

THE ROCHE SCHOOL
Complaints Policy and Procedure for Parents

This policy which applies to the whole school is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.

Information Sharing Category	Public Domain
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Responsible Area	Jonny Gilbert

Introduction

The Roche School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint or wish to appeal against a decision, they can expect to have it treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

This policy is made available via the School website, and to all parents (current and prospective) in the School Office. It is provided to all members of the Advisory Board and provided to all staff in the Staff Handbook. It is also kept in the Library. This policy applies to all parents of pupils at the school, including the EYFS.

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 son/daughter's Class Teacher initially. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Deputy Head.
- The Class Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. The Class Teacher must make the written record in the Individual Pupil Record File. It is hoped that the matter will be resolved at this stage. However, should the matter not be resolved within 7 days (or as soon as reasonably practicable but normally within 14 working days during school holidays), or in the event that the Class Teacher/Deputy Head 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.

The Roche School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all children fulfil their potential

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution – Preliminary Stage:

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. Parents should give details of their complaint, such as dates and times of events and any relevant documents so that the complaint can be properly investigated. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. Where the complaint concerns the Head, the complaint will be directed to the Advisory Board.
- In most cases, the Head will meet the parents concerned, normally within 7 working days, to discuss the matter (or as soon as is reasonably practicable but normally within 14 working days during the school holidays). If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- If may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, as 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 (together with reasons) in writing as soon as reasonably practicable but normally within 20 working days of receipt of the written complaint. Only in exceptional circumstances or with complex cases will this take longer and parents will be informed of the likely timeframe for a response.
- If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure within 30 working days of the Head's decision.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing:

- If the parent seeks to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they must write to the Secretary of the Advisory Board, who will invoke a meeting of the Advisory Board's Complaints Panel. Parents should give full details of the complaint and enclose all relevant supporting documents.

- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration.
- The Chairman of the Advisory Board will appoint at least 3 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 Secretary to the Advisory Board, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as possible and normally within 7 working days (or as soon as reasonably practicable but normally within 14 working days during school holidays) of receipt of the parents' request for a panel hearing.
- 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 not later than three working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- A written record of the meeting will be taken by the Secretary to the Advisory Board and this will form the minutes of the meeting which shall be shared with the parents.
- If possible the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint or appeal without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out and by whom.
- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision based on the balance of probabilities as to whether or not the complaint is substantiated (in whole or in part). If the complaint is not substantiated, the Panel will uphold the complaint (in whole or in part) and may make recommendations if they deem it appropriate. The decision of the Panel will be final.
- The Panel will, within 5 working days of the Hearing, write and/or send electronic mail to all participants informing them of the decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the Advisory Board and where relevant, the person complained of. The Panel's findings and recommendations will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Head.

Record Keeping

- The School keeps a written record of all complaints or appeals for 3 years, and of whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceeded to a Panel Hearing. The School keeps written records of action taken as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).
- Parents can be assured that complaints are to be kept confidential and subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 except where the Secretary of State or body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them. The record of complaints relating to the EYFS must be made available to OFSTED on request.

Mediation

- At any stage of the process it may be helpful to consider mediation, or a facilitated discussion by an experienced mediator, as a way to address any particularly difficult or sensitive issues as constructively as possible.

Timescales

- The Advisory Board endeavours to solve a complaint or hear an appeal within a reasonable amount of time depending on the complexity of the complaint and any further investigations warranted.
- In the case of a complaint brought about by an EYFS parent, the School undertakes to complete its investigations and reach a solution within 28 working days of the formal meeting at Stage 2 unless the matter is found to be very complex. In that instance, the matter can take up to a further 7 working days. This will be monitored by the Headteacher.
- In the event of a complaint being received during a School holiday period, it will be dealt with as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within the timescales set out throughout this Policy. Where there are delays in collecting information (for example, caused by staff absence), parents will be informed of the reasons why and a likely time frame for a response.

ISI & Ofsted

- If parents are dissatisfied with the procedure at any point of the investigation or feel that intervention at a higher level is appropriate, parents may lodge a complaint with Ofsted regarding the EYFS (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-us> - enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk, Telephone: 0300 1234 234) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate at Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA, Telephone: 020 7600 0100 or via their website: www.isi.net/contact
- Parents may contact the Deputy Head, Jonny Gilbert if they wish to know the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.
- For the year 2023-24 there were two Stage 2 complaints and no Stage 3 complaints at the school.