



Terrington Hall School: Policy for Complaints Procedure for Parents

ISI Reference 33a

No. of Formal Complaints Received During Academic Year 2019/20 = 3

Terrington Hall School has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, it will be dealt with by the School in accordance with this procedure.

This policy provides a set structure for parents of pupils at the school to use should they wish to make a complaint. It follows the three stage process of informal, formal and panel hearing (inclusive of clear time scales), details arrangements for record keeping as well specific rules regarding the confidentiality of correspondence, statements and records.

This policy only applies to current pupils (and their parents). However, if a complaint is lodged *before* a child subsequently leaves the School, it must continue to be dealt with following the procedure detailed below.

This policy is made available to parents via the school website, is referred to in the material given to parents when they start at Terrington Hall, is referenced in the start of year literature disseminated by the Headmaster and is kept as a hard copy for reference in the school office.

Initial Procedure

It is hoped that most complaints or concerns will be sensitively dealt with by Form Teachers and all those involved in the care of young people at Terrington Hall School.

All Governors, Senior Management and academic and non-academic staff should be receptive to a complaint/concern from a parent. It is recognised, however, that in most cases a complaint will be made to the Headmaster.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution:

Complaints made directly to the Head of the Pre-Prep/Lower Prep/Upper Prep/Deputy Head or Headmaster 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 days or as soon as is practicable.

The Form Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Form teachers are advised to keep these written records for reference at a later date if required. Should the matter not be resolved within **five** working days, or in the event that the



member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution:

The Headmaster should be informed in writing that a Formal Complaint is to be lodged and the Parental Complaints Form (Appendix 1) should ideally be completed, although a previously supplied letter or email clearly stating that a formal complaint is being lodged, including details of the complaint, is also acceptable.

The Headmaster will respond to the complainant in writing within **24 hours**, explaining the steps which he intends to take to deal with the complaint. The Headmaster will meet with the complainant within **7 days** and, following investigation, report his findings and recommendations to the complainant.

During school holiday periods or when the Headmaster is unavailable the complaint will be dealt with by a member of the Senior Management Team. The complainant will be informed of the Senior Management Team member taking responsibility for dealing with the complaint.

On the occasion of any meeting with the Headmaster the complainant may be accompanied by a friend. The term 'friend' includes (but is not restricted to) another parent or a member of staff. If, following receipt of the Headmaster's report, the complainant remains unsatisfied, the Headmaster will pass on all information to the Chair of Governors, detailing fully the nature of the complaint and actions taken to date. The Chair of Governors (or in his absence, an appointed member of the Governing Body) will, within **7 days**, meet with the complainant and will attempt to resolve the matter informally and by mutual agreement. Records will be kept of all meetings.

A written decision should be issued within 14 days of receiving the complaint. In exceptional circumstances, when relevant people are unavailable, such as prearranged holidays falling during school holiday times, agreement over the timescale for delivery of decisions will be reached with the parents concerned.

If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they may take the opportunity to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing:

If parents seek to involve Stage 3 of this procedure, they are to write to the Headmaster informing him of their decision so to do, whereupon the matter will be referred to a Governor and the complainant informed within 24 hours. He/she will then take responsibility for the organisation of a Complaints Panel hearing.

The Governors of Terrington Hall School will convene within **21 days** a panel of at least three individuals not directly involved or connected with the matters which are the subject of the complaint. At least one member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the School.



The panel will consider the complaint at a formal hearing. The complainant will be entitled to attend (accompanied by a friend, if he/she so wishes) at such a hearing.

If the designated Governor 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 five days before the hearing. Any such further particulars that shall be provided shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the Panel.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' 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. This should be completed within fourteen days of the Panel hearing. The Panel will reconvene at the end of these fourteen days and, after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, will reach a decision and will make recommendations. The recommendations should be completed within 7 days and shared with the complainant. In exceptional circumstances, when relevant people are unavailable, such as prearranged holidays falling during school holiday times, agreement over the timescale for delivery of decisions will be reached with the parents concerned. The Panel will write, either by post or electronically, to the parents informing them of their decision together with their reasons. The decision of the Panel will be final.

Findings and Recommendations

Following the Hearing, the findings and recommendations of the panel will be communicated to the complainant in writing (and verbally, where appropriate) and to any other relevant party or parties including the person being complained about. They will be communicated within the timescales noted above. The recommendations of the panel are available for inspection, on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster.

In the event that the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of any complaint or the fulfilment of EYFS requirements the complainant may have recourse to ask for the intervention of Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate. The address and contact details for Ofsted and ISI are provided below:

Ofsted

www.ofsted.gov.uk
Royal Exchange
Manchester, M2 7LA
0845 640 4040

ISI

www.isi.net
Independent Schools Inspectorate



CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

Record Keeping

All informal complaints and concerns are logged by the member of staff involved in the 'Discussions With Parents Folder' on the Staff Drive. The Headmaster will maintain a complaints folder and record details within the complaints log which is electronic and is kept on the SMT Drive and is password protected. Complaints against staff are also recorded in the Staff Discipline files which are maintained by the Deputy Head Pastoral and stored on the SMT drive and are also password protected. A member of the Governing Body will review these records of complaints annually at the AGM in June. A record of any resolution made must be recorded, detailing the stage at which the complaint was resolved and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint. Pupils whose parents make complaints in good faith will not be penalised in any way. Please see Appendix B for a proforma for the Log of Formal Complaints.

The written record of any formal complaints must contain the following:

1. Whether the complaint has been resolved following a formal procedure or has proceeded to a panel hearing;
2. Any action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Confidentiality of Correspondence, Statements and Records

Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or inspecting body under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where other legal obligation prevails.

Exclusion of Pupils

Details of our policy with regard to exclusions can be found in the Discipline and Sanctions Policy, 2016.

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.



2. In the event of a Panel Hearing, the teacher will have the right to make representations to the Panel.
3. The Designated Safeguarding Governor, currently Mr Richard Smyth, will, as a matter of course, produce an annual report on the school's effectiveness and compliance with Safeguarding issues and such issues will be an item on the agenda of all formal Governors' meetings.
4. As we have an EYFS provision we are mindful that we must meet the following regulatory requirements;
 - the record of complaints is kept for at least three years
 - parents are provided with details for contacting Ofsted [and ISI] and an explanation that parents can make a complaint to Ofsted [and/or ISI] should they so wish. Ofsted address – Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD. General Helpline – 0300 123 1231.
Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA
General Helpline – 020 7600 0100.
 - to notify complainants of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint
 - that the setting 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 each complaint.



Appendix A: Parental Complaint Form

Complaint made by:

Date of complaint:

Nature of complaint

The information below should contain specific detail, including:

- The nature of the complaint;
- Who the complaint is being made against;
- Time and date of the nature of the complaint.

Nature of Complaint:

Signed:
(Complainant)



Appendix B: Log of Formal Complaints (sample)

Terrington Hall School: Log of Serious Parental Complaints, 2020 - 2021

The process to be followed is laid out in the Parental Complaints Policy.

This record should be kept by Simon Kibler, Headmaster.

Date Complaint Received	Details of Complainant.	Details of Complaint	Agreed Actions	Outcomes, including referral to panel.