

COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy applies to all children at Unicorn School, including those in the EYFS.

Parents have been informed that this policy is available to them via the Parent Guide which is issued upon starting the school and then reissued from the transition from the infants to the juniors.

Unicorn prides itself of the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure. All complaints will be taken seriously and, if appropriate, acted upon. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. All written complaints will be investigated and the result relayed to the parents/complainants within 28 working days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's Class Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head of Infants/Head of Juniors/Deputy Head/the Head.
- Complaints made directly to the Head of Infants/Head of Juniors/Deputy Head/the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher unless the Head of Infants/Head of Juniors/Deputy Head/the Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Class Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within two weeks or in the event that the Class Teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to meet with the Head to discuss the issue. In the event that this meeting does not resolve the issue parents are advised proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution – Preliminary Stage

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will meet or speak to the parents concerned, within seven days of receiving the complaint or as soon as possible thereafter (in exceptional circumstances) to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is 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 Head will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chairman of Governors who, on behalf of the Governors, will make provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by the Governors.

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 Chairman of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within two weeks.

- 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 three days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend.
- 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, which it shall complete within seven days of the Hearing. The findings and recommendations of the Panel will be: (1) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. The Chair of Governors' and The Head will also be sent copies as necessary. (2) made available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors' and the Head.
- A written record will be kept of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.
- If parents remain unsatisfied, they may wish to seek independent legal advice or raise the matter with The Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools of which the Headmistress is a member.
- 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 where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them. Where the complaint reveals details of possible child abuse this information will be disclosed.

EYFS

In line with the main school, complainants regarding the EYFS will be responded to within 28 days of having received the complaint. The record of complaints will be kept for at least three years. Parents in the EYFS are made aware that they can lodge a complaint with Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate should they so wish.

OFSTED

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
Telephone 08456 014772

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA
Telephone 020 7600 0100

NUMBER OF FORMAL WRITTEN COMPLAINTS

2005 – none

2006 – none

2007 – none

2008 – none

2009 – none to date.

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