



MALDON COURT
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

33a

Complaints Procedure Policy

This Policy applies to all pupils at Maldon Court Preparatory School including those in the EYFS

Reviewed: October 2023 H Bonner
To be Reviewed October 2024

School Aims

- Children develop a love of learning and come to appreciate the value of their talents and life experiences.
- Children flourish and become enthusiastic and independent learners reaching their full potential through a stimulating, broad curriculum and rich variety of experiences beyond the curriculum.
- Children embrace the traditional values of Kindness, Respect and Courtesy, becoming responsible, independent caring individuals.
- Children are confident happy individuals who are well prepared for their next step in education. This includes I1+, scholarships and entrance to schools with Specialist Status.
- Children develop the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs: both in the local and wider community.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Introduction

At Maldon Court, we pride ourselves on being an open, friendly, family school. We welcome suggestions and comments from parents and take seriously any complaints and concerns you may have. Complaints will be treated in a professional and appropriate manner. Our complaints procedure is set out below.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response. We wish to ensure that:

- If you wish to make a complaint you know how to do so.
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient manner.
- You appreciate that we listen carefully and take complaints seriously.
- We act where and when appropriate.

Making a Complaint

If you wish to make a complaint you can:

- Talk directly to the member of staff involved.
- Telephone the School to speak to any member of staff.
- Put your complaint in writing to any member of staff.

Complaints regarding EYFS

- If a parent feels that he/she has cause for complaint the first point of contact should be the Nursery / Pre-Reception Manager or the Reception Teacher. There will be many occasions where your concerns can be resolved as a matter of routine.
- Where a complaint is made, the Head Teacher should be informed immediately.
- The EYFS Management will respond to any complaint as quickly as possible within 5 working days. The complaint will be discussed with the relevant staff and the person making the complaint in the correct way.
- Written complaints will be responded to and complainants will be notified in writing within 28 days if the complaint relates to the school's fulfilment of the EYFS statutory requirements. General complaints will be aimed to be dealt with in the same time period.
- Complaints will be dated and recorded in the Complaints Book.
- After a complaint has been resolved the final outcome will be written in the Complaints book. Any recommendation for changes in procedures will be made and noted against the complaints policy.
- A record of the complaint and its outcome and details of any action taken by the school will be made available to Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

Early Years Foundation Stage

If parents believe the school is not meeting the EYFS regulations they have a right to complain to:

OFSTED

Telephone: 0300 123 4666

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

In writing: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

OR

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)

Telephone: 0207 710 9900

Email: concerns@isi.net

In writing: CAP House,
912 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

Any record of complaints will be kept for seven years. If there is a safeguarding angle, records concerning abuse allegations will be preserved for the term of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.

In most circumstances, it will be best to raise the complaint with the member of staff most closely connected with the issue. However, you may wish to raise the matter with: -

Mrs E Mason	Headteacher
Mrs L Guest	Principal
Mrs K Callaghan	Nursery Manager

Responding to a complaint and Timeframe for dealing with complaints

All written complaints will be investigated and handled seriously and sensitively. The complaint can initially be considered on an informal basis. Where the parent is not satisfied with the response, made in accordance with the informal procedure, a formal procedure will be established for the complaint to be made in writing.

Stage 1 Preliminary – Informal

On receiving a complaint, the member of staff will complete a '*Preliminary Complaints Form*' (Appendix A) and pass a copy to the Headteacher. Appendix B will also be completed to document all actions and resolution regardless of whether they are upheld.

In many cases, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague or colleagues and consider it further before responding to you. If this is the case, you will be given a date by which a response will be received within five working days.

Stage 2 – Formal

If you are unhappy with the result of Preliminary complaint, you are entitled to make a formal complaint. This will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible; the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 days.

The complaint will be handled by the Headteacher.

If the complaint is made against the Headteacher, you will be offered a referral to Mr S Guest, the Proprietor, or you may wish to write to him directly. In cases of complaint there will be no conflict of interest between proprietors and the school.

Mr S Guest will ask for a full report from the Headteacher any other relevant member of staff before responding to you. If appropriate, Mr Guest will arrange a meeting with you. You may wish to bring a friend with you for support (please notify Mr Guest in advance if this is the case).

If the Proprietor is unable to resolve your complaint it can be taken to a panel hearing – Stage 3

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

The third stage is the Appeal Panel Hearing, which will be completed within a further 14 days if the appeal is lodged during term time and during holiday periods. This stage is only for use as a final arbitrator after all other avenues have been exhausted (stages 1 and 2)

The matter will then be referred to the Appeal Panel for consideration. The panel will consist of three people, two of which are on the school's Board of Visitors, which is an independent body established in July 2003. The other person will be a headteacher from the local area that is completely independent of the management and running of the school and not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The independent person will be beyond the leadership, management and governance of the school. Once a complaint has been lodged with them, the panel will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and a hearing will be arranged within 2 weeks of the original complaint being lodged. Complainants are allowed at the hearing and can be accompanied by a friend, relative or teacher. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require further particulars of the complaint, or any related matter, to be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 days prior to the hearing.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the complainants' complaint 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, which will be completed within 5 days of the hearing. The Panel hearing's findings and recommendations will be available to the Headteacher and Proprietor on the school's premises. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any recommendations, will be sent in writing to the complainants, the Headteacher, the Board of Visitors, the Proprietors and, where relevant, the person(s) who is/are the subject of the complaint.

