

Complaints Policy and Procedure for Parents

Including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Introduction

Moreton Hall strives to support you and your child(ren) and prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. We welcome feedback and suggestions from parents and pupils to enable Moreton Hall to continue to improve the quality of care and educational services that it offers.

The School seriously considers complaints and concerns parents may raise and a complaint will always be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response. If parents do have a complaint, or a concern which may lead to a complaint, about any matter of the School's policies or administration, not involving a decision to permanently exclude or remove a pupil, they can expect it to be dealt with by the School in accordance with this Policy.

We wish to ensure that:

- parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- we respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- parents are reassured that we listen to and take complaints seriously; and
- we take action where appropriate.

Please see Appendices 1, 3 and 4 for further guidance on making a complaint and who to contact.

Background

As required by Part 7 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations (2014) ("the Regulations"), there is a complaints procedure ("the Policy") at Moreton Hall ("the School").

This Policy has been drawn up with due regard to Standard Eighteen of the Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards (2022).

All School policy documents are made available to members of staff, parents, pupils and the parents of prospective pupils and are published on the School website or can be requested from the Principal's PA. This document should therefore be read in conjunction with the following School policy documents:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Complaints procedure for pupils
- Pupil Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- EYFS Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy



Throughout this Policy, the reference to parent(s) also includes the formal carers or guardians of Moreton Hall pupils.

What constitutes a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. A complaint may be made if a parent thinks that the School has, for example:

- done something wrong;
- failed to do something it should have done; or
- acted unfairly.

A complaint may be made about the School as a whole, or any specific concern a parent may have about the School or a member of staff. Further guidance for parents is provided in the appendices at the end of this Policy.

Who does this Policy apply to?

This Policy applies to the parents of existing pupils and to the parents of past pupils if the complaint was raised whilst the pupil was still registered with the School. It does not apply to the parents of prospective pupils.

The School may disapply or amend this Policy as it relates to a complaint or a complainant where:

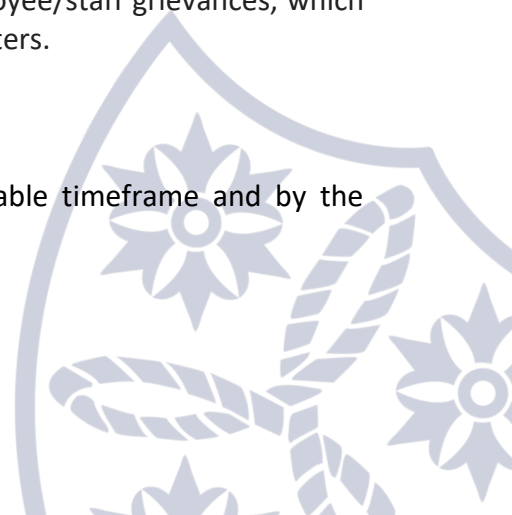
- a complaint relates to an incident or matter that took place (or came to light) more than three months before the complaint is made;
- a complaint is made anonymously;
- a complainant hinders the School's consideration of a complaint (or complaints generally) because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact or lack of contact with the School;
- a complaint is substantially the same as another complaint, which has been dealt with or is being dealt with pursuant to this Policy; or
- the School considers it necessary to deal with such complaint, complainant or those affected by such matters, fairly.

In such cases, the School will, where practicable, inform the complainant of such action and the basis of its decision.

This Policy does not apply to issues related to child protection or employee/staff grievances, which are dealt with by the School pursuant to its policies relating to such matters.

Dealing with complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously, sensitively, within a reasonable timeframe and by the appropriate person.



In this policy, 'days' mentioned in the context of timescales for responding to complaints refers to full school days in term time, excluding, therefore, holidays, half terms, weekends, public holidays and half-days. Where the word 'normally' is used, it is expected that the timescale would only be

altered by the school or the parents in exceptional circumstances, such as the illness of a parent or a key member of staff involved in the process. Should the matter progress to an appeal, the availability of the panel members may also be a constraint.

Process

It is in the interest of all to resolve a complaint as promptly as possible. The time needed to deal with a complaint will vary according to the nature of the complaint, the extent of investigations and actions needed to resolve it, as well as the availability of those individuals that are needed to resolve it. There are three stages to the complaints procedure:

Stage 1 – informal resolution dealt with by your child(ren)'s form teacher or Housemistress.

