



Broomwood Hall School Limited and Northcote Lodge School Ltd

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

Broomwood Prep – Girls, Boys & Pre-Prep

### Policy Summary

Broomwood strives to deliver high quality teaching and pastoral care at all times. If, however, parents do have a complaint, Broomwood will do everything in its capacity to resolve the issue promptly and fairly.

Most issues can be handled informally; however, parents also have the option to escalate complaints to the Head or to the Principal if they feel that a complaint has not been handled adequately.

### Document Control

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## Intended Audience

- Parents

## Introduction

Broomwood prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. If parents have a complaint they can expect it to be treated by the Schools in accordance with this Procedure. Broomwood does not distinguish between concerns and complaints and any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is considered to be a complaint and will be treated seriously and confidentially.

## Definitions

- A concern is an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.
- A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action.

## Documentation and Record-keeping

A copy of this procedure can be found on Broomwood's website and is available to parents, pupils and staff. The School will ensure that parents of pupils are made aware that this document is published on the website or available on request.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are held confidentially except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act (2008) requires access to them.

Broomwood maintains a written record of formal parent complaints for at least three years for regular review by the Principal and for inspection by inspectors. The record states whether the complaint was resolved at the formal stage or proceeded to a panel

hearing. Broomwood will provide ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate), on request, with a written record of all formal complaints made during any specified period and the action taken as a result of each complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).

The School will fulfil the information requirements of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive (2013).

### **Timescales**

The following procedure contains references to 'working days'. Within the context of the school this means a weekday (i.e. not Saturday or Sunday) that is not a bank holiday. School holidays are not regarded as working days for the purpose of this policy as many of the Academic staff are away during these periods, and therefore complaints may not be resolved as speedily as they are during normal term time, depending upon the availability of the staff involved. If there is likely to be a delay in the processing of a complaint, the school will notify the parent making the complaint with a full explanation as to why the school is not able to resolve the matter within the usual time frame.

In accordance with EYFS requirements, parents of children up to 5 years old, are able to complain directly to Ofsted if they have any concerns over the learning and development requirements not being met. For all other complaints individuals should follow the school's three-stage process before then contacting Ofsted or ISI.

### **The Procedure**

#### **Stage 1– Informal Resolution**

Broomwood hopes that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly, informally and to everyone's satisfaction. If a parent of any pupil has a complaint they should contact the form tutor who will try to resolve the issue, if they can deal with it, or, if not, may then pass it on to a senior member of staff.

The senior member of staff will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. If the matter is not resolved to the parent making the complaint's satisfaction within 3 working days, the parent making the complaint will be advised that they may escalate the matter to the Second Stage (Formal Resolution) of this procedure.

#### **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- (a) The parent making the complaint should write to the Head giving details of their complaint and the outcome they are seeking.
- (b) The Head will then either take the case forward themselves or appoint a senior colleague who has had no prior involvement in the matter to do so.
- (c) The Head or (where applicable) the senior colleague appointed by the Head will offer to meet with the parent making the complaint to discuss the matter, normally, within three working days.

- (d) The parent making the complaint will be given an estimate of the time that is likely to be required to complete any necessary investigation.
- (e) Written notes will be kept of all material meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- (f) The parent making the complaint will be notified in writing within five days of the decision reached.

If the Head handled the matter (rather than appointing a senior colleague to do so) and the parent making the complaint is not satisfied with his/her decision, the parent making the complaint should then go to Stage 3 (Panel Hearing) of this procedure. If the Head appointed a senior colleague, then the parent making the complaint can request that the Head review the matter.

### Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- (a) If the parent making the complaint was unsatisfied with the 'Formal Resolution', within three working days of receiving written notice of the outcome, they should escalate their complaint, in writing, to the Principal. The Principal can be contacted via the Principal's PA at the following address:

Broomwood  
29b Sudbrooke Road  
London SW12 8TQ

When doing so, the parent making the complaint should:

