



## AVONDALE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

### Complaints Procedure

#### **1 Introduction**

We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the Co-Headteachers and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases. Avondale Preparatory School will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available, and the form in which it is published or available.

#### **2 Statement of intent**

Our school believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our school and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the school. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns.

#### **3 Aims**

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our school to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. (If a child appears to be at risk, our school follows the procedures laid down in our Child Protection Policy.) We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

#### **4 Methods**

To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure:

- **Stage 1**

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should normally discuss the matter with their child's Class Teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way and it is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction.

The Class Teacher must make a written record of all concerns / complaints and the date on which they were received.

If it is felt inappropriate to talk to the Class Teacher, any parent who is uneasy about an aspect of the school's provision should make an appointment to talk over his/her concerns with the Co-Headteachers. Again, this is a informal discussion, but a record of the conversation shall be made.

Should the matter not be resolved within a reasonable time frame or in the event that the Class 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**

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the Class Teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Co-Headteachers. The Co-Headteachers consider any such complaint very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly. At this stage, this would be classified as formal complaint.

The Co-Headteachers will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Co-Headteachers will meet with the parents concerned, normally within 5 working days of receiving the written complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Co-Headteachers to carry out further investigations. The Co-Headteachers will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Once the Co-Headteachers are 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 Co-Headteachers will also give reasons for the decision.

Most complaints are normally resolved by this stage. Should the matter not be resolved within a reasonable time frame or in the event that the Co-Headteachers and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 3 of this procedure.

- **Stage 3**

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to one of the named Convenors (a list of which is outlined below), who have been asked 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. 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 working 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 3 working days prior to the hearing. The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish; 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 3 working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about, as well as the Proprietor and the Co-Headteachers if different.

## **5 Records**

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. This could be found in appendix 2 and is updated on an annual basis.

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 paragraph 6(3)(f) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003 (as subsequently amended), by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority.

### **WRITTEN COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EYFS:**

As an EYFS provider, Avondale Preparatory School must investigate all written complaints relating to the requirements under the Statutory Framework for the EYFS, and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within **28 days** of having received the complaint.

Avondale Preparatory 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. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least 3 years.

September 2024

## **Appendix 1**

### **Complaints Panel**

Our panel is made up of individuals who may be called upon to serve should a complaint progress to Stage 3 of the school's Complaints Procedure.

It is important to note that participation is subject to availability, and the panel's composition may evolve over time. Members have been chosen based on their background in education or their professional standing within the community.

All panel members have been approached and have agreed to serve, provided they are available. Should any member be acquainted with the complainants, they will declare this when approached, and a reserve will step in if necessary.

The Convenor for a panel meeting will typically be selected from among the following:

- Proprietor
- Current or former School Senior Leaders
- Former parents of the school
- Former teachers of the school
- Professionals from the local community
- Representative from the local authority

This panel will be updated as needed.

### **Appendix 2: Record of Complaints (and at what level they were resolved)**

<b>2010-11</b>	No complaints
<b>2011-12</b>	1 complaint- resolved at stage 2 of the process
<b>2012-13</b>	No complaints
<b>2013-14</b>	2 complaints- one resolved at stage 2 of the process/ the other resolved at stage 3 (panel)
<b>2014-15</b>	1 complaint- resolved at stage 2 of the process
<b>2015-16</b>	No complaints
<b>2016-17</b>	No complaints
<b>2017-18</b>	No complaints
<b>2018-19</b>	No complaints
<b>2019-20</b>	No complaints
<b>2020-21</b>	No complaints
<b>2021-22</b>	1 complaint- resolved at stage 2 of the process
<b>2022-23</b>	No complaints
<b>2023-24</b>	No complaints