



The Mall School

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Parental Complaints and Grievance Procedure

Introduction

The School takes pride in the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to pupils. However should parents have a complaint it will be dealt with in accordance with the following procedure, which applies to the whole school including for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This procedure does not apply to parents of prospective pupils or to parents of past pupils unless the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered at the School.

Stage 1 - Informal procedure

It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally. This would normally be within 10 working days.

Should parents have a complaint they should initially raise it directly with their son's class teacher (for Reception to Year 3), subject teacher (for academic/teaching matters in Years 4 to 6) or class teacher (for pastoral and more general matters in Years 4 to 6).

Alternatively parents may contact the Assistant Head (Pastoral), Assistant Head (Academic), Bursar or Deputy Head depending on the nature of the complaint.

At this informal stage, staff will normally respond within two working days in order to meet and discuss the complaint. The member of staff involved will make a written record of the complaint and the date on which they were received.

If parents do not feel that the matter has been satisfactorily resolved they should then raise a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 - Formal procedure

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, full written details of the nature of the complaint, any relevant documents and full contact details should be sent by the parents in an envelope addressed to the Headmaster.

The Headmaster will carefully consider the complaint and will carry out any necessary investigations. The Headmaster will normally arrange within five working days to speak to or meet with the parents to discuss their complaint further and if possible reach a resolution at this stage.

The Headmaster will keep a written record of all meetings and discussions held in relation to the complaint.

It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations. After this the Headmaster will make a decision and inform the parents in writing of the decision normally within 5 working days of the prior meeting.

If parents are dissatisfied with the Headmaster's decision they may appeal in accordance with Stage 3 of this procedure.

Complaints concerning the Headmaster

If the complaint concerns the Headmaster, then parents should raise their complaint informally with the Headmaster in the first instance. If they do not feel this is appropriate, or if the complaint cannot be resolved informally, they should put the complaint in writing to the Chairman of Governors* who will investigate the matter and who will then put his response in writing to the parents, normally within 10 working days.

If parents are not satisfied with the Chairman's response then they should proceed to Stage 3 of the Formal Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents have a complaint which, in their opinion, has not been satisfactorily dealt with by the Headmaster, or if the complaint is about the Headmaster and it has not in their opinion been satisfactorily dealt with by the Chairman of Governors, then they should so notify the Chairman of Governors in writing and he will nominate a Panel to hear the complaint. The Panel will consist of at least three persons - a Chairman who shall be a member of the Governing Body, one or more other Governors and also a person who is not a member of the Governing Body and who is independent of the management and running of the School.

The Chairman of the Panel will arrange for a hearing to take place as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within 10 working days of receipt of the written appeal. The members of the Panel will not have had any previous involvement in the complaint before the hearing. All parties will receive copies of any relevant documentation no later than three days before the hearing. The Panel may request further details of the complaint or additional information, which should be supplied no later than three working days before the hearing. Parents may be accompanied at the hearing by one other person such as a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be allowed.

The Panel will notify the parents in writing of its decision and the reasons for it within 10 working days of the hearing or as soon as is reasonably practicable after that. The Panel's findings and recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, Governing Body and, where relevant, the person or persons against whom the complaint was raised.

In the event that the Panel is unable to resolve a contractual dispute with a parent, the School will inform parents in writing of the name and website address of an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) organisation which would be competent to deal with the complaint. The School will also inform parents whether it is prepared to submit to an alternative dispute resolution procedure operated by that ADR organisation.

Confidentiality and Written Records

All complaints will be treated in a confidential manner. However parents must recognise that it may be impractical to investigate a complaint without involving others in the investigation on a 'need to know' basis. If parents do not wish to proceed with the complaint for this reason they should notify the person(s) handling the complaint at that stage.

A member of staff against whom complaint is made will be informed of the complaint to enable the staff member to respond.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. 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 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act, as amended, requests access to them.

Details of the complaint will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2003, (where disclosure is required in the course of an inspection of the School) or in accordance with any other legal obligation.

Written records will be kept of all formal complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the formal stage (Stage 2) or proceed to a panel hearing (Stage 3). Action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) will also be recorded. A copy of these records will be made available for inspection on the School premises by the Headmaster and the School Governors. In the academic year 2020 – 2021 there was one complaint that reached Stage 2 of the formal procedure.

Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications will be kept for a minimum of seven years.

For Early Years Foundation Stage pupils (Reception classes):

The above procedures apply equally to pupils below the age of 5. Parents of this age group can also, if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, make their complaint directly to Ofsted (Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD; tel: 0300 123 1231, www.ofsted.gov.uk) and/or ISI (Independent Schools' Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA; tel: 020 7600 0100). Complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of the complaint being received. The School will provide Ofsted and ISI on request with a written record of complaints made and the action taken as a result.

The Mall School Trust
Summer 2021
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* Mr Rupert Walker
Chairman of Governors
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