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# HEYFORD PARK FREE SCHOOL

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FREE SCHOOL

BONUM COMMUNE COMMUNITATIS

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## Complaints Procedure

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## **HEYFORD PARK FREE SCHOOL** **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Heyford Park Free School is committed to providing high standards of teaching and pastoral care for all pupils. The School has a consistent policy of making parents/carers feel welcome. Governors hope that parents find it easy to discuss their child's progress with members of staff. We have referred to "parents" throughout this document but it includes any adult who has the responsibility for a pupil who attends the school.

When there are concerns which parents wish to share with the school we expect them to get in touch with the school by email, letter or telephone. The School will seek to resolve any concerns raised promptly, fairly and if possible, informally in the first instance.

The School also recognises pupils' voice and that of its community and therefore also applies this policy to members of the school and wider community.

#### **Concerns about academic progress**

If a parent is worried about a particular aspect of the school affecting their child's progress, or their progress within a subject area it is most appropriate to contact a Tutor or subject teacher in the first instance, the next immediate point of contact would be a Leader or Director of Learning.

#### **General pastoral concerns**

If a parent is worried about their child's general welfare or progress their complaint should be directed to their child's Tutor, the next point of contact is a Head of House.

#### **Concerns about staff**

Concerns about staff should be addressed to the Principal in the first instance. Concerns about the Principal should be addressed to the Chair of Governors.

#### **Concerns about the school in the community**

Concerns from the community should be addressed to the Principal. Concerns about the Principal should be addressed to the Chair of Governors.

### **2. INFORMAL RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINT**

If a member of staff is unable to resolve the matter raised alone they will seek advice from a line manager or the Principal. If the parent is not satisfied with the initial response a complaint can be raised with the Principal who will contact the parent within 10 days of the complaint being received to discuss the matter and reach an acceptable resolution.

Depending on the nature of the issue the Principal may delegate the complaint to an appropriate member of staff who has not been involved in the matters relating to the

complaint to investigate. In such a case the complaint and actions will be acknowledged by the School within 3 working days. The member of staff appointed to investigate may review all information and contact the parties involved. The outcomes of any investigation will be reported to the Principal. Written records of all meetings in relation to the complaint will be kept. The Principal will normally review the outcomes of any investigation and give their decision in writing to the parent within 15 working days of receiving the complaint.

If the matter relates to the Principal it can be taken to Stage 2 of the formal complaints procedure.

### **3. FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

If a parent feels that the school has not addressed the matter sufficiently and it needs further resolution, formal procedures may begin.

#### **Stage 1.**

Any formal complaint should be made in writing and preferably using a Complaints Form which may be requested from the School Office. The Principal will then arrange to meet the complainant at school. The complainant may bring a friend and a note taker will be present to record the points under discussion. The Principal will endeavour to establish what has happened so far, who has been involved and what the complainant feels would put things right. Any misunderstandings, which might have occurred, will be discussed. The Principal will respond in writing to the complainant within 10 working days of the meeting.

#### **Stage 2.**

If the parent is still not satisfied and wishes the matter to be taken further the complaint may be referred to the Chair of Governors who will convene an Appeal Panel to hear the concerns. Written details of the complaint may be forwarded to the Clerk to the Governing Body who will indicate if any further detail is required.

#### **Stage 3.**

The Chair will convene a complaints panel which will comprise three members who are not directly involved in the matter; two will be members of the Appeals and Disciplinary Committee of the Governing Body. A further member will be independent of the running of the school and a person of standing in the community. The panel will be convened within 21 working days of receiving the complaint and the Clerk will communicate full details. Parents may attend the hearing of the Panel and may be accompanied by a friend or relative, legal representation is neither necessary nor appropriate. Each side will be given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions. All parties will see written material.

The panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not occur again.

The panel's findings and any consequent recommendations will be based on the balance of probabilities. The outcome shall be recorded in writing and sent to the complainant, the Principal, the Clerk to the Governing Body, and, where relevant the person complained about. This will be communicated within 5 working days of the hearing. The outcome of the hearing will be reported to the full Governing Body at its next meeting.

### **Records and Confidentiality**

Records will be retained on site confidentially, they may be accessed by the Principal or the Chair of the Governing Body; this does not apply to inspections by Ofsted or a request by the Secretary of State for Education. The numbers of complaints but not the details will be reported annually.

The School will keep a written record of all logged complaints, the dates on which they are made, and the stage at which they are resolved. In accordance with Data Protection principles details of individual complaints will normally be retained until after any School inspection and will then be destroyed. In exceptional circumstances records may be subject to specific orders and will be retained for a longer period.

### **PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING AND REVIEWING THIS POLICY**

This policy was adopted by the Governing Body prior to school opening September 2013.

This policy is a dynamic document and will be updated as new guidance is produced or, in response to research, review or other events that have not previously been covered in depth, or annually whichever is sooner.

**Reviewed by Governing Body September 2017**

**To be reviewed annually**

**Next review date: Autumn term 2017**