



## Complaints Policy

*Nisi Dominus Frustra* - Without the Lord, everything is in vain

### MISSION STATEMENT

- \* A Rose Hill School child's learning experience is one of aspiration, adventure, and achievement in a nurturing, caring school.

### AIMS

Working with **integrity** your child will:

- \* Be inspired to develop **confidence** to thrive in all areas of our rich curriculum.
- \* Foster the skills and talents which enable them to **organise** their learning and plan to achieve success.
- \* Demonstrate **persistence** to flourish in the face of challenge.
- \* Show **resilience** and learn from difficult situations.
- \* **Get along** with others, work collaboratively and accept everyone.

### Statement

Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is a complaint and, in the scope of the procedure, whatever the school labels it as. All complaints are handled seriously, and all complaints are recorded. Complaints are treated confidentially and respectfully. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents do not rebound adversely on their children.

For the purpose of our Complaints Policy and procedures the term 'parents' includes guardians. The procedure does not apply to parents of prospective pupils. Although this Complaints Procedure is made available to parents of prospective pupils for their reference, it is not available for use by them; it may only be used by parents of current pupils and in relation to matters concerning a child who is a registered pupil at the school at the time the complaint was raised. The complaints procedure does apply to past pupils if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered, and it does not cover exclusions.

At Rose Hill School we:

- Take all concerns and complaints seriously.
- Make every effort to deal with complaints informally and at an early stage, in the spirit of partnership.
- Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the parent/complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.
- Resolve all Stage 1 complaints within 28 working term-time days of the complaint being received and acknowledged.
- COVID-19 – we have reviewed the time periods during the period of the pandemic to ensure we have flexibility as a consequence of disruption or staff absence. Therefore, we ask that parents understand that some leeway is needed when responding to a concern or complaint during this time.
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with in line with the procedures set out in this document.
- Ensure that complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.
- Ensure that, where appropriate, a full and fair investigation of the issue is undertaken.
- Ensure that no-one, including pupils, are penalised for making a complaint in good faith.
- Keep a written record, for at least three years, of all formal stage or panel hearings, the action taken and at what stage they were resolved.



- Review regularly at senior leadership level the written record of serious concerns or complaints and their outcomes. All action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) is kept by the Head.
- Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in as far as is required of the School by part 7, paragraph 25(k) of The Education (Independent School Standards, England) Regulations 2014; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection (section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act); or where any other legal obligation prevails.

**Retention** – Complaints (September 2021, DfE) which do not have safeguarding implications should be retained for a minimum of 7 years. Where there is a safeguarding concern, 'records concerning allegations of abuse must be preserved for the term of the Independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.'

A record of informal and formal complaints - and their outcomes - is kept by the Head. The record is reviewed regularly by the Head.

In the case of parents with pupils in the EYFS setting, should parents feel that the EYFS requirements have not been met in full, parents are also free to make a complaint to ISI/OFSTED if they so wish. Relevant contact details are set out below.

**ISI:** CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA  
Phone: 020 77768849 or e-mail via the ISI website: [info@isi.net](mailto:info@isi.net)

**OFSTED:** Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M21 2WD  
Phone: 0300 123 1231 or e-mail [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

**This policy is applicable to all pupils in our school including those in our EYFS setting. It is available to staff, pupils, and parents on the school's website and paper copies are available on request from the school office.**

### **Concerns and Complaints Procedure**

A vital aspect of working in a close partnership with parents is that we want to know when things are, in the view of parents, not going right. If you have any concerns about any aspect of your child's life at school, please contact an appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. We will take all such expressions of concern seriously and follow them up courteously and promptly. Two things tend to make parents and pupils reluctant to express concerns:

- A fear that the School will not see the issue to be important. Please be assured, if it is important to you, it is important to us.
- A fear that a complaint may lead to repercussions for the pupil. Please be assured that under no circumstances will the School discriminate against a pupil because of expressions of concern or complaints. We are also very experienced in ensuring that, if other pupils are involved (e.g. in an allegation of bullying), there are no repercussions from other quarters.

### **Persistent correspondence**

Where senior staff determine that repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same or similar complaint which they consider having been previously resolved, this will be regarded by the School as vexatious and outside the scope of this procedure. This decision could be made before reaching any formal level of complaint.

For Stage 1 complaints, the School will in general share with relevant staff the substance of the complaint but not the name of the complainant.

### **Lines of Approach**



The relative importance of the complaint is the deciding factor in choice of approach.

Class Teachers/Form Tutors and/or Heads of Area will be the first point of contact. Areas are divided as follows:

- Head of Pre-Prep includes Early Years (Years N & R) and Lower School (Years 1 & 2)
- Head of Middle School (Years 3, 4 & 5)
- Head of Upper School (Years 6, 7 & 8)

Heads of Area will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received.

