

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Opening Statement

Forest Prep School is dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its pupils; our policies and practices encompass the needs of all our children from Early Years to Year 6 across all aspects of school life including out of school provision. It is the duty of all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to play an active role in ensuring that each child's needs are met. Effective induction practices for all ITT, college and school students, volunteers and visitors aims to promote a consistent approach in meeting the needs of the whole school community.

Introduction

Forest Prep School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes, seriously, complaints and concerns they may raise. This document, through answering the thoughts you may have, will show you how to use our complaints system.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response.

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 realise that we listen and take complaints seriously
- we take action where appropriate

“How should I complain?”

Any concerns, however minor, about your child should be communicated to a member of staff. Any member of staff will be happy to help, though in the majority of cases it may be best to start with your child's Class Teacher as he/she is most likely to be the person most closely concerned with the issue. For concerns regarding, for example, Sport/P.E. and Music, then your child's Class Teacher may still be the person to speak with first, as he/she may be the person most favourably positioned to provide an overall view of the problem. Please try to do this without delay through speaking with your child's Class Teacher at the start or end of the school day. If this is not possible, write a letter (do not entrust it to your child to deliver this) or telephone. Please try to be as clear as possible about what is troubling you. We view it as being imperative that you foster positive dialogue with your child's Class Teacher for this will assist their care and happiness. The Class Teachers are charged with the pastoral care of your child and are optimally placed to be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer, for reasons such as confidentiality, to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example, the Deputy Head or Headmaster. In the case of the Headmaster, this should be done through making an appointment to see the Headmaster by

contacting the school's Secretary. If you are able, try to give the Secretary some indication of the problem so that the Headmaster is able to research the issue prior to speaking with you.

Where the child is in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the record of complaint is kept for a minimum of three years. Complaints can also be made in writing to Ofsted and/or ISI should parent(s) so wish.

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

The school is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Contact a member of staff, as described above.

“I am not sure whether to complain or not.”

If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to complain. If in doubt, you should contact the school as we are here to help.

“What will happen next?”

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction so no further action will be necessary.

If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing to the Headmaster, we will contact you, as soon as is practically possible, so responding to your concerns and explaining how we propose to proceed. All complaints will be dealt with within five working days. Where complaints have been made in writing to the school Directors, all complaints will be dealt with within fourteen days in order for a full investigation to be carried out.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with the Deputy Head and/or Headmaster so that it can be considered further before responding. If a detailed investigation of the issue is needed you will be contacted and either invited in for a discussion or a letter/report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. Any written feedback will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it and any action taken or proposed. A copy of all findings will be duplicated and forwarded to the complainant, Headmaster, staff concerned and Directors.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Headmaster and those directly involved. The Directors may also need to be informed. It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or

it became necessary to refer matters to the police. You would be fully informed unless we had to contact CDAT.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints might not be pursued.

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

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

If you are not satisfied, the teacher/Deputy Head will offer to refer the matter to the Headmaster. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to him. The Headmaster will call for a full report from the teacher/Deputy Head, and examine matters thoroughly before responding to the complainant within five working days. This may result in a positive solution, but if it does not the complainant may ask for a meeting which will be convened not later than five working days following the complainant's request. You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate. In all cases the Directors will be informed.

If you are not satisfied with the result at this stage, then you are invited to put your complaint in writing to the Directors who will respond within ten working days.

Where parents are still not satisfied with the response to the complaint, provision will be made for a hearing before an appointed panel. The panel will consist of three persons, one of whom is likely to be an impartial member of the public. The decision, all findings and recommendations will be forwarded to appropriate bodies as well as the complainant within two working days. A written record will be kept of proceedings at all stages of the proceedings. All information and communication is deemed to be confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection of Section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them. Parents may be accompanied at the panel hearing if they so wish.

No formal complaints were received during the last academic year.

The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children in our care. Parents of children under the age of three who, after following the complaints procedure, are still not satisfied, have the right to contact Ofsted on 08456404040 or ISA.