



**BILTON GRANGE**

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

## **Complaints Procedure**

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September 2021

## **Introduction**

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (“ISI”) states that schools must have a published (made available) complaints policy with a 3-stage process. This policy outlines the manner in which complaints are handled by Bilton Grange Prep School.

Bilton Grange has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents or pupils do have a complaint, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they can expect it to be treated by Bilton Grange in accordance with this policy. Complaints may start with lesser “informal concerns” that a parent may raise and often these will be dealt with swiftly as part of ‘stage 1’ before they get to ‘complaint’ status. If they cannot be resolved informally, the concern will be dealt with as a complaint under stages 2 and, if need be, 3.

This policy shows the number of formal complaints the school received during the preceding academic year. Pupils will not be penalised if they or their parents raise a concern or make a complaint in good faith; it is important to note however that complaints cannot be made anonymously as this makes it impossible to investigate and communicate regarding the concerns expressed.

## **Acknowledgement of Complaint**

All complaints received will be acknowledged within two term-time working days. We will always endeavour to respond substantively in as short a timeframe as possible; however, it often takes some time to investigate fully and collate the necessary evidence. We will always keep parents informed of our progress.

## **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

It is hoped that all concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

- If parents or a pupil have a complaint, they should normally contact the pupil’s Form Tutor or Assistant Head Boarding. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway. If the Form Tutor or Houseparent cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Head of Pre-Prep, the Head of Phase, the Assistant Head Pastoral or Academic, the Deputy Headmaster or the Headmaster.
- Concerns raised directly with the Deputy Headmaster or the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor, Head of Phase or Assistant Head Boarding unless the Deputy Headmaster or the Headmaster deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally. Any concerns relating to the Headmaster must be raised with the Chairman of Governors, who can be contacted via the HR Manager.
- The individual dealing with any concerns will make a written record of them, including the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 days, or in the event that the Form Teacher/Assistant Head Boarding and the parent or pupil fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents or pupils will be advised to proceed with their concern in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

## **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- If the concern cannot be resolved informally, then the parents or pupil should register a complaint by putting their concern in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet the parents or pupils 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 Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records 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 in writing. The Headmaster will give reasons for his decision.
- Again, if the concerns relate to the Headmaster, they must be raised with the Chairman of Governors, who will decide the appropriate course of action and communicate his decision directly to the parents concerned. Other governors must not be contacted directly.
- If the parents or pupil are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to the Appeals procedure as outlined in Stage 3 of this policy.

## **Stage 3 – Appeal**

- If parents or pupils seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chairman of Governors for consideration. Again, other governors must not be contacted directly.
- The Chairman will acknowledge the complaint, and, upon ascertaining the prior history of the complaint, form a Complaints Panel to hear the appeal.
- Such a hearing will take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days, although the time taken to investigate the complaint may require a longer timeframe.
- The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of Governors to suit the needs in each case; one member of the Panel will be wholly independent of the management and 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 3 days prior to the hearing.
- The parents or pupils may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. Neither legal representation nor the presence of a teacher at Bilton Grange will be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' or pupil's complaint immediately 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 reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall usually complete within 7 days of the Hearing unless there are good reasons why a longer time frame will be required, in which case this will be explained to all parties. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy of those findings will be available for inspection on Bilton Grange's premises by the Headmaster and Governors.

A written record is kept of all formal complaints, and of whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or proceed to a panel hearing and, ultimately, whether they are upheld or not. A record will also be kept of actions taken by the school, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.

For complaints relating to Early Years Foundation Stage provision, Pre-Prep's Nest and Reception year:

- The record of complaints will be kept for at least three years.
- If they so wish, parents are entitled to contact ISI if dissatisfied with the school's response. ISI – The Independent Schools Inspectorate, Ground Floor, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA, telephone number 020 7600 0100. Alternatively e-mail [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net) or telephone 020 7776 8830. The ISI website is at [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)
- Parents will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.
- Bilton Grange is required to provide Ofsted and ISI, on request, with a record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously with due regard to confidentiality, with disclosure of documents and information only to those officers, governors and advisers of the school who have a direct role in resolving the issue. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential to Bilton Grange except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them.

During the Academic year 2020 – 2021 the number of formal complaints received: 1

<b>Authorised Risk, Compliance and Safeguarding Committee:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	22 September 2021