Stage 2 – formal resolution dealt with by the Principal or his appointed representative.

Stage 3 – formal resolution dealt with by the Chair of Directors who will convene a panel to hear the complaint once Stages 1 and 2 have been exhausted.

Please see Appendix 1 for a detailed explanation of the above three stages.

Please see Appendix 2 for the School's Policy with respect to unreasonable and serial complaints.

Recording of complaints

Parents making a complaint should be aware that they cannot be guaranteed confidentiality as members of staff receiving a complaint are expected to notify a senior member of staff prior to, wherever possible, taking action.

A written record of all complaints that reach Stage 2 and/or Stage 3 will be made and, where applicable, will contain the following information (see Appendix 5):

- date when the issue was raised;
- name of parent;
- name of pupil;
- nature of the complaint;
- brief statement of outcome including:
 - How it was dealt with
 - What decision was reached
 - What actions were taken;
- location of detailed file; and
- staff member handling the issue.

The Principal will always inform, and discuss with, the Chair of Directors in cases where the complaint has reached Stage 2 and/or Stage 3.



Action which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints will be handled confidentially within the School.

APPENDIX 1

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS MADE BY PARENTS

STAGE 1: Procedure for Informal Resolution

Most areas of concern can be resolved quickly and informally and all members of staff are encouraged to deal with a parental concern that lies within their area of responsibility. However, if parents have a complaint or cause for concern we would encourage them to:

- a) Contact their child's Housemistress or form teacher in the first instance by telephone, in person or by email. If the complaint is received out of term time, it will be deemed received on the next school day.
- b) In many cases, the matter will then be resolved straightaway to the parents' satisfaction.
- c) If the initial person contacted is unable to resolve the matter alone, they will consult the most appropriate member of the Senior Management (such as, the Head of Senior School, or the Head of Moreton Prep) and parents will be kept informed.
- d) The complaint will be investigated and the relevant department or member of staff against which the complaint has been made will be given the opportunity to respond.
- e) Once the complaint has been investigated, the outcome and any appropriate action plan will be explained to the parents and implemented within 7 days of the School receiving the complaint. This may include an apology, if one has been found to be appropriate. The action plan will be reviewed after an appropriate interval.
- f) Should the matter not be entirely resolved, or resolved with a satisfactory action plan in place within 7 working days¹ of receiving the complaint, or in the event that the Housemistress, or another member of staff who is dealing with the complaint, fails to reach a satisfactory resolution, then the parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.
- g) A complaint is deemed resolved at Stage 1 if it is resolved to the satisfaction of the parent, or if there is no further communication from the parent concerning the complaint for a period of 14 days without commencement of Stage 2 in relation to the complaint.
- h) If the complaint is against the Principal, parents should instead make their complaint direct to the Chair of Directors in writing.

STAGE 2: Procedure for Formal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved at Stage 1. However, if a complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, parents should put their complaint in writing to the Principal and make it clear that their complaint is now formal. On receipt of the written complaint the following procedure will be followed:

¹ When we use the term "working days" we mean Monday to Friday during term time. It may take longer to process complaints received during the last few weeks of term or during holidays due to the availability of staff.



- a) The Principal, or his appointed representative, will respond in writing within 7 working days to acknowledge the receipt of the complaint. If a formal complaint is made outside of term time, it will be deemed to have been received by the Principal on the next school day.
- b) The Principal will either investigate the issues raised or will delegate the investigations to another senior member of staff who has not been involved with the complaint. A written record will be kept of all meetings and discussions.
- c) Once the complaint has been investigated, the Principal will notify the parents of the outcome and any appropriate action plan within 14 working days of the School receiving the complaint. This may include an apology, if one has been found to be appropriate. The action plan will be implemented within the same timeframe and will be reviewed after an appropriate interval.
- d) Should the matter not be entirely resolved, or resolved with a satisfactory action plan in place within 14 working days of receiving the complaint, or in the event that the Principal fails to reach a satisfactory resolution, then the parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 3 of this procedure.
- e) A complaint is deemed resolved at Stage 2 if it is resolved to the satisfaction of the parent, or if there is no further communication from the parent concerning the complaint for a period of 14 working days without commencement of Stage 3 in relation to the complaint
- f) If the complaint is against the Principal, it will be dealt with by the Chair of Directors in the same manner as above.