A written record of all complaints and their outcomes, whether they are resolved at the formal stage or have gone on to a panel hearing, will be archived for three years and will be retained for at least 7 years. These will be confidential but can be shown to His Majesty's Inspectors or the Independent Schools Inspectorate when they are made available to the Secretary of State under section 109 of the 2008 Education Act. The number of complaints is available on request from the school office.

Confidentiality

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Headteacher and those directly involved. The Proprietors may also need to be informed. Complaints made by parents will not rebound adversely on children within the school.

In certain circumstances, the school's duty to safeguard the health and welfare of pupils may override the duty of confidentiality owed to you. If this is the case we may have to involve a third party (for example the police or social services) from outside the school and, if appropriate, reveal the identity of anyone involved.

You are encouraged to give your name if you wish to make a complaint. If you wish to make an anonymous complaint, the Headteacher will be informed of the nature of the complaint and will have complete discretion as to what action, if any, will be taken.

If we remain unable to satisfy your concerns you may wish to consider:

- Seeking independent legal advice.
- Raising the matter with the Independent Schools Association (ISA)
- Lodging a complaint with the Independent Schools Inspectorate
- Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M12WD 03001231231 (Nursery)

Complaints Procedure

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

It is important for the ethos and culture of our School that any complaint made or concern raised by a parent is dealt with efficiently, effectively and sympathetically.

It is also important that details of complaints and how they have been addressed are recorded to help avoid the School and its staff being criticised for failing to deal adequately and appropriately with a complaint or concern. Many disputes against schools arise because a simple complaint or concern has been allowed to get out of control.

A copy of the information sheet we have produced for parents setting out a clear complaints procedure is attached. Please familiarise yourself with this.

- The basic points of the procedure are as follows:
- Parents are encouraged to raise a complaint or concern with the member of staff most closely connected with the issue.
- A complaint of concern will be responded to promptly. *We must aim to acknowledge a complaint immediately if possible or within 5 working days.* We must keep parents informed of what is happening with their complaint and when a detailed response will be made.
- If you receive a complaint you should complete a *Complaints Form* and pass a copy to a responsible member of staff (if appropriate) and the Head teacher. This is so that the appropriate members of the management team are kept informed and can provide advice and assistance if necessary and to ensure that a written record is kept.
- *If parents are not satisfied with the initial outcome of their complaint the matter will be referred to the Head teacher.*
- You should not promise a parent who makes a complaint or raises a concern that the matter will be kept confidential. The School has an overriding duty to safeguard the health and welfare of the pupil body as a whole and matters of serious concern must be reported to the Head teacher.
- Parents should be encouraged to give their name when making a complaint or raising a concern. If a parent wishes to make a complaint anonymously the Head teacher must be informed of the matter raised.
- If a complaint is made to you about another member of staff this must only be reported to the Head teacher. The staff member concerned has a right to know the details of a complaint made against him or her and to be able to give their side of the story. To protect the integrity and reputation of fellow members of staff such matters should not be discussed with other members of staff or parents.
- A parent who raises a complaint or concern must be treated courteously and professionally even where you believe the matters raised are unfounded or unreasonable. If you feel unable to continue to communicate with the parent on the matter or you feel the parent is treating you unreasonably or aggressively you must refer the matter to the Head teacher.

There may be occasions where a parent is persistently raising unfounded complaints or acting aggressively. Where parents treat the school and its staff unreasonably, or a concern cannot be resolved amicably, the parents may be asked or required by the Headteacher to remove their child from the School. A review of a decision to require removal will be offered.

Reviewed October 2023 H Bonner

Appendix A

PRELIMINARY STAGE COMPLAINTS FORM

This form is to be completed by any member of staff who receives a complaint from a parent. A copy must be passed to the Headteacher and possibly to a member of staff holding specific responsibility.

1. What is the nature of the complaint?	
(Please Tick) Staff Conduct: Teaching Standards Condition of Premises Matters of Regime and Routine:	Parental Conduct: Pastoral Care: Time Tabling: Access to or Regulations of Extra Curricular Activities
Other (please give details):	
Please give details of the complaint:	
2. Name of Complainant:	
3. Date of Incident	
4. Outline brief details of the complaint:	
5. What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome	
6. Are there any further actions needed at this stage?	
If the answer to Q6 is yes, does it need to go forward to a panel hearing?	
Name:	
Signed:	Date:

Appendix B : Complaints Procedure Action Sheet
Stage 1 – Informal Complaint

1. Name of complainant:	Acknowledge date:
2. Date of Incident:	Acknowledged by:
3. Outline brief details of the complaint:	Reply to complaint: (Date)
	Replied by:
Resolution:	

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint - Part A

Formal complaint received:	Acknowledge date:
Complaint against:	Acknowledged by:
Member of staff consulted:	Reply to complaint: (Date)
Interview date with complainant:	Replied by:
Resolution:	

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

Complaint details passed to Board of Visitors and Headteacher (independent from the school): (Date)	Attendance of the following required at hearing:
Panel Hearing date set:	Panel resolution received:
Panel resolution due:	
Resolution:	
Changes required if any to policy documentation:	
Date:	