

Hillcrest Glebedale School Complaints Policy

This policy is linked to and derived from the overarching curriculum policy. This policy has been reviewed by the SLT to ensure it does not undermine British Values of Democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Local Procedures Owner: Karen Caswell

Issue date: March 2018

Review date: March 2019

Hillcrest Glebedale School Complaints Policy

Hillcrest Glebedale School encourages all of its children and young people, and anyone who comes into contact with our services, to raise any matter about which they are unhappy or feel they have cause for complaint. Every complainant has the right to expect to be treated fairly, politely and without prejudice. Anybody making a complaint will not be victimised in any way. We resolve to investigate every issue fully and seek a satisfactory conclusion in all cases.

Aims

Hillcrest Glebedale School takes a pride in the quality of teaching, learning and pastoral care which are provided to pupils. However, if parents or carers do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this policy. Correspondence, statements and records 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 disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Practice and Procedure

This procedure is based on the model recommended by the Independent Schools Council and meets the requirements of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2003 and the Children Act 1989.

Stages

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If a young person or parent/ carer has a complaint they should normally contact the Pastoral Manager in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means, to the parent/ carer's satisfaction. If the Pastoral Manager cannot resolve the problem alone, it may be necessary for him/ her to consult the Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher will usually be referred to the Pastoral Manager unless it is deemed appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
- Staff should make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received and pass them onto the Pastoral Manager. The complainant will receive acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint within one working day, with an explanation of the procedure to be followed, including time scales. Should the matter not be fully resolved within 3 working days, or in the event that the Pastoral Manager and the parent/ carer is unable to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents/ carers will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents/ carers should put their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher. After considering the complaint, the Head Teacher will decide on the course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head Teacher will meet or speak to the parents/ carers concerned within 2 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

- It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Head Teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head Teacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made. Parents/ carers will be informed in writing of the decision, together with reasons for the decision, within 5 working days.
- If parents/ carers are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure by putting their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher.

Stage 3: Review Panel Hearing

- If parents/ carers seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Proprietor, who has been appointed to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three people 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 complaint will be acknowledged and a hearing scheduled to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days. Parents/ carers will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the date of the hearing, with an invitation to attend. They will be informed that they may bring with them a relative, teacher or friend if they wish. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- 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 days prior the hearing.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parent/ carer's complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

The panel, having heard all the presentations from both the representatives of the organisation and of those given on behalf of the child/young person, will make decisions and recommendations. It will be the responsibility of the chairperson to inform the complainant, child/young person, family members or representative, of the decisions and recommendations within 10 working days. The person who the complaint has been made about should be provided with a copy of findings and recommendations if appropriate to do so. Documentation will be retained on file and be available for inspection by the proprietor and the Head Teacher.

Parents/ carers may also contact OfSTED if they believe that the Panel have acted unreasonably in dealing with the complaint. Parents/ carers should write, detailing the steps already taken and the responses received, to the:

Independent and Boarding Team,
 Department for Children,
 Schools and Families,
 Mowden Hall,
 Staindrop Road,
 Darlington,
 DL3 9BG.

This policy is reviewed annually by the governing body.

Signed (Head teacher):

Signed (Chair of Governors):