

The Avenue Pre-Preparatory School and Nursery

Complaints Policy

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Rationale

Avenue Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School (the School) prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents or relevant others have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Policy and Procedures.

We aim to work in harmony with all of our parents and others who have a defined interest in the school and happy relationships are a feature of our school life. Our success as a school means that complaints rarely arise. We always welcome suggestions and comments from parents and relevant others and take concerns and complaints seriously, aiming to deal with them promptly and effectively.

Our staff are genuinely caring towards all pupils and fully committed to ensure that each child has full access to the curriculum and that their wellbeing is actively supported. We are all aware of the need to work closely with parents and relevant others to establish excellent liaison between home and school, offering advice and support when appropriate. We understand that there may be times when relationships are not as positive as we all would like, and are, therefore, aware that this policy for handling complaints and representations is available on the school's website and this process serves to ensure full and proper consideration is made of any concerns or issues raised. The policy includes timescales for action in investigating and responding to complaints and/or representations.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response. It is important that in such a situation, both parents and staff are fully aware that the Principal has undertaken to follow a clear procedure encompassed by our School Ethos. It is not intended however that the procedure should replace normal discussions which take place on a day-to-day basis as need arises.

Introduction

This Policy applies to the EYFS and KS1

This policy is made available to parents, prospective parents and relevant others on the school website and/or in hard copy by request. Prospective parents are informed of this in the information contained with the Prospectus following their initial enquiry. Current parents are reminded about its availability on the website.

In accordance with paragraph 6(3)(f) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 (as subsequently amended), the School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the ISI for the purposes of section 162A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (as subsequently amended), details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Records to be kept

The Principal will **keep written records** of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. These records are to include details of all enquiries undertaken, meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint and actions taken to resolve the matter. Such records will be kept regardless whether the complaint was upheld or not. In particular, a note will be made of whether the Complaint was resolved at the Initial Stage, Formal Stage or Panel Hearing. These records will be retained by the school for at least 3 years. Such records will be confidential but can be made available at the request of an inspector.

Details of any complaint together with the action taken, if any, to deal with it is available for inspection by Ofsted, the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) or DfE.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. In the first instance, they should normally be directed to the Class Teacher. In many cases the matter will be resolved straight away to the complainant's satisfaction. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary to consult the Principal. The Principal will endeavour to resolve the matter on an informal basis after making such enquiries as may, in her view, be necessary. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the complainant's satisfaction.

Should the matter not be resolved within **5 days** the 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 complainant should **put their complaint in writing** to the Principal. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to be taken. In most cases, the Principal will meet with those concerned, normally **within 48 hours** [working days only] of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. The Parent must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. Following this meeting, it may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations.

Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and complainants will be informed of this decision in writing **within 14 days** of the meeting held and in any event within 28 days of having received the written complaint, unless extended by mutual consent. The Principal will also give reasons for his/her decision.

In the event that the complainant not being satisfied with the Principal's response, he/she has a right to appeal at Stage 3 of this policy to the School Complaints Panel.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If complainants seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) the Principal will, if necessary, make arrangements for a School Complaints Panel (SCP) hearing to be convened at which the complainants will have the right to present his/her case and to be accompanied by one other person of the Parent's choice. The 4 person accompanying complainants shall also be entitled to address the SCP. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. One of these three persons will be nominated as Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, who will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally **within 21 days**.

The Panel may be constituted **ad hoc** to determine an appeal or issue arising from the decision given by the Principal. It shall not comprise any person who has been directly involved in a previous consideration of the complaint.

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 normally not later than **14 days** prior to the hearing.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint(s) 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 complainant informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally **within 14 days** of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations will (if any) be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about, as well as the Board of Directors and the Principal.

Important further contacts

If a satisfactory conclusion is still not reached the complainant may wish to seek independent advice and/or take the complaint to Ofsted, ISI or the DfE. A written record of all complaints will be kept in the School office and will be made available to the above bodies should an issue not be satisfactorily resolved.

Confidentiality of Records

Parents and relevant others will 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 where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Statutory Framework for the EYFS (Nursery and Reception Classes)

As required under the statutory framework for the EYFS, written complaints about the fulfillment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within **28 days**. In addition, the School will provide Ofsted and/or the 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. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least **3 years**.

Parents of children within the EYFS are entitled to make complaints (which are in relation to the fulfillment of the EYFS) directly to ISI/OfSTED, details of which are given below.

ISI and OFSTED Details:

Should a parent of a pupil in the EYFS wish to complain to ISI / OFSTED in respect of the School's provision, contact details can be found below:

Early Years Ofsted

Ofsted Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD,
Contact - 0300 123 4666
Registration – 0845 601 4771
Complaints & Enforcement – 0845 601 4772
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)

www.isi.net
contact - 020 7600 0100

A record of any complaint in respect of the EYFS will be kept for at least three years.

Complaints Received: 5 Previous Academic Years

Formal complaints received in the academic year 2017/2018 - 0
Formal complaints received in the academic year 2018/2019 - 1 - resolved
Formal complaints received in the academic year 2019/2020 - 1 - resolved
Formal complaints received in the academic year 2020/2021 - 1 - resolved
Formal complaints received in the academic year 2021/2022 - 2 - resolved
Formal complaints received in the academic year 2022/2023 - 1 - resolved

The Complaints Process – Summary

Whole School		
Stages	Process	Timescale
Stage 1 Informal Resolution	1. Complaints / concerns about school life should first be directed to the Class Teacher. 2. Issue referred to the Principal for informal resolution 3. If not resolved, move onto Stage 2	Within 5 school days or as soon as is practicable.
Stage 2 Formal Resolution	1. Complaint in writing to the Principal who must acknowledge receipt of the complaint. 2. Meeting with complainant arranged to discuss the issue. If possible a resolution will be reached during the meeting 3. The outcome must be confirmed to the complainant in writing. 4. If the complainant is still not satisfied he/she can write to the Principal to ask for a review by the School's Complaint Panel	Within 48 hours (School days) Within 14 school days Within 28 school days
Stage 3 Panel Hearing	1. School Complaints Panel convened and meeting held. The complainant may attend the hearing and be accompanied if they wish, providing they inform the school beforehand. 2. The Chair of the SCP will inform the complainant via email or give in writing to the complainant (and, where relevant the person complained about) details of the panel's decision with an explanation of the outcome. The decision of the panel is final. 3. Should the panel decide at the hearing that further investigations should be carried out they will decide how and by when. This should be completed within fourteen working days of the first hearing wherever possible but within twenty-eight working days in any event unless otherwise agreed with the parents.	15 school days 10 school days
Provisions specific to complaints relating to the EYFS Provision		
Stages	Process	Timescale
Stage 1 Informal Resolution	1. Written complaints about the EYFS provision to be addressed to the Principal for investigation and resolution. 2. If not resolved, move onto Stage 2	Within 5 school days or as soon as is practicable.
Stage 2 Formal Resolution	1. Meeting with complainants arranged to discuss the issue. If possible, a resolution will be reached during the meeting 2. The outcome must be confirmed to the complainants in writing. 3. If the complainant is still not satisfied he/she can write to the Principal to ask for a review by the School's Complaint Panel - the procedure then follows Stages 3 above, as necessary.	Within 2 School days Within 14 school days Within 28 school days

Other Matters

The arrangements for the constitution of the panel at Stage 3 of this procedure are set out in guidance to the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2014 and National Minimum Standards for the EYFS (2014). The school will fully comply with statutory guidance, good practice guidance and ensure that appropriate connections are made between the complaints system and other relevant policies and procedures. These include safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying and staff code of conduct.