



Complaints Procedure

Edgbaston High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All staff share this commitment and are trained in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, all parents, guardians or prospective parents (including Early Years Foundation Stage) can expect any complaint relating to the School to be dealt with in accordance with this Procedure which is available to them on request, or from our website. Details of how to access it are also given in the Admissions and Policies sections of our website.

In accordance with paragraph 6(3)(f) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, Edgbaston High School for Girls will, on request from parents of pupils 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), make available details of this Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal parts of the Procedure during the preceding school year.

Parents can be assured that all complaints dealt with under this Procedure will be treated seriously and confidentially. Matter relating to it will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection or where other legal obligation prevails.

Whilst it is hoped that any complaints relating to the School will be resolved quickly, informally and within 28 days of receipt, the procedures set out below will be followed.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- 1.1 If a parent, parents, guardian of pupils on roll (in this document now called 'the Parents') have a complaint, they should normally contact their daughter's Form Teacher in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will be resolved to the Parents' satisfaction straightaway by this means. If, however, the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for her or him to consult and/or involve a more senior member of staff.
- 1.2 Complaints made directly to any other member of staff will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher unless the Head of Department, Senior Teacher, the Deputy Head Academic, the Deputy Head Pastoral or the Headmistress deem it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- 1.3 Written records of all complaints, the nature thereof and the date on which they were received will be made and kept. Should the matter not be resolved within 14 days, or in the event that the staff involved and the Parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then the Parents will be advised that they may proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- 2.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis as above, then the Parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmistress who will attempt to resolve the issue. After considering the complaint carefully, the Headmistress will decide the appropriate course of action to take.
- 2.2 In most cases, the Headmistress will speak to or meet with the Parents to discuss the matter within 14 days of the complaint being referred to her though, in her discretion, it may be necessary for her to carry out such further investigations as she considers appropriate. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 2.3 The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 2.4 Once the Headmistress is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the Parents will be informed of this decision in writing or by electronic communication. The Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.
- 2.5 If the Parents are still not satisfied with that decision, they may proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

3. Should the Parents wish to invoke Stage 3 of this Procedure, they must write to the Headmistress informing her of their intention to do so within 7 days of receipt by them of the decision of the Headmistress referred to in clause 2.4 above. The panel hearing will take place unless the parents later indicate that they are satisfied and do not wish to proceed.

Within 14 days of the decision referred to in the previous clause, the Parents must also submit a written request (“the Request”) addressed to the Clerk to the Governors at the School address for the complaint to proceed to Stage 3. As part of the Request, the Parents must also submit at the same time:

- i) A full written statement of their claim,
- ii) Details of any witnesses they wish to attend the hearing, and
- iii) Copies of any documents then available on which they wish to rely.

- 3.1 Following receipt of the Request by the Clerk to the Governors, the procedures set out below will be followed:

- 3.1.1 The Clerk to the Governors will convene a Complaints Panel (‘the Panel’) for this purpose in accordance with the following requirements:

- 3.1.2 The Panel shall consist of three people including not less than one independent member with the remainder consisting of one or two Governors nominated from among members of the governing body of the School.

- 3.1.3 The independent member(s) of the Panel will be selected along the guidelines issued by the Department of Education. This means suitable people will be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence, facts and documents and listening to and putting forward balanced

arguments. In this connection, serving or retired professional or business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools and people with a legal background may be considered suitable. The person chosen must be independent of the management and running of the school and not involved in matters related to the complaint.

- 3.1.4 In convening the Panel, the Clerk to the Governors and the governing body shall be sensitive to issues of race, ethnic origin, gender and religious affiliation.
 - 3.1.5 The members of the governing body nominated to the Panel shall be Governors who have had no prior involvement with the complaint.
 - 3.1.6 The Panel shall be chaired by a member of the governing body.
 - 3.1.7 The Panel will ensure that minutes are kept of all its proceedings.
 - 3.1.8 In the event that a member of the Panel becomes ill, indisposed or otherwise incapable of continuing to serve on the Panel, then the Panel will be entitled to co-opt another member of the governing body or another independent member as may be required.
- 3.2 The Clerk to the Governors will write to the Parents (with a copy to the Headmistress) to acknowledge receipt of the Request. Such acknowledgement shall inform the Parents that the complaint is to be heard by the Panel constituted in accordance with Clause 3.1.1 of this procedure ('the Panel Meeting').
- 3.3 The Clerk to the Governors shall submit to members of the Panel and to the Headmistress copies of the Parents' Request and of any supporting documents without delay after receipt. The Headmistress shall be invited by the Clerk to The Governors to submit a written Report to the Panel in response to the Parents' Request. The Headmistress may invite members of staff directly involved in matters raised by the Parents to respond in writing to the complaint set out in the Request.
- 3.4.1 If the Parents' Request contains matters which have not been raised previously or which set out a claim that is substantially different from that which was investigated under Stage 1 or Stage 2 of this Complaints Procedure, then the Headmistress can request that the Stage 2 procedure be repeated.
 - 3.4.2 If such request is made, the Stage 3 procedure will be suspended until the repeated Stage 2 procedure has been concluded. In the event that there is a dispute as to whether the Stage 2 procedure should be repeated, the decision of the Chair of the Panel shall be final.
 - 3.4.3 As soon as possible after the Request has been received, the Clerk to the Governors will write to inform the Parents, the Headmistress and the members of the Panel of the date, time and place of the Panel Meeting, which should, if practicable, be conducted within 10 working days after the receipt of all documents referred to in clause 3 above.
 - 3.4.4 Copies of any further documents on which the Parents wish to rely at the Panel Meeting (and which were not provided earlier under clause 3 above) must be submitted to the Clerk to the Governors as soon as possible but in any event not later than 5 working days before the Panel meeting.

