



Parental Complaints Procedure

“Twickenham Preparatory School seeks to create a safe, caring and happy Christian environment in which all pupils are valued and can thrive personally, socially and academically.”

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1. Introduction

Twickenham Preparatory 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, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this procedure.

The School makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils including prospective pupils, on the school's website and in the school office during the school day. The School will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it, are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Twickenham Preparatory 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 procedure during the preceding school year.

2. What Constitutes a Complaint?

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 department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

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 (or your child) raises in good faith.

3. 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 or concern about an educational issue (i.e. relating to the classroom, the curriculum, or provision for learning difficulties and disabilities/special education needs) or a pastoral issue (i.e. relating to matters outside the classroom) they should initially contact their son/daughter's Form Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction.
- If the Form Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary to consult the relevant Head of Department, Deputy Head or the Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head or Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor unless the Deputy Head or Headmaster deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The staff concerned will make a written record of every complaint; this record will include the date on which the complaint was received. Should the matter not be resolved within a reasonable period (one not normally exceeding 5 working days) or in the event that the relevant staff and the parents 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 Headmaster, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors.

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 Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, upon the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will speak to and/or meet with the parents concerned to discuss the matter, within 5 working days of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations that may delay a resolution. The Headmaster may ask a member of the Senior Leadership Team to act as investigator.
- Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster 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 (within 28 working days of the formal

complaint) in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.

- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Headmaster 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 his/her 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 Chair of Governors who is responsible to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. Requests will normally only be considered if parents have completed Stages 1 to 2 and make their request in writing to the Chair of Governors within 7 working days of receiving the Stage 2 decision.
- The Panel will not consider any new area of complaint which has not been raised previously as part of the Complaints Procedure.
- The Chair of Governors will acknowledge the parents' request in writing within 3 working days and will call a Panel Hearing. A Panel Hearing will be called as soon as reasonably practicable, normally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. The Panel will not normally sit during school holidays, unless the complaint is connected to EYFS.
- 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 the day to day running of the School.
- 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 five working days prior to the hearing.
- The parent/s may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person, this may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate but if a parent wishes to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, acting in their professional capacity, the School must be notified at least five working days before the hearing.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. If the Panel decides that further investigation is necessary, the hearing may be adjourned.
- 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 reach a decision.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 7 working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). A copy of the Panel's findings and

recommendations (if any) will be sent in writing to the parents, and where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Headmaster and Chair of Governors.

- The decision of the Panel will be final.

4. Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 3 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. EYFS complaints are always dealt with according to the time-frames stated, irrespective of school 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 33 working days. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 17 working days.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, 'working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time.

5. Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing (Stage 3) and any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is 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)

6. Pupil Complaints

For information regarding the management of complaints from pupils:

See Appendix 1

7. Confidentiality and Records

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

8. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Twickenham Preparatory 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 five years.

Parents of pupils in Reception classes may address their complaints directly to Ofsted and/or ISI if they believe the School is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

OfSTED:
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>
<https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-form>

ISI:
Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

Telephone 020 7600 0100
Web: www.isi.net
Email: info@isi.net

Appendix 1

Pupils' Complaints

The principles which apply to parental complaints should also be applied to complaints and concerns from pupils.

There are, however, differences in approach. One important difference from the handling of parental complaints is that pupils should be able to raise concerns with any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable, whether it be the form teacher, a member of the support staff, the Head of House or the Deputy Head.

In more complex situations, once the matter is resolved, the outcome should be discussed with the pupil by a member of staff. To make sure that is fully understood, a written record may be shared.

The school has a Pupil Council at which pupil representatives can raise complaints. At Council meetings issues can be aired and discussed with members of staff. A suggestion box is readily available for pupils before such meetings so that they can raise areas of concern.

Complaints which appear trivial still need to be handled seriously. Young people may test the complaints procedures on relatively minor issues before finding the confidence to raise something painful, such as bullying.

If the issue is a painful one, or if exploration of it is taking time, a pupil may need support from another pupil or from an adult.

Complaints, and ways of dealing with them, also need to be explained to pupils. Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHEE) programmes can be of use not only in teaching pupils how they may support and act as mentors to others, but also in encouraging them to understand that their views matter.