



This policy is available on the school website: www.herries.org.uk

This Policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

September 2024 Rob Grosse, Headteacher and Emma Dutton, Chair of Governors

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Approved and ratified by the Governors after reviewing the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged (September 2024).

This policy also provides for those children in the EYFS.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Acceptable User Policy for Staff
- Staff Induction Policy

Herries Preparatory School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents (meaning those parents who have signed an Acceptance Form) do have a complaint they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

All complaints will be handled in a confidential manner and details shared appropriately with members of staff on a need to know basis.

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 child's class teacher or form tutor. In many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parent's satisfaction.

If the class teacher or form tutor cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult a member of the senior leadership team (SLT).

- Complaints made directly to the SLT will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher, unless the member of the SLT deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The form teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 working

days or in the event that the form teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.

- If, however, the complaint is against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will hear the complaint and respond accordingly.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, on the appropriate course of action to take.

- The Headteacher will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 working 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 Headteacher to carry out further investigations.

- The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

- Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headteacher will also give reasons for his/her decision.

- If the complaint is against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Headteacher and for all the relevant documents. The Chair may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to and meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair will give reasons for his/her decision.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

If parents are not satisfied with the decision they should inform the Headteacher in writing within 5 working days. In this case the Headteacher will inform the Chair of Governors who will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

The complaints panel is convened at the request of a complainant to review the school's decision to a complaint at stage 2. If the complaint has not been settled at the formal stage and the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome or the way it was dealt with, they can invoke Stage 3 which is the Complaints Panel.

The purpose of the Complaints Panel, in each case, is to review (not to re-investigate) the original complaint and the school's response to it, including its investigation and the outcome. The Review Panel's role is not to undertake a re-investigation of the case, nor to extend its reference beyond the matter relevant to the particular complaint

The role of the stage 3 Complaints Panel is to review the actions and supporting evidence of the stage 2 investigation. For the avoidance of doubt, the Complaints Panel will not hear any new complaints as part of the process.

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to The Chair of Governors, who will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel. In his/her absence or where there is a conflict of interest, the Chair will appoint an alternative Governor.
- The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall not be involved with the management and running of the school. The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working days.
- The Panel members shall be provided with copies of all documents relating to the complaint which have been prepared or considered in Stages 1 and 2 of the complaint process. If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all members of the panel not later than four days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation is not appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- After due consideration of all relevant facts, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within 10 working days of the decision (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent in writing either by email or letter to the parents, the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and, where appropriate, the person complained of. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the school's premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.

The Remit of the Complaints Appeal Panel

The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part

- (if the complaint is upheld in whole or in part) decide on the 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 reoccur.

Timeframe for dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible; the school's target is to resolve the first two stages of any procedure within a period of 20 working days. Stage 3, The Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days. Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, 'working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time.

The complainant must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. Complaints made outside of this timeframe will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. Complaints which are received outside of term time will be considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period. Complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible using time limits given in this procedure. However, where further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set.

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all formal complaints stating whether they are resolved at the informal stage, the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). This record (which will be available for inspection on the School premises) will be kept for a minimum of three years and will include what action was taken by the school as a result of these complaints. At the school's discretion, additional records will be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member/s of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except when the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 Act requests access to them.

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days.

Herries Preparatory School will provide ISI, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The records of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.

Parents of children in the EYFS setting may additionally complain directly to inspectors if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

ISI - 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net

Academic year	Number of formal complaints
2023/24	1
2022/23	2
2021/22	0
2020/21	1 heard by panel
2019/20	0
2018/19	1



FORMAL COMPLAINT RECORD

Date when issue was raised	
Name of parent	
Name of pupil	
Description of the issue	

Resolved	Date	Initials of Staff and Governors involved	Date records to be destroyed in 3 years
Stage 1 Informal			
Stage 2 Formal			
Stage 3 Panel hearing			

Action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND INFORMATION

Records of all correspondence, emails, phone call records, investigations, witness statements and meeting notes to be attached



INFORMAL COMPLAINT RECORD

Date of informal complaint	
Name of person making complaint	
Name of child	
Nature and context of complaint	
Date resolved	
Action taken/support given by the school	
Outcome	
Ongoing plan	
Review information	

ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND INFORMATION

Records of all correspondence, emails, phone call records, investigations, witness statements and meeting notes to be attached