



## **PARENTS' COMPLAINTS POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This policy is a 'Whole School Policy' and informs practice in the Senior School, Prep School and Nursery. Battle Abbey School has long prided itself on 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 seriously treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

### **STAGE 1 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

2. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Form Teacher in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Deputy Head or the Headmaster before returning to the parent.

3. Complaints made directly to a head of department, a deputy head or the form teacher will usually be referred to the Headteacher unless recipient of the complaint deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally. The recipient of the complaint will make a written record for the child's file of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within a working week or in the event that the Headteacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure. Copies of all notes and correspondence on each complaint are to be copied to a central complaints file.

### **STAGE 2 – FORMAL RESOLUTION**

4. 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 with the parents concerned, normally within seven days of receiving the formal complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

5. 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 decision. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### **STAGE 3 – PANEL HEARING**

6. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to The Secretary to the Governors who has been appointed by the Governors 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 School Officers not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent to the management and running of the School. The Chairman of the Governors Complaints Panel shall appoint each of the

Panel members. The Chairman of the Panel will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within seven days.

7. 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. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

8. 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 Panel will write to 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, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 25(j) of the Independent Schools Standard Regulatory Requirements, 2010; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails. The written record will state whether the complaint has been resolved at the preliminary stage (ie informal resolution), stage 2 (formal resolution) or stage 3 (Panel hearing).

9. Parents have the option of complaining to OFSTED or the ISI should they wish. A record of all written complaints, the action taken and the outcome is held by the School and is kept for 3 years. All written complaints will be investigated and the complainants notified of the outcome of any investigation within 28 days of receiving the complaint.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR THE PARENTS OF BOARDERS**

10. Boarders' parents are requested to note the following additional points:

- All staff are aware of this policy.
- All boarding parents and pupils have a complaints procedure that they can follow, which is given to them in writing.
- All boarding parents and pupils are informed in their Handbooks of how to contact Ofsted and the Local Authority Designated Officer.
- All complaints will be dealt with, without unreasonable delay.
- A written record of all complaints and their outcomes are available for inspection by the Headmaster or senior member of staff.
- Pupils will not be penalized for making a complaint in good faith.
- If parents are dissatisfied with the result of the action taken by the Head of Boarding, they may appeal to the Headmaster, who will follow the guidelines for handling all complaints, above.