



Est. 1919

BRAMBLETYE

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### COMPLAINTS Policy and PROCEDURE

#### Introduction

Brambletye is committed to maintaining good relationships with parents, children and others in order to promote good quality learning and teaching at the school and to promote pupils wellbeing. In this connection, governors and leaders strive to respond to any concerns or representations as quickly and as effectively as possible in order to resolve any difficulties. Where necessary, the school has also established a formal system to enable the full, fair and impartial investigation of concerns and complaints and to provide complainants with statements of findings. This includes any actions to be taken or any learning for the school as the result of investigations. The policy is specifically tailored in light of the Independent Schools Regulations (Part 7), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and the national framework for Early Years provision. In effect, this is a 'whole school' policy And is available on the school's website and on request from the School Office.

The number of complaints registered under the formal procedures set out in this policy and during the preceding academic year is available from the Headmaster's Office upon request.

Brambletye believes in an open door policy and welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and others, and takes seriously complaints and concerns they may raise. This policy will show you how to use our complaints system. There is a difference between a concern or representation and a formal complaint. A concern is likely to require discussion, perhaps involving a teacher, pupil and parent with the aim of resolving the matter quickly. **A formal complaint, which should, where possible, be made in writing to the Headmaster, will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction, which needs investigation and a formal response. The final stage of the procedure allows complainants to have their concerns heard by a panel of people made up of governors (who have had no previous involvement with the issues) and includes an independent person with suitable knowledge, skills and experience.**

As a school we will ensure that:

- Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so.
- We respond to complaints within a defined time-limits and in a courteous and efficient way.
- Parents realise that we listen and take representations and complaints seriously.
- We take action where appropriate and will use learning from complaints as part of our continuous learning process.

### Stage 1: Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most representations or concerns will be resolved quickly and informally at the earliest stage of the process.

- If parents or others have a concern or wish to make representations or complaint, it may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue. For example, the Form Tutor is likely to be the best person to talk to in the first instance. For boarding/pastoral matters, you may wish to talk to the Deputy Head Pastoral, for music concerns to the Director of Music, and for sports concerns, to the Director of Sport. All matters concerning the Pre-Prep should be addressed to the Form Teacher or the Head of our Pre-Prep Department.

The individual staff member may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However if they are unable to resolve the matter alone, they will consult the Headmaster or Deputy Headmasters who will decide the next course of action.

- Where concerns or complaints are made directly to the Headmaster or Deputy Headmasters the matter will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff unless the Deputy Headmasters or Headmaster deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
- The member of staff will make a written record of all concerns or complaints and the date on which they were received (*c.f. Appendix: Complaints Form*). Should the matter not be resolved within **three weeks**, or in the event of the member of staff and the parent failing to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of our procedure.

It is expected that informal complaints will be acknowledged within **48 hours**. A period of no longer than **28 working days** will be set to respond to informal complaints from the point the concern was first raised. If this time-scale cannot be met for good reasons the complainant will be suitably advised.

**Stage 2: Formal Resolution**

- If the representation or complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents or others should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. If it is not possible to put the matter in writing the school will accept verbal communications or other forms of communication where the complainant may have special needs of disabilities. In these circumstances the school will make the record of complaint and ask the complainant to endorse that this has been accurately recorded. The Headmaster will then decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases the Headmaster will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within **seven 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 in which case the complainant will be advised of any extension to the time scale to deal with the matter – usually within **14 days**.
- 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 practical, 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 also give reasons for his decision.

If parents or others are still not satisfied with the decision, they have a right to seek and independent review at stage 3 of these procedures.

**Stage 3: Panel Hearing**

- If parents or others seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should write directly to the Chairman of Governors. If this is not possible they should request a telephone discussion with the Chair of governors who will produce a record of the issues raised and what the complainant would like examined at this stage.
- The matter will then be referred to the School's Complaints Panel for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel members will be appointed by the Chairman of Governors (or in his absence, the Deputy Chairman), who will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practical – normally within **seven days**.
- 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 will be supplied to all parties not later than **seven days** prior to the hearing.

- The parents or others 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 as the panel is not adversarial and is designed to enable concerns to be fully considered in an appropriate and fair way.
- If possible, the panel will resolve the concerns or 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 relevant facts, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within **ten days** of the hearing. The panel will write to the parents or others informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. At this stage the decisions of the panel will be final. The panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, the Chairman of Governors and, where relevant, the person who has been the main source of the complaint.
  - Records and the letter of outcome will also be available on the school premises for inspection by authorised persons in accordance with the regulations. All information and records relating to the complaints process will be maintained in line with data protection and confidentiality requirements. Parents and others can therefore be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.
  - Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential, except insofar as is required of the school by Paragraph 6 (2) j of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003, or where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection or under other legal authority.
- A written record will be kept of all formal complaints and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing
- The action taken by the school as a result of these formal complaints will be recorded in writing (regardless of whether they are upheld).

**Written complaints relating to the requirements under the statutory framework for the EYFS:**

Parents of EYFS pupils only may complain to Ofsted and/or ISI if their complaint is about the fulfilment of the EYFS Requirements. Complaints to Ofsted can be made online at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) and those to ISI at [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net).

**The School recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children in our care.**

**Governing Body Review**

The governing body will maintain oversight of the implementation of this policy and procedures in conjunction with the Headmaster. The policy will be reviewed every year by the governing body and, as necessary, in light of any changes to regulations or guidance.

There were no formal complaints, to Stage 3 under this Procedure, during the academic year 2016/17

Date of review: September 2017

Date of next review: September 2018

*Appendix: Complaints Form*

**Will Brooks**

*Appendix 1*

**Complaints Form**

**1. Complaint From:** .....

Name: .....

Address:.....

.....

Telephone Number:.....

Date Complaint Received:.....

**2. Is the Complainant a Parent / Staff member / Pupil / Member of Public?** (please circle)

If Parent, state the name of the child: .....

**3. Name of person who received complaint:**.....

**4. Name of person who is dealing with complaint:**.....

**5. Has the issue been resolved? If so, give brief details:**.....

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