



School Policies

Complaints & Compliments

Mission Statement

Horton Education and Care supports children, young people and adults through their difficulties, fosters their ability to manage their own behaviour, and develops their knowledge, skills and independence, enabling them to live as full and rich a life as possible.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is important that pupils, staff, families and others involved are aware of how to complain. All complaints will be dealt with seriously.

Complaints can arise through simple misunderstanding or genuine dissatisfaction and can be distinct from an expression of concern. Usually, discussing the matter determines its cause and a solution can generally be found. If you are unhappy in any way at all, please tell us immediately.

Complaints often provide an opportunity to do something better in the future and as such, form part of our policy to engender a culture of continuous improvement. Therefore, we operate a “no blame” policy so that any complaint allows full, thorough and open investigation because persons involved are not “threatened” by the outcome. Monitoring of the effectiveness of the procedure will also ensure that valuable lessons can be learned from experience and the procedures improved over time.

We hope that the adoption of a clear procedure will help to ensure that if complaints arise they will be resolved efficiently and effectively and as close to the source of the misunderstanding as possible. In this way the complainant will feel assured from the outset of the process that the matter is being dealt with fairly. In this way the School anticipate that an unnecessary escalation of the problem can be avoided.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific area or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent or pupil believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

Complainants can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014), the 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 an independent inspectorate, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal complaints procedure during the preceding School year. This information is made available to parents on request from the School Office.

Representations may not always be complaints; they might also be positive remarks or ideas that require a response from the School. Enquiries or comments about the availability, delivery or nature of a service which are not criticisms are likely to constitute representations, for example, young people should be able to put forward ideas or proposals about their education or the School, without having this framed as a complaint.

2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

Simplicity:	Simple, well publicised stages.
Access:	Complainants knowing exactly where, how and to whom they should complain.
Speed and clarity:	Complaints being dealt with promptly, effectively and professionally within the stated time limits and at the earliest stage possible.
Action:	Action being agreed and reviewed, with complainants kept informed of progress throughout each stage of the procedure.
Objectivity:	Beyond the first informal stage of investigation of a complaint against an individual, the subject of the complaint will not deal with it but instead refer it to his or her manager or the Head where appropriate.
Development:	Opportunities for the organisation to review practice and consider changes to the procedures.

3.0 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The School complaints policy and procedure will apply to complaints made by parents. Our complaints procedure has three stages:

The Three-stage Complaints 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 child's class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway 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 Head
- Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher unless the Head deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally
- The class 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 days or in the event that the class 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 Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Directors

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 Head
- Although all formal complaints must be made in writing, this does not mean that the formal stage is automatically triggered whenever a concern is expressed in writing, for example by email
- The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take
- In most cases, the Head 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 to carry out further investigations
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint and will file them electronically in a Complaints folder
- 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 the decision.
- If the complaint is against the Head, the Directors will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Directors 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 Directors are 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 Directors will give reasons for the decision
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure
- The Head will record whether the complaint was resolved at the Formal Resolution stage or whether it proceeded to Stage 3 of this procedure

Stage 3: Independent Panel Hearing 3

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the convenor who has been appointed by the Directors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three independent persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. DfE guidance on the identity of the independent panel member is set out in Appendix 1. The convenor, 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 days
- 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

- 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
- 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 facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within seven days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about and will be made available for inspection on the School premises by the Directors and the Head

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing and the action taken by the School as a result of these complaints regardless of whether they are upheld. 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 (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 to the extent required by paragraph 33(k) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations (2016).

The School will provide ISI/Ofsted, 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 record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years (subject to the supervening requirements of the Goddard Enquiry set out in Appendix 2).

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Schools must make available details of how to contact Ofsted and/or ISI:

- Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 1234 234 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net

4.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

We will treat your complaint in confidence and only pass details to staff and others who need to know in order to investigate it.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed however, where a child is considered to be at risk and child protection procedures apply. In these circumstances, Horton House School may have to share the information with other agencies.

5.0 COMPLIMENTS

It is always encouraging when someone feels motivated enough to compliment us or a member of staff for something they feel they have done well. Naturally, we want to ensure others know about compliments because they too feel encouraged and this filters through the organisation. We are happy to receive any compliment in whatever manner seen fit, but if possible the Head should know of the compliment. This helps us ensure that others may be encouraged too. The Head keeps a file of any compliments received and this is available to parents on request.

End of Policy

Audit Trail

Version	Change	By Whom	Date	Review Date
1.0	Updated Policy, new format	R H Parker	August 2014	
1.1	New Policy for School	Janjer Ltd	June 2015	
1.2	Updated Policy	Principal Plus(SJH)	August 2016	
1.3	Policy Reviewed	Board of Directors/Executive Manager	September 2017	
1.4	Review of Policy and Accuracy Check	Head Teacher and School Secretary	July 2018	July 2021