



COMPLAINTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Hasmonian High School ("the School") is committed to addressing all complaints from parents. It is expected that the majority of complaints will be resolved at an early stage with a satisfactory outcome.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the School can be crucial in determining whether a complaint will escalate.

The School became an Academy in October 2011 and as such the complaints procedure has been modified to meet the regulations for Independent Schools. This document sets out the procedures to deal with complaints relating to the School. In compliance with the law this procedure is to be well-publicised and made publicly available.

Certain formal complaints fall outside the scope of this document such as staff grievances or disciplinary procedures. Third party providers offering community facilities or services through use of the School's premises (such as for a wedding reception), also have their own separate complaints procedure in place.

The goals of the formal complaints procedure

Our Formal Complaints procedure is designed to:

- Be easily accessible, widely-circulated and well-publicised;
- Be simple to understand and use;
- Be impartial;
- Be non-adversarial;
- Allow swift handling for action and keep the parties involved well-informed of developments and progress made;
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- Respect confidentiality;
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;

- Provide information to the School's senior leadership team so that services provided can be improved where necessary.

MANAGEMENT OF A COMPLAINT

The School encourages resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible. It is a precondition of the complaints procedure that reasonable attempts should be made to resolve issues on an informal basis (at stage 1) and the Chair of Governors shall have the discretion, to be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

Equally, formal procedures may be invoked when all attempts to resolve a concern informally prove unsuccessful, and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

Stage 1: Local Resolution (the Informal Stage)

1. If parents have a complaint they should contact their child's year leader in the first instance. If the year leader cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
2. Complaints made to the Executive Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff unless the Executive Headteacher deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
3. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 school days or in the event that the member of staff dealing with the complaint and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, the parent will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2: Head Teacher Resolution (the Formal Stage)

1. If the parent wishes to take the matter further, they should put their complaint in writing addressed to the relevant Headteacher (of either the Boys' or Girls' School). The date of receipt of the letter will be noted on the complaint and be considered the date at which the complaint is established. The relevant Headteacher (of either the Boys' or Girls' School) will acknowledge in writing receipt of the complaint within 3 school days of the date of receipt.
2. The relevant Headteacher (of either the Boys' or Girls' School) will investigate the complaint. This will usually involve a meeting with the parents and relevant members of staff which will take place within 7 school days of receiving the complaint where reasonably possible. Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept.
3. The relevant Headteacher (of either the Boys' or Girls' School) will inform the parents of the decision in writing, giving reasons for this decision.
4. Where the complaint is about either the Headteacher of the Boys' or Girls' School, the complaint should be addressed to the Executive Headteacher. The Executive

Headteacher will ask for a report from the relevant Headteacher and for all the relevant documents. The Executive Headteacher 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 Executive Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Executive Headteacher will give reasons for his/her decision.

5. Where the complaint is about the Executive Headteacher, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will ask for a report from the Executive Headteacher and for all the relevant documents. The Chair 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 Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair will give reasons for his/her decision.
6. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3: Executive Head Teacher Resolution (the Formal Stage)

7. If the parent does not feel satisfied that the Head Teacher of either the boys' or girls' schools has dealt with their complaint in a satisfactory manner, and wishes to take the matter further, they should put their complaint in writing addressed to the Executive Headteacher (it must include a statement specifying reasons for the review request and any perceived failures arising from the investigation process followed). The date of receipt of the letter will be noted on the complaint and be considered the date at which the complaint is established. The relevant Executive Headteacher will acknowledge in writing receipt of the complaint within 3 school days of the date of receipt.
8. The Executive Headteacher will investigate the complaint. This will usually involve a meeting with the parents and relevant members of staff which will take place within 7 school days of receiving the complaint where reasonably possible. Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept.
9. The Executive Headteacher will inform the parents of the decision in writing, giving reasons for this decision.

Stage 4: The Governors' Complaints Panel

1. A complainant dissatisfied with the response at Stage 3 may make a written request to the Clerk to the Governors that the matter be referred to the Complaints Panel ("the Panel") of the Governing Body. This request must be made in writing within 10 school days of notification of the Headteacher's, Executive Headteacher's or Chair of Governors' decision at previous stages and must include a statement specifying reasons for the review request and any perceived failures arising from the investigation process followed. The Clerk will acknowledge the request in writing within 5 school days.

2. The Clerk will invite the School to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. The School will do this within 15 school days and at the end of that period (whether or not the School has responded) the Clerk will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel of the Governing Body. That meeting will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, the School and the members of the Panel. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within 15 school days of the end of the School's response time. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation will not be allowed.
3. The Panel will consist of a minimum of three persons of whom one will be independent of the management and running of the School. None of the Panel will have been previously involved in the complaint process.
4. The Panel hearing is not a court case and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will have the opportunity to put her/his reasons for dissatisfaction and to enlarge on them but may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. The School will have the opportunity to put its side of things and each side, as well as the Panel members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the Panel.
5. The Panel may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be
 - (i) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - (ii) available for inspection on the School premises by the Governing Body and the Executive Headteacher.
6. The Panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 school days, and the Clerk to the Governors will notify all concerned.

Record Keeping

Written records of all complaints that reach the formal stage will be kept. Details to be recorded will include the point at which the complaint was resolved and the action taken by the school as the result of the complaint.

Confidentiality

All complaints and written correspondence pertaining to the complaint will remain confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education Act 2008 requests access to them.

Referral to the Education Funding Agency

Parents that are not satisfied with the way in which their complaint has been handled by the School, are to be made aware of the Education Funding Agency's complaints system which can be found here:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/school-complaints-form>

Vexatious complaints

If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted and which do not arrive at an outcome which is satisfactory to all parties involved. However, there will be occasions when, despite properly following all stages of the procedure, the complainant remains dissatisfied.

If a complainant seeks to reopen an issue which has gone through all available stages, including the Governing Body complaints panel, the Chair of the Governing Body may then inform the complainant in writing that the process has been exhausted and that the matter is now considered closed.

Behaviour of complainant

The School recognises that all its members of staff are dedicated professionals who are committed to delivering high standards. We expect all complainants to respect this and to raise any issues in a polite and calm manner to reflect this.

If a complainant fails to deal with any member of staff in a proper and polite manner, the Executive Headteacher may write to the complainant stating that if he/she fails to improve their conduct the School will cease to deal with the complainant or the complaint until the complainant has apologised to the relevant member of staff and improved their behaviour.

If a complainant, despite receiving the above letter, fails to improve his/her conduct then the Chair of Governors is entitled to write to the complainant stating that their behaviour will no longer be tolerated by the School and that, as a result, the School will now cease to deal with the complainant or the complaint until the complainant has apologised to the relevant member of staff and improved their behaviour.

Reviewed by Stone King:

Checked by Maxine Zeltser – Foundation Governor

Ratified by Full Governing Body April 2016

Next Review April 2021