



## CAMERON HOUSE SCHOOL

4 THE VALE, LONDON SW3 6AH

### POLICY FOR PARENTAL COMPLAINTS

This policy is written to comply with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 Part 7, Paragraph 33.

Paragraphs 3.74 and 3.75 of the EYFS Statutory Guidance (2017) also apply for pupils in the EYFS.

#### Application

This policy applies to parents of current pupils, including pupils in the EYFS, and to the parents of past pupils if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered.

This policy includes:

- Details of the three-stage process (informal, formal and panel hearing), including clear time scales for each stage and in line with the particular requirements set out for each stage in the regulations
- Arrangements for record keeping
- Confidentiality of correspondence, statements and records

Cameron House School has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils (**for all classes including the EYFS: Reception Class**). However, if parents do have a complaint, it will be dealt with by the school in accordance with this procedure. *This policy also has due regard to the terms of the Equality Act 2010 and guidance provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission as to its implementation in school.*

#### 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 contact their child's Class Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parent's satisfaction. If the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Deputy Head or Head as appropriate.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head or Head will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless the 'line manager' concerned deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally. In this event the 'line manager' will attempt to resolve the matter in five working days or as soon as is practicable.
- The relevant teacher will make a written record of all complaints and concerns and the date on which they were received. Should a matter not be resolved within five working days or in the event that the relevant teacher and the parents 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 will be asked to put their complaint **in writing** to the Head, who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate action to take. If the complaint involves the Head, then it should be put in writing to the Proprietor.
- In most cases, where practicable, the Head will speak to the parents concerned within forty-eight hours (2 working 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. These will usually be completed in seven working days or as soon as is practicable.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Records of Complaints will be kept by the school for at least 3 years.
- Once the Head is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will give reasons for the decision.

- The written decision will be issued within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the Head will write to the parents within the 10 working day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why she is unable to issue her decision and informing the parents when she will do so, which will be within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint in any event.
- Where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint, the school will make provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (Stage 3 below)

### **Stage 3: Panel Hearing:**

- Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents wish to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure, they are to write to the Head informing her of their decision to do so within 10 working days, whereupon the matter will be referred to the Principal. The Principal will then take responsibility for the organisation of a complaints panel hearing.
- The panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matter or matters detailed in the complaint.
- Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Proprietor. Members of the panel may be drawn from the local educational authority (RBKC), Heads of other schools or from a professional legal practice such as a lawyer or a representative from IAPs.
- One panel member shall be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The Proprietor, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days.
- If the Proprietor and/or the members of the panel deem it necessary, they may require (in writing) that further particulars of the complaint or any other related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 days before the hearing. However consideration will be given to whether the information was realistically available earlier, whether the other party has time to consider it properly and comment on it and how prejudicial it is to admit it or refuse to admit it. Any such further particulars received within 5 days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it will not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.
- Provision will be made for copies of all documents relating to the complaint to be circulated to all persons concerned including parents, in advance of any panel hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by another person/s. This may be a relative, eye-witness, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the panel will resolve the parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However should the panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required, the panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded. In most cases the full details of the further investigations should be given to both parties. If this involves taking evidence from anyone else, then this should only happen in the presence of both parties. The panel will reconvene and, after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, will reach a decision and may make recommendations. This procedure will be completed within 10 working days of the first hearing wherever possible but within 28 days in any event unless otherwise agreed with the parents.
- The panel will write to the parents informing them of their decision together with their reasons. The decision of the panel will be final.
- The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the complainant, the Head, the Proprietor and, where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual. A copy will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Head
- Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially.
- The School will ensure:-
  - a written record is kept of all complaints that are made whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing;
  - a written record is kept of the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld);
  - that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

### **Additional requirements for EYFS pupils**

- Written complaints about the fulfilment 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 made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.
- In addition to, or as an alternative to using the procedures outlined in this policy, parents of EYFS children may, if their complaint is about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, complain to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) or Ofsted.

#### **Contact details**

Ofsted: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted> Tel: 0845 640 4045.

ISI: [www.isi.net/contact](http://www.isi.net/contact) Tel: 020 7600 0100

### **Footnotes to Complaints Procedure:**

1. In the event that a complaint involves or relates to a teacher, then the teacher will be kept fully informed in writing of the procedure being adopted in relation to the management of the complaint and supplied with copies of all documentation. A record of all complaints and how they are resolved is kept by the Head.
2. In the event of a panel hearing, the teacher will have the right to make representations to the panel.

*The number of complaints recorded under the formal procedure during the preceding school year is available to parents on request from the school office.*

Revised by: Dina Mallett September 2018

Approved by: Josie Cameron Ashcroft Date: September 2018

Next Review: September 2019