

33a Complaints Procedure		Revision	4	
		Implementation Date	2nd Dec 2020	
Author	Deputy Head	Reviewer	Head	

COMPLAINTS POLICY – PARENTS

Thetford Grammar School ('the School') Complaints Policy applies to both the Senior and Preparatory School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. These procedures comply with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2019.

This policy is available on the School's website – www.thetgram.norfolk.sch.uk. Copies can also be made available to parents on request to the School Office or alternatively can be viewed onsite in the School Office.

INTRODUCTION

The School prides itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, the School recognises that parents may have cause for complaint; a complaint being any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the School.

If parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this policy. Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

This policy is available to parents of pupils currently registered at the School. This policy does not apply to parents of prospective pupils. This policy does not apply to parents of former pupils unless the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered at the School.

STAGE ONE: INFORMAL PROCESS

1. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
2. If parents have a complaint they should contact their child's Form Tutor in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for them to consult a senior member of staff, such as with the relevant Head of Key Stage.
3. If the complaint is about the child's Form Tutor, the matter should be raised initially with a senior member of staff such as with the relevant Head of Key Stage.

4. Complaints made directly to the relevant Head of Key Stage will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor, unless they deem it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
5. The person receiving the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. The written record will be kept in the pupil file. Should the matter not be resolved within 14 w o r k i n g days, or in the event that the person receiving the complaint is unable to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents may proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

STAGE TWO: FORMAL PROCESS

1. 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 acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as reasonably practicable, within 5 working days during term time and within ten working days outside of term time. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
2. In most cases, the Head will meet with or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 10 working days - and not exceeding 15 working days - of receiving the formal Stage 2 complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
3. The Head may at their discretion appoint a senior member of staff to carry out the investigation for all or part of the complaint as the Head feels fit. This may include seeking further information from the parent. A written record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept.
4. 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 their decision. The Head will confirm the decision together with reasons, as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within 14 working days - and not exceeding 21 working days - following acknowledgment of the formal complaint.
5. Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days.

6. If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they may proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure within 14 working days of the Head's decision.

If the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors who is also Director of Thetford Grammar School Ltd. If the complaint concerns the Chair, it will be passed onto an appropriate member of the Board of Thetford Grammar School Ltd or directed to ISI.

STAGE THREE: PANEL HEARING

1. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Chair of Governors who has been appointed by the School Proprietor to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
2. The Chair of Governors will refer the matter to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Chair of 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 14 working days - and not exceeding 21 working days
3. 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 normally not later than 3 working days prior to the hearing.
4. The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
5. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
6. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 working days - and not exceeding 14 working days - of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, the Head and the School Proprietor, and where relevant, the person complained.

A copy will also be made available for inspection on the School premises by the School Proprietor and Head.

7. The School aims to resolve all complaints as speedily as reasonably practicable and the School will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the panel will have considered the complaint and made their findings and recommendations within 28 days of having received the request for a panel hearing under Stage 3 of this procedure.

The Chair of Governors, Mr Jay Liu can be contacted via jliu@thetgram.norfolk.sch.uk

HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except insofar as is required of the School by the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 and Early Years Statutory Framework; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Details of the number of complaints in the previous 12 months are available to parents on request.

RECORDS

The Head will ensure a written record of all complaints is kept including whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing. A written record will also be kept of action taken by the School as a result of complaints, regardless as to whether or not they are upheld.

The School's written record will include, amongst other things:

- The date when the complaint was raised
- The name of parent raising the complaint
- The nature of the complaint
- Copies of key correspondence.

TIMEFRAMES

All references to 'working' days in this policy means Monday-Friday (excluding weekends and bank holidays). In the event of a complaint being received during a school holiday period, it will be dealt with as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within the timescales set out throughout

this policy. Where there are delays in collecting information, for example, caused by staff absence, parents will be informed of the reasons why, and given a likely time frame for a response.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Any written complaint about the fulfilment of the EYFS regulations will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 days of having received the written complaint. The record of any such complaint will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and their outcome, relating to the EYFS provision. These records are kept by the Head.

CONTACT DETAILS TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

If parents remain dissatisfied with the School's response and/or feel that intervention at a higher level is appropriate, they may lodge a complaint to external agencies as detailed below.

Parents who wish to make a complaint if they believe the School is not meeting the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements can contact Ofsted or ISI.

Independent Schools Inspectorate OR
ISI
First Floor CAP House
9-12 Long Lane London
EC1A 9HA
Tel: 020 7600 0100

The Early Years Foundation Stage
OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: complaints@isi.net

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-procedure>

Alternative Dispute Resolution

In the event that the School is unable to resolve a complaint with a parent and the internal procedure has been exhausted, the School will write to parents to let them know that they cannot settle the complaint but that parents may, if they wish, contact the Ombudsman Service as a means of alternative dispute resolution. Use of ADR by the School and parents is voluntary; the School is under no obligation to submit to alternative dispute resolution.

Date	Summary of Changers	Author	Reviewer
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Oct 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated to new template • Updated chair of governors 	Amanda Faye	Michael Brewer
12Nov19	Updated the chair of governors	Amanda Faye	Michael Brewer
12Dec19	Specified maximum response waiting periods	Amanda Faye	Michael Brewer
1Dec2020	Clarification of Chair and Director link	Amanda Faye	Michael Brewer