

# **TALBOT HEATH SCHOOL**

## **POLICY - COMPLAINTS – also applies to Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Rationale and Purposes**

Our prospectus and home-school agreement state that Talbot Heath “aims to deliver a full and balanced curriculum to high academic standards and create a community in which caring values are upheld”. The complaints procedure follows.

### **Broad Guidelines**

The prospectus, policies, school handbook and home-school agreement expand upon the ways in which we aim to honour this commitment as well as explaining the involvement we expect from parents and pupils alike.

Problems are less likely to arise if parents and pupils feel the staff and Headmistress are open to their concerns. We believe that constructive suggestions from parents and pupils can be used as the basis for positive dialogue which develops mutual understanding. All concerns are treated seriously and dealt with promptly

#### **1 Individual Staff Responsibility**

- To listen to pupil concerns (note these on file) and explore ways of dealing with these
- To liaise with colleagues, Deputy Head or Head/Deputy Head or Head of Junior School as appropriate
- To listen to parental concerns (note these on file)
- Pupils and parents must be kept informed of any actions taken

#### **2 Form Teacher/Tutor Responsibility**

- To tell Headmistress/Head of Junior School if pupil is giving cause for concern
- To listen to pupil concerns (note these on file) and explore ways of dealing with these
- To liaise with colleagues Deputy Head or Head/ Deputy Head or Head of Junior School as appropriate
- To listen to parental concerns (note these on file)
- Pupils and parents must be kept informed if any actions taken

#### **3 Head of Faculty/Subject/Key Stage Co-ordinator Responsibility**

- To listen to pupil concerns (note these on file) and explore ways of dealing with these
- To pass on to Head of Faculty or Senior Leadership Team as appropriate
- To inform Headmistress of parent/pupil concern relating to a member of staff - that member of staff will be informed of nature of concern

#### **4 Pupil Responsibility**

- To tell a teacher of any matter making them unhappy or giving cause for concern
- To work with teachers/parents to resolve matters of concern

#### **5 Parental Responsibility**

- To contact school about any matter of concern
- To work with school in resolving the concerns positively

### **Conclusion**

By following the above it is hoped that matters giving concern to staff or pupils and their parents can be speedily and satisfactorily resolved.

Updated

Head Responsible – Reviewed December 10

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. If parents do, however, have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- **It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.**
- **If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their daughter's Form teacher or an individual subject teacher. In most cases, the matter should be resolved by this means. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head/Head of Junior School.**
- **Complaints made directly to the Head/Head of Junior School will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless she deems it more appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.**
- Dated, written record of all concerns and complaints will be made. Should the matter not be resolved within an agreed period of time, normally seven days, or in the event of the teacher and parent failing to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.

### Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head/Head of Junior School who will decide the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head/Head of Junior School will meet the parents concerned, normally within 7 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head/Head of Junior School to carry out further investigations.
- Records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept.
- Once the Head/Head of Junior School 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 this decision in writing. The Head/Head of Junior School will also give reasons for the decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### 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 Chairman of Governors who has been appointed by the Board of 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 shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each Panel member

shall be appointed by the Chairman on behalf of the Board of Governors. The Panel will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 20 working days.

- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require further particulars of the complaint or any related matter to be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than seven 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 would not normally be considered.
- If possible, the Panel will make recommendations for the resolution of the parents' complaint to the Governing Body, who will then come to a decision about the complaint.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts considered relevant, the Panel will make recommendations, which it shall complete within 14 days of the Hearing. The Chairman of the Governors will write to the parents informing them of the decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Governing Body will be final.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Parents can also contact OFSTED should the situation not be able to be resolved -  
Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA  
Tel no 0300 123 4234

#### Appendix: Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel

The DfES has supplied the following guidance in a letter to the ISC General Secretary:

Whilst we do not intend to be prescriptive our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members had some standing in the local community. In this connection serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background – perhaps retired members of the Police Force – might be considered suitable by schools. Schools will have their own views and may well have other suitable suggestions to make.

You asked if it would be acceptable to appoint former governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member. The regulations do not preclude this since the stipulation is that the person must be independent of the management and running of the school. Clearly former governors or staff would not have any such involvement. However, schools should bear in mind that they may be subject to criticism that such people would remain too close to the school and would not be truly independent.