FARRINGTONS
SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Updated – September 2025
Revised by: Bursary Department - SAE
Review Date: September 2026

Complaints Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 Farringtons School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have concerns or complaints, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this Policy.

1.2 Farringtons School makes its complaints policy available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website. Parents can also request a hard copy from the School Office. Farringtons School will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.

1.3 In accordance with Paragraph 33 Part 7 of the Education Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSR) (England) Regulations 2014. Farringtons School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of the complaints policy.

1.4 In accordance with Paragraph 33 Part 7 of the Education Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSR) (England) Regulations 2014 Farringtons School will ensure that a written record will be kept of all complaints that are made, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing; and action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

1.5 Farringtons School will keep correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under point 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

1.6 Details of complaints are recorded centrally by the Head's PA.

1.7 The number of complaints recorded under the formal procedure during the preceding school year is available to parents of pupils (and prospective pupils) on request through the Head's PA.

2 What Constitutes a Complaint?

2.1 Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school will be considered a complaint.

2.2 Paragraph 33 Part 7 of the Education Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSR) (England) Regulations 2014 notes that the standard does not distinguish between a 'concern' and 'complaint'. For the purpose of this Policy, Farringtons School notes that the word complaint means either a concern or complaint.

2.3 Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you raise in good faith.

2.4 Complaints can only be raised by parents or guardians of existing pupils (or existing pupils at the time of the complaint).

2.5 A formal complaint must be raised within three months of the concern happening.

3 Timeframe for dealing with Complaints

3.1 All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received 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 complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 working days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

3.2 Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 working days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time, and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

4 Recording Complaints

4.1 Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all complaints (see section 1.3 – 1.5). The recording of the complaint will be made using the School's central complaints register.

4.2 At the School's discretion additional records may 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 of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

4.3 Farringtons School will keep all correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

4.4 Complaints relating to Boarding will be indicated within the Complaints record keeping.

5 Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

5.1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

5.2 If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's Form Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him / her to consult the pupil's appropriate Head of Year.

5.3 Complaints made directly to a Head of Year, will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher unless the Head of Department / the Assistant Head / the Head deems it appropriate for the Head of Year to deal with the matter personally.

5.4 The Form Teacher / Head of Department will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received if the outcome of complaint is likely to be escalated to stage 2. Should the matter not be resolved within 14 days or in the event that the Form Teacher / Head of Department 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.

5.5 If, however, the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors.

6 Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

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

6.2 In most cases, the Head will meet / speak to the parents concerned, normally within 14 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

6.3 It may be necessary for the Head (or someone nominated by him) to carry out further investigations.

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

6.5 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 this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his decision.

6.6 If the complaint is against the Head, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Head 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 or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair will give reasons for the decision.

6.7 All correspondence produced by the Chair of Governors, that is related to the complaint will be stored by the Clerk to the Governors.

6.8 If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure. Parents have two weeks, following receipt of the decision, to escalate to Stage 3.

7 Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

7.1 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

7.2 The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of 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. The Clerk to the Governors on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working days.

7.3 The DfE has given the following guidance on the identity of an independent panel member.

"Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered."

7.4 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 parties normally not later than seven days prior to the hearing.

7.5 The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

7.6 Panel hearings may not be recorded.

7.7 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.

7.8 After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations.

7.9 The Panel will write to the parents (complainant) and, where relevant, the person complained about informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 14 working days of the hearing.

7.10 The decision of the Panel will be final.

7.11 A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations will (if any) be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about, as well as the Chairman of Governors and the Head.

7.12 The findings and recommendations will be stored confidentially within the central register of complaints.

8 Complaints regarding the welfare of boarders

8.1 In accordance with Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, this standard is intended as a complaints policy for all parents and guardians.

8.2 The Schools complaints policy therefore applies equally to boarding and day parents. A copy of which can be found on the school website or a copy can be requested from the school office.

8.3 Day and Boarding parents can contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate on 0207 600 0100, or the Bromley Safeguarding Officer on 020 8461 7309 regarding any complaint concerning a boarder's welfare.

8.4 Boarders should raise concerns or complaints with the Head of Boarding in the first instance. If the concern relates to the Head of Boarding, boarders should raise their concerns with the Head or another member of the Boarding community.

9 Written complaints relating to the requirements under the statutory framework for EYFS

9.1 Additional requirements apply for EYFS settings beyond those which apply to the main school. 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. The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

9.2 Farringtons School provides contact information for Ofsted and ISI, parents who believe the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements should use the following contact numbers:

Ofsted – telephone 0300 123 4666

ISI – telephone 0207 600 0100

Number of complaints registered under the Formal Procedure in the 2024/25 Academic Year: 10