



## GREENFIELD SCHOOL

### **Complaints Procedure 2023-2024 Including EYFS and Little School**

Greenfield 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. Greenfield makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website and Greenfield will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available, and of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Greenfield will also make available, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Although this 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 Headmistress to exclude or require the removal of a pupil under clause 7 of the School's Terms and Conditions in which case such a review must be requested by no later than five working days from the date of the decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil.

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

#### **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 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 body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.**

**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.**

### **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 contact their child's class teacher/Little School Manager or the Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School or Head of Upper School. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If that child's class teacher/Little School Manager, Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School or Head of Upper School cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for the parent to consult the Deputy Head.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head or Headmistress will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher/Little School Manager or the Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School or Head of Upper School unless the Deputy Head or Headmistress deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
- The class teacher/Little School Manager or the Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School or Head of Upper School 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 10 working days or in the event that the class teacher/Little School Manager or the Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School or Head of Upper School 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 who can be contacted via the Clerk to the Governing Body [bursar@greenfield.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:bursar@greenfield.surrey.sch.uk).

#### **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 speak to the parents concerned, within 10 working days of receive the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmistress, or their nominee, to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

## Complaints Procedure and Code of Conduct for Parents (Complaints) 2023-2024

- 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 their decision. In most cases, the Headmistress will make their decision and provide the parents with reasons within 15 working days of the complaint being put in writing.
- If the complaint is against the Head, the complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors or their nominee will call for a full report from the Head and for all relevant documents. The Chair of Governors or their nominee 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 of Governors or their nominee 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 of Governors or their nominee will give reasons for their 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 should do so in writing to the Clerk to the Governors within 5 working days of receiving the decision at 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. To the extent the parents are unable to provide their complaint within the time period stipulated due to extenuating circumstances which have impeded the parents from taking action, the parents should request an extension in writing. Such a request should be made to the Clerk to the Governors in advance of the original deadline, setting out the further time period requested and the reason for this. This will be considered.
- The Clerk to the Governors, 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 and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. The Complaints Panel will appoint one of the Panel members to act as the Chair of the Panel. The Clerk to the Governors will, on behalf of the Panel, acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days and schedule a hearing to take place within 20 working days of receiving the complaint.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any relevant matter be supplied in advance of the hearing or further investigation be carried out. 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 may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not (normally) be appropriate. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.
- 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.

## Complaints Procedure and Code of Conduct for Parents (Complaints) 2023-2024

- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' 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
- 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 complaint about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Headmistress. A copy of the Panels' findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the School's premises by the Chair of Governors and the Head.
- Any complaint about a decision taken by the Head 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 School's Complaints Procedure. In such circumstances, the Panel may only uphold the complaint and ask the Headmistress to reconsider their decision if they consider, having regard to the process followed by the Headmistress, that the Headmistress' decision to exclude/require the removal of the pupil was not a reasonable decision for the Headmistress to have taken.

### **Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints**

All complaints will be handled seriously, sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales.

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 25 working days. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 25 working days.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, working days refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays. This means that, during School holidays, it may take slightly longer to resolve a complaint although the School will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid undue delay. It may also take longer to resolve a complaint during periods of significant disruption to School life or as a consequence of unavoidable staff absence, however, deviation from the normal timescale for resolving a complaint during term time will only occur on an exceptional basis, and the School will take all reasonable steps to limit any such delay.

### **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 will be regarded by the School as vexatious and outside the scope of this Procedure.

### **Recording Complaints and use of Personal data**

## Complaints Procedure and Code of Conduct for Parents (Complaints) 2023-2024

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).

The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice which can be found on the School's website - <https://greenfield.surrey.sch.uk/about-us/policies/>. When dealing with complaints, the School (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

- 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 and contact details 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)
- Notes/minutes of the hearing
- The Panel's written decision

This may include "special category personal data" (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice), for instance, information relating to the physical or mental health where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice. All records relating to complaints shall be treated as confidential. In addition to where requested by the Secretary of State or an inspector (see above), there may be other circumstances where disclosure of the substance of a complaint or particular confidential records relating to it is required, for example, where there is a legal, regulatory, safeguarding or data protection obligation (e.g. in response to a subject access request) which prevails over the requirement to maintain the records as confidential).

**Number of formal complaints September 2022 to September 2023: 0 (and two not raised as a formal complaint but treated as one).**

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. Parents will be notified by ISI or Ofsted of the outcome of the investigation into their complaint within 28 days of the complaint being received.

Greenfield will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specific 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.

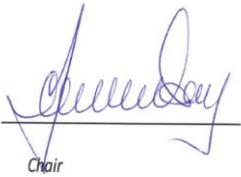
## Complaints Procedure and Code of Conduct for Parents (Complaints) 2023-2024

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe that the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Schools must make available details of how to contact Ofsted and/or the ISI:

OFSTED can be contacted via email at: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) or by telephone 0300 123 1231. Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

ISI can be contacted via email at [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net) or by telephone 020 7600 0100. ISI, CAP House, 9 -12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA.

### **Reviewed September 2023**



Chair

### **To be reviewed September 2024**



## GREENFIELD SCHOOL

### **Code of Conduct for Parents (Complaints)**

At Greenfield, we have outstanding relationships with our parents, and we expect everybody to behave courteously to each other and set a good example to the children. Inevitably there are occasions where parents may be unhappy or upset about something that may have occurred in school, and will want to discuss it.

In most cases, complainants are helpful, polite and patient, and they give us time to sort out whatever has happened so that everyone has been listened to and the problem is resolved. However, complainants can make investigating and resolving a complaint difficult, or they may behave in a way that is unacceptable or inappropriate.

We will never tolerate violence or abuse towards any member of the Greenfield staff. This may include behaviour or language (verbal, non-verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened or abused; and it may include threats, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks and rudeness.

In these instances, parents will be asked to desist from the behaviour, and/or leave the premises. In instances where parents refuse to leave when asked and their behaviour is still causing distress, the police may be called.

Parents may also not approach any children in the school to investigate a problem. Parents may also not question staff about sanctions that may have been put in place by the Headmistress, as this will be seen as intimidation or harassment of staff.

Greenfield values the positive relationships that we have with our parents and we will work extremely hard to resolve any concerns or problems that may occur.

For details of our complaints procedure please refer to the Complaints Policy which can be found on the website.

**Tania Botting**

Headmistress

September 2023