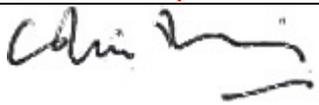




MOUNT HOUSE SCHOOL

SCHOOL POLICIES

COMPLAINTS

Review	Date	By
Last Reviewed	August 2018	
Next Review	August 2019	

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Introduction

Mount House School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents. The School will:

- Ensure that parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
- Respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way
- Take action where appropriate

It is the School's policy that any parental complaint will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. It is hoped that most concerns, queries or complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.

The School publicises the availability of this policy on its website.

A complaint is considered to be any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the School.

In the case of an appeal regarding an exclusion, please refer to the Exclusions Policy (on the website or available on request) in which the process for a Governors' Appeal is set out.

Informal Resolution (Stage 1)

If parents have a concern or complaint, they should normally contact the member of staff most closely concerned with the issue; for example, the Head of House, sports concerns to the Director of Sport, academic matters to the Tutor, etc. Alternatively, parents may, in the first instance, prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff such as the Deputy Head (Academic) or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or Head of Sixth Form. Complaints made directly to the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff when deemed appropriate. We encourage all parents to contact a member of staff with whom they consider it appropriate to raise any query or concern as soon as possible. The member of staff will always aim to help by directing concerns accordingly. In most instances the matter will be satisfactorily resolved by this means.

Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days of the date on which a complaint was received, then parents are advised to proceed with the complaint in accordance with the following procedure. During School holidays, it may not be practicable to resolve the matter within this timescale and the School will advise parents of the anticipated timescale.

Formal Resolution (Stage 2)

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, parents are invited to put their complaint in writing, normally to the Principal or alternatively to another senior member of staff who will decide the appropriate course of action. All members of staff can receive complaints and will direct them to the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that they are swiftly acted on.

The Principal will contact the parents concerned, usually within ten working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. During School holidays, it may not be practicable to resolve the matter within this timescale and the School will advise parents of the anticipated timescale.

It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out a further investigation and parents will be given a date by which they will receive a response.

The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Principal is satisfied that, as far as practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made. Parents will be informed in writing of the Principal's decision and the reasons for it.

The School hopes that parents will feel satisfied with the outcome but if they are still not satisfied, they should request that the matter be referred to the Conciliation Panel. A request for a referral must be made within 10 working days of the date of the decision.

Panel Hearing (Stage 3)

Parents will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors (who is the Finance Director), who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Conciliation Panel.

The matter will then be referred to the Conciliation Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of *at least* 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 governors shall appoint each of the Panel members. The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 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 5 days prior to the hearing.

Parents may attend the hearing. One other person may accompany the parents to the hearing. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

Where the parent is not satisfied with the school's response to their complaint at stage two and indicates a wish to continue to stage three, for compliance purposes a panel hearing should take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further.

The panel hearing should, therefore, proceed notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend. If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion. The requirement for the panel to proceed does not prevent the school from accommodating parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning panel composition.

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 implemented.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will establish its findings, will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to, or email, the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Principal, the Chairman of Governors and, where relevant, the person to whom the complaint refers.

The decision of the Panel will be available for inspection on the School premises by the Chairman of Governors and the Principal.

Records of Complaints

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

Correspondence, statements and records (Records of Complaints) relating to individual complaints in the School will be maintained by the Principal.

All records are kept confidential except insofar as is required of the School by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them or the Schools internal audit. Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other overriding legal obligation prevails.

The written Records of Complaints: will be kept whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing; and will specify the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints regardless of whether or not they are upheld.

A written record will be kept for at least three years of all complaints, whether they were resolved at Stage 2 or proceeded to a Panel hearing (Stage 3).

Number of Formal Complaints

Parents have a right to request from the School the number of formal complaints received in the preceding School year.

The number of complaints* recorded in the academic year 2017/18 was:

Mount House School: **None**

*The School defines recorded complaints as those which reach Stage 2 or 3.

Contacting ISI in Connection with Complaints

Should a parent not be satisfied with the outcome of a decision made by the Conciliation Panel, the organisation below may be contacted.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate may also be contacted regarding any complaint.

- Concerns about a school
- Concerns for the safety or welfare of a child
- Queries relating to safeguarding

Telephone: 02076000100 Email: concerns@isi.net

Other bodies

Independent Education & School Safeguarding Division Department for Education Level 3 Riverside Bishopsgate House Feethams Darlington DL1 5QE	Local Council 02..... Or Local Police on 101 If you think a child is in danger
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