



# **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

## **Introduction**

This policy is a 'Whole School Policy' and informs practice in the Senior School, Boarding Houses, Preparatory School, Pre-Prep and Early Year Foundation Stage. Claremont 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. Responding to complaints will be given the highest priority by the school and will be dealt with comprehensively.

## **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

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 or Room Leader in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher or Room Leader cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a member of the SLT or the Head teacher before returning to the parent.

Complaints made directly to the Head of Nursery, Head of Department, an SLT member, Form Teacher or Room Leader will usually be referred to the Head teacher unless the 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 Head teacher 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 the Procedure. Records of each complaint are kept in a central Complaints Book.

## **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head teacher. The Head teacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Head teacher 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.

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 and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for the 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 Director 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 and must consist of staff who have not hitherto been involved in the complaint. 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.

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. 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 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 by email or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and available for inspection on the school premises by the Director and the Head.

Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 25(3)(g) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards)(England) Regulations 2010, by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required by the ISI under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority.

The school will keep a record of all complaints reaching Stage 2 or Stage 3, indicating how they were resolved. Details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure in the preceding academic year are available on request. The stage at which the complaint is concluded is recorded, whether at Stage 2 or Stage 3.

If parents feel a complaint is unresolved they can refer it to Ofsted:

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street

Email: [enquiries@claremontschool.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@claremontschool.co.uk) | Website: [www.claremontschool.co.uk](http://www.claremontschool.co.uk)

Manchester  
M1 2WD  
General Helpline: 0300 123 1231  
Website: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-us/how-complain>

### **Unresolved Complaints**

You must complain through your school's complaints procedure first. The Department for Education (DfE) cannot investigate individual complaints about private schools. But it has certain powers as a regulator, if the school is not meeting standards set by DfE for:

- education
- pupil welfare and health and safety
- school premises
- staff suitability
- making information available to parents

The DfE will consider any reports of a major failure to meet the standards. It can arrange an emergency inspection to make sure that pupil welfare and health and safety are safeguarded and that serious failings are dealt with. For minor complaints, DfE can ask the school inspectorates to take these into account when the school is next inspected. For more information visit their website: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

There is also an Ofsted Whistleblower Hotline:

WBHL  
Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
Telephone: 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm)  
Email: [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)

Other websites that may be useful:

- [www.cypnow.co.uk/news](http://www.cypnow.co.uk/news) (Children and Young People Now)
- [www.rights4me.org](http://www.rights4me.org) (created especially for children, which tells them about its work with children and young people and the role of the Children's Commissioner).

### **Policy Owner**

The policy owners are the Heads of the Nursery, Pre Prep, Preparatory, Boarding Houses and Senior Schools.

### **Issue Date**

Issue date: September 2018.

### **Review Date**

This policy will be reviewed annually. The next review is due in September 2019.

Email: [enquiries@claremontschool.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@claremontschool.co.uk) | Website: [www.claremontschool.co.uk](http://www.claremontschool.co.uk)