching at 4.30 pm. We ask parents to email staff no later than 6pm regarding any concerns they have. This also allows staff to mark, plan and respond to emails regarding work from students.

Staff will respond to emails at the earliest at 8.15 am the day after receiving an email and within the aforementioned 24-hour timeframe.

The Head is available from 8.15 am until 6pm, Monday to Friday. If he has to leave the site earlier, he may be contacted by email until the 6pm cut-off time.

Staff and (or) parents can make an appointment with the Head through calling the school office or by emailing the Head.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

Please note: All formal complaints will be recorded so as to state the name of the complainant, the date the complaint was received, the date it was resolved and the actions that were taken.

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. This should be done by using the complaints form which is located at the end of this policy.

The Head will decide, after considering the complaint and discussing if necessary with other members of the School's SLT, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head will meet the parents concerned, normally within 3 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 Head to carry out further investigations.

The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. It will be detailed as to whether the complaint was resolved at a preliminary stage or if it proceeded to a panel hearing.

Once the Head 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, within 5 working days of the meeting. It is anticipated that this timeframe should be sufficient in term time. Should a complaint be made outside of term time, resolution may depend on the availability of relevant members of staff. Should this be the case, parents will be informed and a clear timeframe established for each particular case. The Head will also give reasons for his decision.

Records of complaints will be available to parents.

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

Complaints Against the Head

If the complaint is against the Headmaster, the Proprietor, Mrs. Patricia Sinclair, needs to be contacted through the school office on patricia.sinclair@btconnect.com or 01903 235960. The Proprietor and the Bursar, Mr. David Sinclair, will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents.

The Proprietor 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 Proprietor and Bursar are satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed in writing and the reasons for the decision given. The Proprietor and Bursar may decide to contact any other agencies (iAPS, ISI) if necessary.

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 Principal, who has been appointed by the Board of Directors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

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 proprietor. **The Principal, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 7 days.**

Furthermore:

- 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 2 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. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Findings and recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and where relevant the person complained about.
- 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 3 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 or electronic mail to the parents, the Head, and, where relevant, the person complained about.
- A copy will **be** available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headteacher.
- **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.**

EYFS

All written complaints relating to the EYFS will be investigated and the complainants notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. The record of complaints must be available to ISI. A record of complaints is available to parents. All parents will be notified if the setting is aware that they are to be inspected.

After an inspection, Sompting Abbotts School and EYFS will provide a copy of the report to all parents and carers. A record of complaints is kept for at least 3 years for any pupil in the EYFS.

Additional Notes:

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially, as set out in The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2013

It is anticipated that the normal timeframe should be sufficient in term time. Should a complaint be made outside of term time, resolution may depend on the availability of relevant members of staff. Should this be the case, parents will be informed and a clear timeframe established for each particular case.

A copy of this document is available to view on the school website and this policy, along with all school policies, can be obtained from the school office.

Parents can also contact the ISI- (Independent Schools Inspectorate) by writing or e-mailing or ringing:

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

Email: concerns@isi.net

020 7600 0100

If Parents of children in the EYFS (PP1 and PP2) classes believe that the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements, they may contact Ofsted using the below email and telephone number:

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

0300 123 1231

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APPENDIX ONE: Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel

The DfES has supplied the following guidance in a letter to the ISC General Secretary:

Whilst we do not intend to be prescriptive our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members had some standing in the local community. In this connection serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with legal background – perhaps retired members of the Police Force – might be considered suitable by schools. Schools will have their own view and may well have other suitable suggestion to make.

It asked if it would be acceptable to appoint former governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member. The regulations do not preclude this since the stipulation is that the person must be independent of the management and running of the school. Clearly former governors or staff would not have any such involvement. However, schools should bear in mind that they may be subject to criticism that such people would remain too close to the school and would not be truly independent.

APPENDIX TWO

NUMBER OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED:

Year 2016/2017: 2 (both resolved at Stage 2)

Year 2017/2018: 0

Year 2018/19: 0

Year 2019/2020: 0

Year 2020/2021: 1 (resolved at Stage 2)

Year 2021/2022: 0

APPENDIX THREE



SOMPTING ABBOTTS SCHOOL FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

Name of Complainant
Date of Complaint
Nature of Complaint
Name of other person (s) involved
What actions do you think might resolve the problem at this stage?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
Signature:
Date:

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date acknowledgement sent and by who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Actions taken:

Date: