

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

**Policy reviewed by:**

**Policy approved by:** Robert Berry – Director of Operations

**Review date:** 01/09/2020

**Submission:** 01/09/2020

**Version:** v3.0

**Policy actioned from:** 01/09/2020

**Next review date:** 31/08/2021

**Reviewer's Signature:**

**Approver's Signature:**



Please note: 'School' refers to Chatsworth Schools; 'parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.

This is a whole school policy, which also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

All schools should aim to work collaboratively in partnership with parents. However, it is recognised that there are times when there will be issues that are not resolved to the satisfaction of parents and that they will wish to make a complaint. If parents have a complaint, the school will treat it in accordance with the policy and procedures detailed below. Responding to complaints will be given the highest priority by the school and will be dealt with comprehensively.

The school regards that a complaint is any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school. Parents of EYFS pupils have a right to complain to Ofsted and/ or ISI if their complaint is about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements. All complaints will be investigated, and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 days. A record of all complaints will be made available to Ofsted and/ or ISI on request. For contact details see the end of this policy. If a student is permanently excluded the parent may appeal using the complaints procedure. This policy is available on the school website or through application to the school.

The school will provide for a written record to be kept of all formal complaints that are made, and the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). The school will ensure that all 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 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

## Stage 1 – Informal resolution

We hope 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 immediately by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Head Teacher.

Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form teacher unless the Head deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

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 immediately, receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 3 days and a response provided within 5 working days. If a response cannot be provided within that time, 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 in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head will meet with the parents concerned, normally within two 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 Head to carry out further investigations, in which case a definitive answer will be given within 10 further working days.

The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

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 will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his/her 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 the Operations Director of Chatsworth Schools, who will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of the Operations Director of Chatsworth Schools, or his nominated representative who will be a Director of Chatsworth Schools, a second representative from Chatsworth Schools not involved directly in the running of the school and an independent panel member not involved in the management or running of the school. Panel members will not have been involved in matters detailed in the complaint.

The Director of Operations, 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 (except during school holidays).

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 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 proceed.

After due consideration of all facts considered relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 14 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. A written record will be kept of any action taken by the school as a result of these complaints, regardless of whether they are upheld.

The Panel's findings and recommendation will be sent in writing to the complainant and where relevant, the person regarding whom the complaint was made, and made available for inspection on the school premises by the governing body and the Principal.

## Recording of Complaints

All complaints, and the outcome of the individual complaint, are duly recorded in the Complaints Register. The stage at which the complaint is concluded, whether at the preliminary stage or the final stage of a Panel Hearing, is appropriately noted.

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 by the school by paragraph 33 part 7 (k) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations February 2015; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's Inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

- A record of complaints is kept for three years.

This information will be provided on an annual basis to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and can be obtained from the school upon request.

## Details for contacting Ofsted

Address: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

## Details for contacting ISI

Address:

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

Email: [info@isi.net](mailto:info@isi.net)

Telephone: 02076000100

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Disciplinary Procedure; Grievance Procedure; Malpractice Disclosure Policy; Violence towards Staff Policy; CS Code of Conduct; Safeguarding Policy; Admissions, Misbehaviour and Exclusion Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Risk Assessment Policy.

### Interpretation

In this policy, the term “senior manager” means a School Head and their designated deputies.

This policy applies to all employees in all Schools (save for Schools with their own procedure which shall prevail) and other work environments within Chatsworth Schools

This policy applies within all companies, which are wholly owned subsidiaries of Chatsworth Schools Ltd, a company registered in England, registered number 11552579.

The registered office of all companies is Crimea Office, The Great Tew Estate, Great Tew, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, OX7 4AH. Any enquiries regarding the application of this policy should be addressed to the Director of Operations at the above address.

## POLICY AMENDMENT PAGE

Date	Key Amendments	Version Number	Signed off by
11/01/2018	Policy Approved – Fit for use by schools.	v1.1	RG
01/09/2019	Annual Endorsement	v2.0	RNB
01/09/2020	Annual Endorsement	v3.0	RNB