Certain parents will wish to go straight to the Head with their concerns, and this is respected. However, the Head will invariably be unable to respond until she has consulted staff who can help.

### **Who should you contact? Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

It is to be hoped that most complaints can be made and considered on an informal basis.

- For a minor day to day issue please contact the relevant teacher or Form Tutor or teacher.
- For a more serious subject-related academic concern, the Head of Department or Head of Year should be contacted.
- For a more serious general academic concern or pastoral matter, the relevant Head of Year, Head of Department or Deputy Head is the appropriate person to contact.
- For concerns about the curriculum, please contact the Head of Department or Head.
- For any other pastoral concerns, please contact the Deputy Head.
- In matters regarding finance, fees and non-academic services please contact the Bursar.
- In matters regarding wrap around care please contact the Head of Pre-Prep. We will do all we can to ensure that we respond to serious concerns and complaints in a professional manner, ensuring that during any process all of the parties concerned – be they parents, pupils or school staff – remain fully supported and communicated with openly and in a timely manner.

However, if you feel that an expression of concern has not been handled properly by a member of staff, please contact the Head. We keep a written record of every serious concern or complaint; this record will include the date on which the complaint was received and will be logged with the Head. We will endeavour to acknowledge a written notification by telephone, e-mail or letter within five working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the holidays. In the event that the relevant staff and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint by writing directly to the Head. A complaint about the Head should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

### **What to do if you remain dissatisfied? Stage 2 - Formal Resolution**

If you remain unhappy, please contact the Head in writing. Receipt will be acknowledged within 24 hours during term time and usually within five days during school holiday periods. The Head (or delegated person) will ask to meet you for an initial discussion of the problem. Either in the first instance or in due course full written details of the nature of the complaint, any relevant documents and full contact details should be sent by email or hard copy from the parents to the Head. It can be helpful were parents also to indicate what they envisage as the desired outcome.

The Head will conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. You will receive a written response to your complaint, possibly after a further meeting to discuss the possible outcome.

The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, upon the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Head will speak to and/or meet with the parents concerned to discuss the matter, normally within 10 term-time working days of receiving and



acknowledging the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations that may delay a resolution. The Head may ask a senior member of staff to act as investigator and/or may involve one or more of the Governors. Written records will be kept 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 the findings and decision in writing, within 28 term-time working days of the start of the stage 2 process. The Head will give reasons for the decision. If parents do not respond to the Head's request, then after a period of 3 months the case will be closed.

### **Panel Hearing – Stage 3**

If having discussed the matter with the Head, you still feel dissatisfied then please contact the Chair of Governors who will convene a panel of at least two Governors and one person independent of the management and running of the School to consider the complaint. No member of the panel may have had any direct involvement in the matters detailed in the complaint. You can write to the Chair of Governors in confidence c/o the Bursar who is Clerk to the Governors. The Clerk will acknowledge the request within 5 working days.

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.

At the Panel Hearing, the complainant(s) may be accompanied by one other person such as a relative or friend. Legal representation will only be permitted if the Chair considers it appropriate. If it is considered appropriate the Chair will inform the complainant(s) to that effect so that they may choose to be legally represented at the Panel Hearing if they so wish. Should they decide to be so represented they shall inform the Chair at least seven days before the date set for the Panel Hearing that that is their intention. If the complainant(s) choose to be legally represented the Chair will notify the other parties of that decision to enable them to have legal representation at the Panel Hearing should they so wish.

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 meeting or Hearing or as soon as reasonably practicable. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within seven days. The Panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, Governors and, where relevant, the person(s) about whom the complaint was made. The decision of the Panel will be final.

Guidance for parents and trustees can be found in the [DfE's Best Practice Guidance for School Complaints Procedures, 2020 \(updated Jan 2021\)](#).

Written records of Formal stage or Panel Hearings and their outcomes (including at what stage they were resolved) will be kept for at least 7 years (September 2020, the DfE as regulator advised that complaints which do not have safeguarding implications) so that patterns can be identified, reviewed and inform changes of practice. Where there is a safeguarding angle, retention of complaint 'records concerning allegations of abuse must be preserved for the term of the Independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.' These records will be scrutinised annually by the Head and Bursar as appropriate. The records will include action taken by the school as a result of these complaints.



Persistent correspondence – 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 findings and recommendations will be made available for inspection by the Head and Governors on the school premises. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Parents are always welcome to address their serious concerns on any matter to the Head.

**Notes:**

Regarding the Independent member of the Complaints Panel, the view of the DfE is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility, who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments. Some standing in the local community would add credibility.

Register of formal complaints: The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, in accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014: One complaint was registered under the formal procedure during the academic year 2024 – 2025.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy.

Reviewed by: Emma Neville, Spring 2026 Next Review: Summer 2027