



Complaints Policy and Procedure

Date of review: Spring 2022	Policy Holder: Headmaster
Review cycle: Three years	Date of next review: Spring 2025

This policy also applies to the EYFS and after school and holiday clubs.

Introduction

At Great Ballard, the happiness, health and welfare of every child is of paramount importance. We also aim to help each child to achieve their full potential both in and out of the classroom.

However, there will be occasions when parents may have a complaint and they can expect it to be taken seriously and treated by the school in accordance with this procedure.

Copies of this Policy & Procedure are available to all parents and prospective parents for viewing and/or downloading on the school's website and a hard copy is available from the school office. In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014, Great Ballard will also make available, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of the Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A **"concern"** may be treated as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought".

A **"complaint"** may be generally recognised as an "expression or statement of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem, about actions taken or the lack of action". Any action about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is considered to be a complaint.

Staff take all concerns seriously and they are recorded and actioned at point of receipt and logged by senior staff (e.g. Head of Pre Prep, Pastoral and Academic Deputies, Business Manager) who meet regularly to look for patterns. They make every effort to resolve them at the earliest possible stage. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated confidentially. A child will never be penalised for a complaint raised in good faith.

If a complaint concerns safeguarding or child protection issues please also refer to the school's Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy. The scope of this policy does not include staff grievances or disciplinary procedures, or parents of prospective pupils.

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BALLARD**

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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 form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Complaints made directly to a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be discussed with the relevant form teacher but will be dealt with by the member of the Senior Leadership Team.

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 five working 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 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 formally 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 contact the parents concerned, normally within two working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter, or to arrange a meeting. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations; ideally, the complaint will be resolved within 14 working days of the written complaint initially being received by the school.

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. At this point the school may offer in advance of a Panel Hearing an independent mediator to meet with the parents in order to try and resolve the complaint. The cost of which will be at the schools expense.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should formally write to Mrs Sue Jay, Chair of the Board of Governance who will then organise the Complaints Panel. Please pass this letter to the Headmaster's PA, marked Strictly Private and Confidential and for the attention of Mrs Sue Jay, Chair of the Board of Governance.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The panel will be convened by Mrs Sue Jay and made up of at least three members one or more of which will be

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independent of the school management. Mrs Jay will acknowledge receiving the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within ten working 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 two 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 days of the hearing. The panel will then 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 Senior Leadership Team and, where relevant, the person complained of.

A written record will be kept of all complaints including:

- Whether they are resolved during an informal meeting or proceed to a panel hearing.
- Action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)

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 by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools' Standards) Regulations 2003, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Parents may also contact Ofsted by telephone on 0300 123 4666 or email on enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk The Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) may also be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or via their website at www.isi.net.

Parents of Early Years Foundation Stage pupils may also make a complaint to Ofsted and the Independent Schools' Inspectorate in respect of the School's EYFS provision. Details of how to do so are available from the office. A record of any complaint in respect of EYFS will be kept for three years. The school must provide Ofsted and ISI on request with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action which was taken as a result of the complaint.

Number of formal complaints reaching stage 3 of this policy:

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