



# Whole School

## Complaints Policy

### (inc. EYFS)

Reddam House Berkshire prides itself on the quality of the teaching, co-curricular provision and pastoral care for its students. However, if parents/guardians do have a concern or complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. They can be confident that no parent, guardian or child will be penalised in any way for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy also applies to EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage).

Records of complaints are kept for at least three years.

## Preliminary Stage – Concerns and Complaints

The ISI Regulatory Handbook and the DfE do not distinguish between complaints and concerns. Any matter about which a parent or student is unhappy and seeks action by the School is now a complaint. However, on a day-to-day basis questions of a fundamentally minor issue may arise, even where there may initially be a concern that the issue is less minor. For example:- Allegation: “My son X has had his bag stolen.” Answer: “He left it in the lab at the end of the afternoon and it is now available in lost property.” These minor issues or concerns will be dealt with as expeditiously as possible at the most appropriately immediate level of staffing. No formal record is normally kept.

## Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents/guardians have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter’s Houseparent or classroom teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents’/guardians’ satisfaction. If the Houseparent/classroom teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Complaints made directly to a member of the Senior Leadership Team will usually be referred to the relevant Houseparent/classroom teacher unless the SLT member deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The Houseparent/classroom teacher will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received. S/he will also make a note of the date that the complaint was resolved, with the action that was taken, and the way the resolution was completed. A copy of any correspondence about the issue should be kept. Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days or in the event that the Houseparent/classroom teacher and the parent/guardian 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 Head of School. He or she will decide, after considering the representation, the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Head will communicate with the relevant parents/guardians, normally within ten working days of receiving the representation, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head, or appointed staff, to carry out further investigations.
- The Head or investigating office will keep written summary records of all telephone conversations, meetings and interviews held in relation to the representation. A record of the date the matter was noted, how it was resolved and what the resolution was, with dates, will be kept.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made, and parents/guardians will be informed of this decision in writing. Reasons for the decision will be given.
- This Stage 2 procedure will be completed, where possible, within a total of twenty working days. If there is an overriding reason why that time frame is impracticable (eg a key witness to an incident is not available to the investigative process for a limited period of time in excess of twenty working days), then the complainant will be notified and an alternative appropriate time frame will be communicated to him/her.

## **Stage 3 – Refer to Governor/Managing Director of Reddam House (Europe)**

- If parents/guardians seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they must do so within five working days of the conclusion of Stage 3. They will be referred to the Governor with responsibility for complaints or the Managing Director of Reddam House (Europe). That person will attempt to resolve the issue with the parents and the School. S/he will convene a meeting with the parents to listen to their complaints and to consider with them what had been done so far. S/he would also, separately, consult with those members of staff in the School who had been involved in the complaint or had supplied evidence with regard to its consideration. He would then communicate his decision, in writing, to the parents and the School within ten days of his/her meeting with the parents.

## **Stage 4 – Final Appeal: Referral to Complaints Panel of Board of Governors**

- If the parents do not wish to accept the decision of the Governor with responsibility for complaints/Managing Director of Reddam House (Europe), they may appeal to a Complaints Panel of the Governing Body. This must be done in writing within ten working days of the

communication of the Stage 4 decision to them. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the College. The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Complaints Panel, will acknowledge 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 three days prior to the hearing.
- The parents/guardians 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'/guardians' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out and by whom.
- After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make a finding and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within ten working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents/guardians 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 by email or otherwise to the complainant, (where relevant) the person complained about, the Head and the Governing Body. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations, will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the Head.

Parents/guardians can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complainants will be kept confidential except insofar as the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act, as amended, requests access to them; or where any other legal obligation prevails. A written record will be kept of all complaints under Stages 2-4 above, that is from the Formal Stage and beyond, how they were resolved and what actions were taken in relation to them; these records will be kept for at least three years.

In that Reddam House Berkshire provides boarding accommodation, the document is to be interpreted in compliance with Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

As Reddam House Berkshire educates children in its Early Learning School who come under the EYFS provisions, any written complaint about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days.

The School will make available details of how to contact OFSTED, and/or ISI, if parents believe that the School is not meeting EYFS requirements.

A complainant may refer an EYFS-related matter in the Early Learning School to Ofsted Complaints, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD, telephone: 03001231231, or to ISI (the Independent Schools Inspectorate) on 020 7600 0100.

The School makes available to Ofsted and ISI on request a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action taken as a result of each complaint.