



## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### Document Control

This policy has been approved for operation within:	Eternal Light Secondary Boys School
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## 1. Aims

This Policy aims to ensure that:

- Parents/ Guardians know that the School takes complaints seriously and will respond in a courteous and efficient manner;
- An effective procedure for making and adjudicating complaints (including appeals) from parents/ guardians is established;
- Parents/ Guardians wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- There is a separate procedure for dealing with parental concerns which fall short of a formal complaint;
- All those involved in handling a complaint make every effort to resolve matters quickly and amicably;
- Response to complaints will be made within a reasonable period of time, and where necessary appropriate action will be taken.

## 2. Procedure

### ***1. Raising concerns informally***

1.1 Parents/ guardians can raise a concern informally by contacting the office and speaking to the teacher / supervisor / Headteacher.

1.2 This can initially be done by telephone call, email, letter or in person. In all cases, a written statement will be required for record purposes and evidence.

### ***Making a complaint***

1. In serious cases, however, a formal complaint should be made in writing and referred directly to the Head Teacher. This provision will typically apply where:
  - (a) the parent/guardian does not believe that the matter is suitable for informal resolution
  - (b) The teacher / supervisor has failed to satisfy the person making the complaint.

Please note that complaints made anonymously will not be pursued.

2. Parents/ guardians should note that, where the Head Teacher is the subject of the complaint, a separate procedure applies, details of which can be found in paragraphs 25-29 below
3. ELSS will take every reasonable step to ensure that a complaint made under paragraph 4 is resolved within ten working days of the complaint being lodged.

### ***Investigating Complaints***

4. As soon as possible after the complaint has been lodged, a senior member of staff

appointed by the Head Teacher will contact the parents/ guardian concerned. The purpose of this contact is to make initial response and to explain how school intends to investigate the matter, how long the investigation is likely to take and when to expect a response. Where in the course of an investigation it becomes clear that this date is likely to be exceeded, the parent/guardian will be informed of a new response date.

5. At the end of the investigation, the parent/ guardian will be informed in writing of the outcome. This will include the conclusion reached, the reasons for it and any action taken or proposed.
6. It is school policy that complaints made by parents/ guardians will not adversely affect their child's interests.

### ***Confidentiality***

7. Subject to paragraph 13-14 below, any complaint or concern, viewpoint, etc. raised by parents/ guardians will be treated as confidential.
8. Knowledge of the complaint will be restricted to those who, for various reasons, need to know about it. This will include the Head Teacher, the member(s) of staff investigating the complaint and any other member of staff otherwise involved. In addition, there are circumstances where the Proprietors of the school may be informed.
9. On occasion, however, it may be necessary to inform third parties of the complaint and, possibly, the identities of those involved. The most obvious example of this is where an investigation suggests that a criminal offence has taken place. In such circumstances, school would cease its investigation and refer the matter to the relevant external agencies.

### ***Written Records***

10. In order to comply with school's obligations under standard 7(j) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended), a written record will be kept of all complaints, including information as to whether or not they proceed to a formal hearing (see paragraph 19.) The written record will also include all correspondence and statements gathered in the course of an investigation.
11. Written records will be treated as confidential and processed in accordance with School's data protection policy. The exception to this is where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an investigation under s. 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), requests access to them.
12. A record of the number of complaints made under the formal procedure for every academic year will be available on request to parents/ guardians and Ofsted.

### ***Disciplinary Action Taken Against Staff***

13. It may be the case that, as a result of a complaint made by a parent/guardian, disciplinary action may be taken against a member of staff employed at Eternal Light Secondary School.
14. Where this occurs, any such action will be taken in accordance with the official staff

Discipline and Dismissal Policy and handled confidentially within school.

### ***The Panel Hearing***

15. The School hopes that a parent/ guardian making a complaint will be satisfied with the outcome. Certainly, it will make every reasonable effort to ensure that each complaint is fully and properly investigated and that the issues raised are considered in a fair and professional manner.
16. However, where the parents/ guardian are dissatisfied either with the outcome of an investigation or the manner in which the complaint was handled, they should inform the Head Teacher in writing who will refer the matter to the Proprietors. Alternatively the Proprietors can be contacted directly by letter addressed in the first instance to the Proprietors address as shown on the Prospectus.
17. It is particularly important that the parents/ guardians state as clearly and fully as possible the reasons why they wish a panel to hear a complaint.
18. Upon receipt of a request for a panel hearing, the Proprietors will convene an independent panel to hear the complaint within 10 working days of receiving the complaint.

### ***The Panel***

19. The panel formed will consist of a minimum of three people. Two members will be totally independent from the school and the third from school SLT (not directly involved with the matter) will make up the panel.
20. The appeal panel will have access to all relevant documentations.
21. The parents/guardians will be invited to attend the panel hearing. They will also be invited to produce documentation to be circulated in advance to panel members. In addition, the parents/ guardians will be invited to bring a friend or a relative, not a legal representative to the panel hearing.
22. The panel will make the final decision in respect of the complaint. It may, if it so chooses, also attach recommendations to its findings.
23. The panel's findings and recommendations will be emailed or otherwise sent to the parent/ guardian making the complaint within seven working days from the date of the hearing. Where relevant a copy will be sent to the employee or employees complained against.
24. A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will be kept on file in the Head Teacher's office, where it can be inspected by the Head Teacher and the Proprietors.

### ***Complaints Against the Headteacher***

25. Where the Head Teacher is the subject of the complaint, the matter should be referred directly and in writing to the Proprietors. The Proprietors will then contact the parents/ guardians in order to explain how the complaint will be investigated, how long an investigation is likely to take and when they might expect a final response.

26. Where the Proprietors believe that the complaint merits it, they will appoint a person to investigate the complaint and report his/ her findings to them. After considering this report, the Proprietors will then write to the parents/ guardians within ten working days. This letter will include the conclusion reached, the reasons for it and any action taken or proposed.
27. If the parents/ guardians are dissatisfied with this response, (s) they should write to the Proprietors to request that the matter be referred to an independent panel hearing.
28. The composition of the panel, its purpose and procedure are set out in Paragraph 19 – 24 above.