

# **Roxeth Mead School**

## **Complaints Policy**

Roxeth Mead School prides itself on the quality of the teaching, extra-curricular activity and pastoral care provided to its pupils. There may be occasions, however, when parents are unhappy about some aspect of school life. We believe that parents should feel comfortable in expressing any reasonable concern and that the school will respond in a positive, non-defensive manner. The Board of Directors believes that constant feedback is vital to ensure self-improvement and high standards. Should a parent wish to make a complaint, they can expect it to be taken seriously by the School in accordance with this policy and attached procedures.

There are various principles behind this policy:

- There is a difference between a concern and a complaint. A concern is likely to require discussion between teacher, pupil and parent. If the concern is not resolved by that means then it could become a complaint.
- A complaint is likely to arise when there are issues of physical or emotional well-being and security or when the school's stated values or aims are being ignored.
- A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint.
- We will seek to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible.
- Investigations will be full, fair and swift.
- People will be kept informed of progress and the decisions reached.
- Every effort will be made to respect confidentiality, but statements and records of complaints must be shown to the Ofsted Inspectorate when they inspect
- Feedback will be actively sought from those voicing complaints in order to minimise complaints and maximise accountability.

This policy reflects all the main Every Child Matters Outcomes and should be read in conjunction with all other school policies

### **Roles and responsibilities of Head Teacher, other staff, directors**

The **Head Teacher** will ensure that:

- This complaints policy and the procedures are made known to all involved with the school through newsletters and the parents' handbook
- All written complaints are dealt with in the first instance by the head teacher or a member of the leadership team, who will document the complaint (names, dates, times, events), acknowledge in writing within three days of receipt, and consult with all those directly concerned
- The complainant receives a written explanation of the action taken within ten working days following the complaint.

All members of **staff** are expected to encourage pupils, parents and carers who have concerns that cannot be resolved to follow the complaints procedure.

The **Board of Directors** will ensure the following:

- If a complainant is not satisfied with the action taken by the head teacher, then the chairman of the Board of Directors will hear the complaint. On receipt of the complaint the chairman of the Board of Directors will inform the Head Teacher, investigate the complaint, and write to the complainant normally within fifteen working days, explaining the action taken.
- Where the complaint is against the Head Teacher, the complainant may wish to contact the chairman of the Board of Directors first.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the chairman of the Board of Directors a request can be made to refer the complaint to a complaints panel. This will consist of three persons not directly associated with the matter, one of whom will be independent of Roxeth Mead School
- In the final instance where the complainant feels that a satisfactory response has not been produced the matter can be referred to Ofsted and the Secretary of State. If the complaint is upheld and the Board of Directors fails to follow the direction of the Secretary of State, the judgement may be legally enforced.

#### **Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation**

All complaints and the action taken will be documented and a summary included in the Head Teacher's report to the Board of Directors, with advice on any implications for policies.

# **Roxeth Mead School's Complaints Procedure**

## **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns can be resolved quickly and informally
- If parents have a concern they should normally contact their child's Class Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved immediately by this means to the parents' satisfaction before it becomes more serious. If the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Head Teacher
- Complaints made directly to the Head Teacher will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher unless the Head Teacher deems it appropriate for her to deal with it 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 14 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

## **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 Teacher. The Head Teacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases the Head Teacher will meet the parents within three working 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 Teacher to carry out further investigations which could include interviewing any members of staff or pupils involved
- The Head Teacher will keep a written record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint
- Once the Head Teacher is satisfied that, in 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 within ten working days. The Head Teacher will also give reasons for her decision
- If parents are still not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure
- If the complaint concerns the Head Teacher they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure

### **Stage 3 – Appeal**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chairman of the Board of Directors, who on behalf of the Directors will convene hearings of the Complaints' Panel
- 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 in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the Management of the School. The Panel will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 15 working days
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied to all parties not later than 5 days prior to the hearing
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate
- 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 make recommendations, which it will complete within 7 days of the Hearing
- 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 Head Teacher, the Directors and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint has been lodged
- If the parents are still dissatisfied with the outcome they should lodge the complaint with Ofsted or, ultimately, with the Secretary of State

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints 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)(i) of the Education (Independent School's Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or when any other legal obligation prevails.

