



Abbots Bromley School

33.A. Complaints Policy

1Statutory Policies	33.A. Complaints
ISI	Part 7. Complaints
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A Procedure for handling concerns and complaints at Abbots Bromley School (including EYFS and boarding provision)

Introduction

The School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. However, if the parents of any students from Early Years Foundation Stage to the Sixth Form do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. If they wish, they may complain directly to;

- Independent Schools' Inspectorate, Ground Floor, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA
Telephone: 020 7600 0100

or

- Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
General Helpline 0300 123 1231 Textphone 0161 618 8524

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 Key Stage Coordinator in the Senior School or class teacher in the Junior School. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Year Head or class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for her/him to consult a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Faculty, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Key Stage Coordinator or class teacher unless the Head of Faculty, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Headmaster deems it appropriate for her/him to deal with the matter personally.
- The Key Stage Coordinator or class 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 fourteen school days, or in the event that the Key Stage Coordinator or class 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.

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 / speak to the parents concerned, normally within seven school 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 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.
- 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 Bursar, who 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 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 Bursar, on behalf of the Panel, who will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen school 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 seven 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. 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 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, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about.
- The final outcome of an investigation will be communicated to a parent within 28 days of receiving the complaint.
- A written record of all complaints, including EYFS, and whether it was settled at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel interview will be kept in school for three years. This information will be kept in a secure area of the computer system to ensure confidentiality. A hard copy file is stored in the Headmaster's P.A.'s secure office.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school through meeting the standards set in Part 7 of the ISI Regulatory Handbook, February 2016; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

EYFS – Additional requirements apply for EYFS setting beyond those which apply to the main school.

Written complaints about the fulfillment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints must be available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

Appendix: Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel

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

Whilst we do not intend to be proscriptive 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 a legal background – perhaps retired members of the Police Force – might be considered suitable by schools. Schools will have their own views and may well have other suitable suggestions to make.

The regulations do not preclude the appointment of former governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member 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.