- (i) give reasonable particulars of their complaint; and
- (ii) specify the outcome they are seeking.
- (b) The matter will then be referred to a Panel Hearing for consideration. The Principal's PA will schedule a hearing to take place as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within 10 working days of the Principal's PA receiving the complaint.
- (c) Where a complaint, relating to a pupil, reaches this stage Broomwood will (save in exceptional circumstances) keep other parents and guardians involved. All parents and guardians will be invited to attend the Panel hearing as well as any other adult who entered into the contract with Broomwood for the education of the pupil and any other adult who (in the opinion of the School) acts in a parental capacity for the relevant pupil.
- (d) The Panel will consist of at least three persons who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one member of the Panel shall be independent of the management and running of the School. The Panel members will be appointed by the Board of Directors of Broomwood.
- (e) In the case of a complaint regarding a pupil's fixed term or permanent exclusion, the Principal shall have complete discretion as to whether to implement the exclusion of the pupil pending the Panel's decision.
- (f) Within three working days of notifying their complaint to the Principal's PA, the parent making the complaint should send the Principal's PA copies of all documentation on which they intend to rely at the hearing.
- (g) If the Principal's PA requires further information for the panel they may request this from a parent. We ask that parents please get any such information to us as quickly as possible, preferably within three working days.

- (h) At least three working days before the hearing, the Principal will give the Panel a written statement setting out their views in relation to the complaint. The Principal's PA shall give a copy of the Principal's statement to the parent making the complaint.
- (i) The school will provide a copy their child's school file if requested.
- (j) The Chairman of the Panel may decide to conduct the hearing at a location outside the School.
- (k) The parent making the complaint may be accompanied at the hearing by one other person who is over the age of 18. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. We hope that matters can be resolved without the need for legal representation. If, however, a parent wishes to involve a lawyer we would ask that they discuss the lawyer's inclusion in the meeting with the Chair of the Panel.
- (l) If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- (m) The Chair of the Panel may decide to record the Hearing.
- (n) If the Chair of the Panel reasonably believes that the Panel should hear evidence from an individual in private (i.e. in the absence of the person bringing the complaint or any third party), he/she may do so. If that happens, the parent making the complaint will be told the reasons for that decision. The parent making the complaint will be given a summary of the individual's relevant evidence after the event if the Chairman believes it to be relevant to the complaint. The Panel will, however, maintain the anonymity of any pupil who gives evidence, in private, to the Panel.
- (o) The Panel may make decisions by majority vote.
- (p) The Panel's findings and recommendations will be presented as a report.
- (q) Within three working days after the hearing, the Principal's PA will send the parent making the complaint, the Head and the Principal a copy of the Panel's draft report. If the Panel's decision was reached by majority vote the opinion of the panel member who disagreed with the decision will also be recorded.
- (r) On receipt of the report, if the parent making the complaint believes that the report is not factually correct, they should, within two working days, let the Principal's PA know specifically what it is that they believe is incorrect. Similarly, if the Proprietors believe that the report is not factually correct, they will inform the Director of finance within two working days.
- (s) Once any disputes have been resolved, the Panel will finalise its report. A copy of the Panel's report will be:
  - (i) given to the parent making the complaint and, where relevant, the person complained about. This will usually be sent by e-mail.
  - (ii) made available for inspection on Broomwood premises by the Proprietors and the headteacher.
- (t) Subject to the rules set out in this document, the Panel may regulate their proceedings as they see fit.

### Complaints by EYFS Parents

As our Little Broomwood and Reception (EYFS) classes are part of an independent school, the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is responsible for inspecting the EYFS department. However, if you as parents are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, you are entitled to make a complaint directly to Ofsted. The Ofsted leaflet: "Complaints to Ofsted about Schools: Guidance for Parents" reference O80113 may be downloaded from [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Contractual Disputes - Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Alternative Dispute Resolution is the name given to different methods of dealing with disputes without going to court. Common ADR methods include mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication.

Schools and parent making the complaints are not required to use ADR but schools, as traders, do have a responsibility to make parents aware that ADR is available for all disputes in relation to its contracts with them even if the School does not intend to use it.

If the School has been unable to resolve a contractual dispute through the internal complaints procedure, the school must advise the parent making the complaint in writing:

- (a) That the school cannot settle the complaint with the parent making the complaint;
- (b) That 'Small Claims Mediation (UK) Ltd' at [www.small-claims-mediation.co.uk](http://www.small-claims-mediation.co.uk) or 'Ombudsman Services' at [www.ombudsman-services.org](http://www.ombudsman-services.org) are relevant certified ADR providers and would be competent to deal with the complaint, should the parent making the complaint wish to use ADR.
- (c) Whether the school is prepared to submit to an alternative dispute resolution procedure operated by 'Smalls Claims Mediation (UK) Ltd' or 'Ombudsman Services'.

### Additional Policies, Procedures and Legal Framework

Further guidance can be found in the Education and Skills Act (2008) and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive (2013).

**Information made available in relation to paragraph 7(25)(k) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 (as subsequently amended)**

Number of Formal Complaints made in the 2023-24 0