- 3.5 The following rules shall apply to the Panel Meeting:
- 3.5.1 Both the Parents and the Headmistress have the right to be accompanied at the hearing by one representative, friend or interpreter whose identity has been notified to the Clerk to the Governors not less than 4 working days before the Panel Meeting. All parties shall be informed of such notification. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
 - 3.5.2 The report of the Headmistress referred to in Clause 3.3 and any supporting documentation shall be submitted to the Clerk to the Governors no later than 5 working days before the Panel Meeting.
 - 3.5.3 The Clerk to the Governors shall supply copies of any further documents submitted by the Parents, the Headmistress's report and any supporting documentation to the Panel and to the other party as soon as the same are received by him or her. He or she will also notify the Panel, the Parents and the Headmistress of the identity of everyone attending the Panel Meeting.
- 3.6 The Panel Meeting will be conducted in two separate parts. The Panel will first hear from the Parents and/or any representative notified under Clause 3.5.1. The Panel will then hear from the Headmistress and/or any representative notified under Clause 3.5.1. The Panel will hold both parts of the Meeting on the same day. Each party will only be present at their own hearing.
- 3.7 At the Panel Meeting, the Panel shall be free to question the Parents, the Headmistress and any persons in attendance but may also, at its discretion, request that other persons with relevant knowledge attend as well in order to assist the Panel.
- 3.8 In the event that the complaint involves or relates to a teacher, then the teacher concerned will be kept fully informed of the procedure being adopted in relation to the management of the complaint and will be provided with copies of all the documentation. He or she will also have the right to make representations to the Panel and to be accompanied by a friend or representative.
- 3.9 The Panel shall issue a decision within 5 working days of the Panel Meeting. The decision will then be sent to the Clerk to the Governors who shall send it to the Headmistress, the Parents and the Chair of Council. The decision will either be a final decision or an interim decision and will be expressed as such.

The Panel will issue an interim report where it considers that it requires additional documentation or additional evidence from other persons to enable it to reach a final conclusion. The interim report will confirm what more the Panel requires and:-

- 3.9.1 Any additional documentation requested in the interim report shall be supplied to the Clerk to the Governors within 5 working days after receipt of the interim report by the party called upon to produce additional documentation. Copies will be provided to the Parents and to the Headmistress.
- 3.9.2 In the event that the Panel wishes to hear from any other person or persons, it shall say so and arrangements will be made as soon as is practicable. If it is not possible for such persons to attend on the day of the Panel Meeting, the Panel will be re-convened and every effort will be made to ensure minimum delay.

- 3.9.3 The Parents and the Headmistress will have the right to hear the evidence given by such other persons and will be notified by the Clerk to the Governors of when the Panel will re-convene.
- 3.10 In the event that an interim report has been issued under Clause 3.9, the Panel will issue its final report within 7 working days after the additional documentation requested has been submitted to it or after any re-convened Panel Meeting.
- 3.11 The role of the Panel is to determine issues of fact only and its findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing or by electronic communication to the Parents, the Headmistress, the Chair of Council and, where relevant and at the discretion of the Panel, the person complained of.
- 3.12 The decision of the Panel shall be final and will conclude the process under this Complaints Procedure.
- 3.13 The Panel hearing will go ahead as planned in the event that the complainants fail to attend.

A written record will be kept of all complaints and the stage at which they are resolved. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be made available for inspection at the School only to the Chair of Governors and the Head.

Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except as is required of the School by paragraph (k) of Schedule 1 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 or where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, requests access to them or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Parents have the right to complain directly to Ofsted or ISI. Contact details are below:

Ofsted	ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate
Piccadilly Gate	1 st Floor
Store Street	CAP House
Manchester	9-12 Long Lane
M1 2WD	London
	EC1A 9HA
Tel: 0300 123 1231	
	Tel: 020 7600 0100

Written Complaints relating to the Requirements under the Statutory Framework for EYFS

EHS will provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all formal complaints referred to a Panel under this procedure during any specified period, and of the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Number of Complaints to reach Panel Hearing:
2018 -19 1

Approved by Council: _____

Date: _____