STAGE 3: Procedure for Panel Hearings

- a) Once Stages 1 and 2 have been completed, if the parents believe that the complaint has not been resolved by the Principal, they will have the opportunity to move to Stage 3 and write directly to the Chair of Directors. If a complaint is referred to Stage 3 outside of term time, it will be deemed to have been received on the next school day.
- b) The Chair of Directors, or his appointed representative, will respond in writing within 7 working days to acknowledge the receipt of the complaint.
- c) The Chair of Directors will convene a panel of at least three individuals who are not directly involved with the complaint (one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the School). This will be done within 14 working days from the receipt of the written complaint.
- d) The panel hearing should take place within 21 working days of the School's receipt of notice requiring commencement of Stage 3 in relation to the complaint. The panel hearing should take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further.
- e) Parents are entitled to attend the panel hearing (and be accompanied by one other person). The School's arrangements for the panel hearing should be reasonable to facilitate the parents exercising the right of attendance. The allowance for parents to attend and be accompanied at a hearing does not entitle parents to insist on legal representation at a hearing. If a parent decides not to attend, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in their absence. A parent's absence does not remove the School's obligation to hold the hearing in conformity with this Policy.
- f) The panel's findings and recommendations will be reached and recorded in writing and the complainant and – where relevant - the person being complained about will be informed of these in writing within 7 working days of the hearing.

- g) A copy of the findings and recommendations will be made available for inspection at the School by the Principal and the Directors and the outcome will be listed in the School's complaints record.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

- a) Where a complaint relates to one or more of the Welfare Requirements OFSTED will be informed immediately. OFSTED will be sent a copy of the complaints record sheet which will inform them of the details of the complaint and action taken.
- b) All complaints will be dealt with efficiently, sensitively and with regards to confidentiality.
- c) If the complaint relates to a child protection issue then we would refer to the procedures outlined in our Safeguarding Children Policy.
- d) From time to time OFSTED receive complaints about providers, and they will normally refer the complaint to the provider to investigate in the first instance. In exceptional circumstances, for example where there are child protection allegations about a provider OFSTED will refer the complaint to the appropriate agency and will take appropriate action themselves about the continued registration of the provider.
- e) If a parent/carer or visitor to the setting wishes to make a complaint direct to OFSTED they can do so in writing to the address found at the end of this Policy:

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the following procedures will be followed (except where the complaint relates to one or more of the Welfare Requirements detailed in Appendix 6):

- a) Any complaint will be investigated in full by the EYFS Manager and/or Registered Person. They will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint with any staff member/s involved. Once sufficient information has been gathered the cause of action to be taken will be decided. Support may be sought from outside agencies. The Head of Moreton Prep must be informed of all complaints.
- b) Appropriate action will be taken to resolve the complaint and changes implemented as necessary.
- c) A meeting will be arranged with the parent to inform them of the outcome of their findings and the action taken within 28 days of the complaint been made.
- d) A record of the complaint will be recorded by the person who handled the complaint on a complaints record sheet which will be stored securely in the EYFS Managers Office, a copy of which will be given to the parent/person who made the complaint. All complaint records are available for parents to view, and it is therefore important that details do not identify individuals concerned.

Correspondence, statements and records are confidential except in so far as is required of the School under Section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008; where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails. A written record is kept of all complaints that reach Stage 2, whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or proceed to Stage 3, and the action taken by the School as a result of those complaints, as required by paragraph 7(33)(j) of the Independent Schools

Standards Regulations. All complaints at Stages 2 and 3 are kept on record for a period of three years.

EYFS: A copy of this Policy is available to EYFS parents in the entrance to Moreton Prep and First Steps Nursery. A copy of the complaints record sheet is also displayed with this Policy, which records the following details: source of complaint, which Welfare Requirement it relates to, full details of the complaint, how it was investigated, outcomes and action taken (see Appendix 5). Records will be kept as above.

