



## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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| <b>Date Policy Reviewed:</b>             | 01 September 2024 |
| <b>Date of Next Review:</b>              | 01 September 2025 |
| <b>Person(s) Responsible for Review:</b> | SLT (Head)        |

The Manor aims to be a listening and responsive school. We encourage parents to inform us of their concerns while they are still minor ones which can more easily be resolved. It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally and we expect parents to allow a reasonable opportunity for informal resolution before resorting to the formal stages of the procedure set out below.

### SCOPE OF PROCEDURE

Any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is a complaint and is in the scope of this procedure.

This procedure is available to all parents of current registered pupils. The Complaints Procedure also applies to the parents of past pupils if the complaint was originally raised when the pupil was a registered pupil. The Complaints Procedure does not apply to prospective parents nor does it apply to exclusions (please see Behaviour and Discipline Policy)

### EYFS

Parents of children in the Early Years Foundations Stage (EYFS) should follow this procedure. Parents of EYFS pupils can also make a complaint to OFSTED or ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate), should they so wish, if their complaint is about fulfilment of the EYFS requirements – i.e. if the parents believe that the School is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Contact details can be found at the end of this document

This policy is available to parents via the school website and on request from the School Office.

### PARENTS

#### STAGE 1 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- At The Manor, parents who have any concerns or complaints should normally contact the teacher concerned (if it is an academic matter) or the Form Teacher (if it is a pastoral matter) in the first instance, either by letter, electronic mail or by telephone or in person.
- Complaints made directly to the Head of Section, Deputy Heads or Head will usually be referred to the teacher concerned or Form Teacher unless the Head of



Section, Deputy Heads or Head deems it appropriate for another member of staff to deal with the matter. In many cases the matter will be resolved then. In some cases, staff may need to liaise with the Head of Section.

- In the event of a failure to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised to pursue their complaint in accordance with the Stage 2 procedure set out below.
- The whole process of 'informal resolution' where reasonably possible, should take no more than 5 working days ('working days' means term-time days when the school is in operation).

## **STAGE 2 – FORMAL RESOLUTION**

- Parents whose complaint has not been resolved by the Stage 1 process should put their complaint formally in writing to the Head. The phrase 'formal complaint' may be used to clarify the situation and to distinguish the matter from minor concerns.
- If a concern about a more minor matter is repeated and the parent is clearly not satisfied with the school's original response, it will be regarded as a formal complaint.
- The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Head will wherever possible meet with the parents concerned to discuss the complaint within 5 working days of receiving it.
- The Head will carry out such investigation as they consider appropriate.
- Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be maintained.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is reasonably practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing within 5 working days of their meeting with the Head wherever possible.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.
- Complaints will usually only progress to the formal stage after first being considered at the preliminary stage and only then if the complainant intends to escalate the matter to a formal stage.
- Where the parent is not satisfied with the school's response to their complaint at stage two and indicates a wish to continue to stage three, a panel hearing should take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further.



### **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 Clerk 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 persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom is independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The Clerk to the 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 10 working 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 in reasonable time and usually 4 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 complaint 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 aim to complete within 5 working days of the hearing.
- The Manor's procedure provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of these findings and recommendations is:
  - i) Provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
  - ii) Available for inspection on the school premises by members of the Governing Body and the Head
- The Panel will, wherever possible, within 5 working days of the hearing, write by email or otherwise to the parents informing them of its decision. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be wherever possible sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Board of Governors and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint was made.

### **OTHER POINTS**

- The School realises that the whole process (from original complaint to the Stage 3 Panel informing parents of its decision) has an outside limit of 28 working days except in extenuating circumstances.



- Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and (so far as is reasonably practicable) confidentially, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act as amended, requests access to them or access if otherwise required by law.
- Written records are kept of all formal complaints, how they are resolved and at what stage, including for the EYFS.
- A record is kept by the School of any action taken by the School as a result of formal complaints, regardless of whether they are upheld.
- The DfE has given the following guidance on the identity of an independent panel member:

*'Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the police force might be considered'*

- If a parent does not exercise the right to attend a panel hearing, this does not remove the school's obligation to hold the hearing in conformity with its complaints policy. The school's arrangements for the panel hearing should be reasonable in order to facilitate the parents exercising the right of attendance.
- Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications should be retained for a minimum of 7 years.
- Records concerning allegations of sexual abuse will be preserved for the term of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. All other records with a safeguarding angle should be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.
- Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy.
- The number of complaints recorded under the formal procedure during the preceding school year is available to parents of pupils (and prospective pupils) on request from the Head's Personal Assistant.

## **EYFS**

All complaints about the delivery of the EYFS must also be completed within the 28-day timescale regardless of holidays or non-working days.

## **CONTACT DETAILS AVAILABLE TO PARENTS OF EYFS CHILDREN**

Additionally, Parents of EYFS pupils are able to complain to one or both of Ofsted and ISI, the contact details for which are below, if they believe the school is not meeting the requirements of the EYFS.



## **OFSTED**

### **Website for making a complaint:**

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

### **Address:**

Ofsted Applications, Regulatory and Contact (ARC) Team  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

**Email:** [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

**Helpline:** 0300 123 4666

## **ISI**

### **Address:**

Independent Schools Inspectorate  
First Floor, CAP House  
9-12 Long Lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA

**Telephone:** 020 7600 0100

**Email:** [info@isi.net](mailto:info@isi.net)

The school recognises its duty to ensure it provides Ofsted and ISI on request with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint if parents have complained that any aspects of the EYFS requirements have not been fulfilled.

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Complaints that proceeded to Stage 2 between 09/23-09/24: 3

Complaints that proceeded to Stage 3 between 09/23-09/24: 2

All complaints were resolved in a timely and appropriate manner