

POWNALL HALL SCHOOL

'Pownall Hall School is committed to co-education and aims to provide a caring, disciplined, safe and secure family environment, where all pupils are enabled and encouraged to maximise their academic, sporting, musical and creative potential. The School aims to instil traditional values of courtesy, good manners, mutual respect, tolerance and compassion in its pupils and help them develop self discipline and good working habits for the future. The all round personal development of each and every pupil lies at its heart.'

14 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This is a whole school policy; it refers to and includes EYFS, after school care and holiday clubs held on our premises. Please see page 3 for EYFS.

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the ISI Regulatory Standards for Independent Schools (0415). Copies are available on the school's website and from the school office on request from parents and prospective parents.

Introduction

Pownall Hall School prides itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated sensitively by the school in accordance with this procedure. The school will make details of this policy available to parents and prospective parents (as above) and will also provide details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

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 son/daughter's form teacher. In many cases the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Headmaster.
- ◆ Complaints made directly to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff/ form teacher unless the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally.
- ◆ The form teacher/member of staff 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 7 days, or in the event that the form teacher/member of staff and the parent fail to reach a 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, the parents should put their complaint 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 speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 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 Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- ◆ 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 the 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.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- ◆ If parents seek to invoke Stage 3, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, they will be referred to [*Name of Convenor*], who 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, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. [*The Convenor*], on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 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 5 days prior to the hearing.
- ◆ The parents may attend the hearing and 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.
- ◆ The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations will, if any, be sent by writing or electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents and where relevant, to the person complained about and will be available for the Headmaster and the Governors.
- ◆ A written record will be kept of all complaints and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a Panel hearing.

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 to the extent required by Part 6 Regulation 32(g) of the Regulatory Requirements for Independent Schools (0415), where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The named person for EYFS is the EYFS Co-ordinator, Mrs. Beryl Spence.

The whole school policy applies to the EYFS, after school care and holiday clubs held on our premises with the following additions:

- ◆ Each record of complaint at this stage is kept for three years.
- ◆ Parents can make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish – 08456 404045
[http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/online complaints](http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints)
- ◆ Parents can make a complaint to ISI should they wish – 020 7600 0100 info@isi.net
- ◆ If required, Pownall Hall School will provide 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.
- ◆ For registered provision, the school acknowledges the requirement to notify the complainant of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.
- ◆ For registered provision, the school acknowledges that the setting must provide Ofsted and ISI, on request, a written record of all complaints during any specified period and the resulting action taken in respect of each one.

Monitoring and Review

These procedures will be monitored by the Headmaster and Chair of Governors and will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

Approved

May 2017

Signed

Mrs. Eileen MacAulay, Chair of Governors

May 2017

Review Date: May 2018

A Legal Requirement, an ISI Reporting Standard,
OFSTED Standards for Boarding Schools and EYFS providers

References:

A: Independent Schools Inspectorate: Handbook for the Inspection of Schools –The Regulatory Requirements, January 2017 (www.isi.net)

B: The Early Years Foundation Stage: Statutory Framework 2012 (www.education.gov.uk)

Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel

The following guidance comes from a letter sent by the DfE to the ISC General Secretary in 2002. Although dated, the advice is extant.

‘Whilst we do not intend to be prescriptive our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members had some standing in the local community. In this connection serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background – perhaps retired members of the Police Force – might be considered suitable by schools. Schools will have their own views and may well have other suitable suggestions to make.

You asked if it would be acceptable to appoint former governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member. The regulations do not preclude this since the stipulation is that the person must be independent of the management and running of the school. Clearly former governors or staff would not have any such involvement. However, schools should bear in mind that they may be subject to criticism that such people would remain too close to the school and would not be truly independent.’