APPENDIX 2

UNREASONABLE AND SERIAL COMPLAINTS

The School defines unreasonable and serial complainants as ‘those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contact with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s complaints’.

The School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and thoroughly and it would be highly unusual for the School to limit complaints or its contact with complainants. However, the School will not accept complaints that involve unacceptable, abusive or threatening behaviour.

Examples of unreasonable and serial complaints include situations in which the complainant:

- does not articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure;
- asks for the complaint to be dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on;
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- will not accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school’s complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;



- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with;
- uses threats to intimidate, violence, or abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowingly provides falsified information, or publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.



APPENDIX 3

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Frequently Asked Questions

How should I complain?

Please follow the procedure set out above.

I don't want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me

The School is here for you and your child(ren), and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Please contact a member of staff, as outlined in Stage 1 of the Policy.

I am not sure whether to complain or not

If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them. If in doubt, you should contact the School in accordance with the above procedure to discuss your concerns. This will hopefully help you to decide if you wish to make a formal complaint.

If I make a complaint will it have a negative impact on my child?

If you make a complaint, please be reassured that your child(ren) will not be penalised, nor will there be any adverse impact on the quality of care or education that they receive.

What will happen next?

If parents have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with the above Policy.





APPENDIX 4

Is there anyone I can talk to outside of Moreton Hall?

If you have a complaint or concern which you feel cannot be addressed directly with the School there are several agencies you may wish to contact:

The Initial Contact Team at the Shropshire Safeguarding Children's Board, Shropshire County Council: Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury SY2 6ND (**0345 6789021**).

E-mail: customer.service@shropshire.gov.uk

Main School and EYFS

ISI - Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House

First Floor,

9-12 Long Lane,

London.

EC1A 9HA

Tel: 020 7600 0100/0207 768842

www.isi.net

concerns@isi.net

Alternative EYFS

Ofsted Helpline for all queries:

0300 123 1231

Ofsted Complaints Information

Ofsted North Regional Centre

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester M1 2WD

and they will advise you how to proceed.

The Children's Commissioner can be contacted on **0207 783 8330** or Freephone number 0800 528 0731 or by email on www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk.

You can also contact the Department for Education [online](#) or on **0370 000 2288**.

If concerns relate to bullying or possible child abuse then in the first instance you can contact ISI on concerns@isi.net or **020 7710 9900** and they will advise. In addition to ISI and/or the Department for Education, parents can contact the child protection unit of the local authority social services department.

The pupil may contact Child Line on **0800 1111**.





APPENDIX 5

Record of Complaint

Date of complaint:			
A: Source of complaint			
Parent (in writing, including email)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent (in person)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ofsted (include complaint no. if known)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent (telephone call)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
B: Nature of complaint			
(please tick all requirements that the complaint relates to)			
Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Member(s) of Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Teaching Standards	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Academic Progress	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Extra-Curricular Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>		
EYFS	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Please give details of the complaint:			



C: How it was dealt with

Internal investigation
Investigation by Ofsted
Investigation by other agencies
(please state)

Please give details of any internal investigation or attach any outcome letter from Ofsted:

D: Actions and outcomes

Internal actions
Actions agreed with Ofsted
Changes to conditions of registration
Other action taken by Ofsted
No action
Actions imposed or agreed with other agencies

Please give details:

Has a copy of this record been shared with parents? Yes or No

Name of recorder:

Outcome notified to parent:
(within 28 days)
Date:

Position:

Date completed:

Name:

Signature:



APPENDIX 6

Welfare Requirements

For details of the EYFS Welfare Requirements please see Section 3 of the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage', which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>





APPENDIX 7

Annual Check

Policy:	Complaints Procedure for Parents
Applies to:	All students in both the Senior and Moreton Preparatory School
Author(s):	Principal
Approved by:	Duncan Murphy, Chair of Directors
Annual Review:	<i>I certify that I have reviewed this Policy, and verify that, to the best of my knowledge, it reflects current legislation and is in accordance with the wishes of the Directors and Principal.</i>
Reviewer to enter initials and appropriate date:	SD (December 2023) To be reviewed August 2023

