

## MICKLEFIELD SCHOOL



### POLICY FOR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

Micklefield 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 dealt with courteously in accordance with this procedure, which is available to the parents of pupils and prospective pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage and prospective pupils at the school, on the school's web site, at the school and on request.

#### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son or daughter'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 or her to consult with the Head of the Upper or Lower School or the Headmistress.
- Complaints made directly to the Head of the Upper or Lower School or to the Headmistress will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher unless the Head of the Upper or Lower School or the Headmistress deem it appropriate for him or her to deal with the matter personally. In this event the 'line manager' will attempt to resolve the matter in five days or as soon as is practicable.
- The Form Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should they not be resolved within five days, or in the event that the Form Teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

#### **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 Headmistress. The Headmistress will then decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmistress will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 48 hours of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.

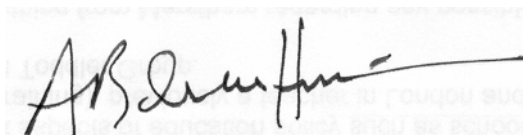
- It may be necessary for the Headmistress to carry out further investigations. These will be completed in seven days or as soon as is practicable.
- The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmistress is satisfied that, so far as is practicable all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents informed of this decision in writing. The Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.
- The written decision will be issued within fourteen days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the headmistress will write to the parents within the fourteen day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why she is unable to issue her decision and informing the parents when she will do so, which will be within twenty-eight days of receipt of the complaint in any event.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents seek to involve Stage 3 of this procedure, they are to write to the headmistress informing her of their decision to do so within 28 days, whereupon the matter will be referred to a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Chairman of Governors.
- The panel will consist of at least three persons who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One of these shall be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The complaint will be acknowledged on behalf of the panel and a hearing scheduled to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.
- If the convenor of the panel and/or the panel members deem it necessary, they may require (in writing) that further particulars of the complaint or any other related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five days before the hearing. Any such further particulars received within five days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it may not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.
- The parents 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.
- If possible, the panel will resolve the parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However should the panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required, the panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded. The panel will reconvene and,

after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, will reach a decision and may make recommendations. This procedure will be completed within fourteen days of the first hearing wherever possible but within twenty-eight days in any event unless otherwise agreed with the parents. The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision together with the reasons. The decision of the panel will be final.

- The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the Headmistress, Chairman of Governors and, where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual.
- Provision will be made for a written record to be kept of all complaints, for at least 3 years, and of whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.
- For parents of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage if the matter is not resolved they may make a formal complaint to the Independent Schools Inspectorate, Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA and/or to Ofsted.
- Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6 (2) j of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003; by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families; or where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.
- In the event of there being a complaint against the Headmistress the Chairman of Governors can be contacted through the school office. It would be hoped that matters could be resolved amicably before this stage was reached and all reasonable steps taken to come to a mutually satisfactory conclusion.



March 2009

**Person Responsible for the Complaints Procedure Policy: The Headmistress**

**Date of next Review of Policy: March 2010**