

Oakwood School Complaints Policy

This policy applies to the whole school, including the EYFS

1 Introduction

- 1.1** We strive to provide a good education for all our children. The Head and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.
- 1.2** If any parents are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to their child's class teacher immediately.
- 1.3** All parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the PACT governing body if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

2 Aims

- 2.1** Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

3 The complaints process

- 3.1** If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter informally with their child's class teacher. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.
- 3.2** Where parents feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher or other member of staff, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should either telephone or email the Head, or make an appointment to discuss it. This appointment will be made within a few days. The Head considers any such complaint very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. These types of informal complaints are normally resolved at this preliminary stage. However where the parent is not satisfied with the response, any complaint should be made in writing to the Head.
- 3.3** Where the parent is still not satisfied with the written response from the Head, they are entitled to approach the governing body as outlined below. This then constitutes a formal complaint.

- 3.4** Formal complaints must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the Oakwood Director, who sits on the PACT governing body. As at the date of this policy this person is Dr Tony Newman-Sanders and he can be contacted at 28 Woodcote Valley Rd, Purley, CR8 3AJ (Tel. 020-8645 0884, Email tonyns@blueyonder.co.uk). The Oakwood Director will acknowledge a complaint immediately whenever possible but at the latest within 5 working days. He will ask for a full report from the Head and any other relevant member of staff before responding to parents.
- 3.5** On behalf of PACT, the Oakwood Director will then make provision for a hearing before a panel, consisting of at least 3 people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one person will be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain the complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least 3 working days' notice of the meeting, and will allow the complainant to be accompanied at the hearing if they wish. This representative is not normally someone from the legal profession. The period from the lodging of the complaint to its resolution is normally 28 working days.
- 3.6** After hearing all the evidence, a copy of the findings and recommendations will normally be sent within 5 working days by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor (PACT Educational Trust Ltd) and the Head. The Oakwood Director will do all he can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction. However his decision will be binding on all parties involved.
- 3.7** All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the proprietor (PACT Educational Trust Ltd), the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 163 of the 2002 Act requests access to them.
- 3.8** If we remain unable to satisfy a parent's concerns they may wish to consider seeking independent legal advice, raising the matter with the IAPS of which the Head is a member, or lodging a complaint with the Registrar of Independent Schools.

4 Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.1** If parents with children in the Early Years wish to make a formal complaint against the school in writing, they can register their complaint with one of the following organisations:

Ofsted – Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
Tel. 0300 123 1231, email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or
Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) – Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9 HA, Tel. 020 7600 0100

- 4.2** Records of complaints involving children in the Early Years will be kept for at least three years.

4.3 If requested by Ofsted and/or the ISI, the school will provide a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

5 Monitoring and review

5.1 The PACT governing body monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints, all of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

5.2 The number of formal complaints the school receives in any academic year is recorded in the annual Head's Report to Parents.

5.3 Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

5.4 This policy is reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Signed: C Candia

Date: 30 September 2010