



# Whole School

## Complaints Policy

### (inc. EYFS)

Reddam House Berkshire ('the school') 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) in our Early Learning School and Reception Classrooms.

The school makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of students on the School's website and we will ensure that parents of students who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available. This procedure only applies to current students and past students if the complaint was initially raised while they were still registered.

## **Preliminary Stage – Concerns and Complaints**

Any matter about which a parent or student is unhappy and seeks action by the School is a complaint, the school does not distinguish between complaints and concerns. 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 form or classroom teacher, or in Boarding, the houseparents. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents'/guardians' satisfaction. If the 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 teacher unless the SLT member deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The teacher or houseparent 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 five working days of the date of receipt or if the teacher or houseparent 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.
- If, however, the complaint is against the Principal, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chairman of Governors. Please contact Reception at the school.

## 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 Principal. Upon receipt of this complaint you will receive an acknowledgement within two working days. She will decide, after considering the representation, the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Principal will speak to/meet with the relevant parents/guardians, normally within five 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 Principal, or appointed staff, to carry out further investigations.
- The Principal 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 Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all 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.
- If the complaint is against the Principal, the Chairman of Governors will call for a full report from the Principal and for all the relevant documents. The Chairman 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 Chairman is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chairman will give reasons for his 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 will be referred to Jane Emmett has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred 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. Clarissa Farr, member of the Governing Board, will draw from a list of available independent panel members.
- Jane Emmett, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within 10 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 five working 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.

- 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 complained about as well as the Chairman of Governors and the Principal. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Chairman of Governors and the Head.

## Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

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 20 working days. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 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. Our Early Learning School is open year-round and therefore working days will refer to all weekdays (Monday to Friday), excluding bank holidays

## Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at the informal stage, the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the School because of the complaint regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.

All complaints pertaining to the EYFS or Boarding are clearly identified as such.

At the School's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of student
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name 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)

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 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Reddam House Berkshire will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least 3 years, or until the next inspection cycle.

Current parents can apply to the school to receive the number of complaints which proceeded to Stage 2 and 3 of the Complaints procedure. Please email the Principal's PA for details, [j.veater@reddamhouse.org.uk](mailto:j.veater@reddamhouse.org.uk)

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 1234 234 or by email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)