

GREENFIELDS EDUCATIONAL TRUST
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
(Issued December 2004)
(Revised January 2017)

Communication between parents, teachers, heads of department and heads of the different sections of Greenfields School or Trust nurseries is always encouraged and issues are usually swiftly resolved. Should a parent have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school or nursery in accordance with this procedure.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution:

a. Experience has shown that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally through contact with the appropriate person in the school or nursery and will be dealt with within one working day.

b. Normally the first point of contact for a parent would be a child's class teacher, in the Junior, Infant and Nursery School, or the Class Tutor in the Senior School. In most cases a meeting with the class teacher or class tutor will resolve the matter.

If the class teacher/tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult his/her senior, which would be the appropriate head of school (Head of Junior, Infant and Nursery School for classes up to Year 6 and the Junior English as a Foreign Language class, and Head of Seniors for all senior classes including the senior English as a Foreign Language class).

c. Complaints made directly to the Heads of Schools will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher/tutor for resolution unless the Head of School deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

Complaints handled in this way should be resolved very quickly, preferably within one working day.

d. Complaints received from parents of boarders, boarders or boarding staff are given to the Head of Boarding for resolution.

e. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) area of the school or the Montessori nursery in East Grinstead, the first point of contact is the child's Key Person. If the matter is not resolved within one working day, it is then referred to the manager.

Anyone, who has been involved in the resolution of a complaint, should make a written record of the issue(s), the date on which it was received and the result of the informal handling. It will be filed in the student file.

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Should the matter not be resolved very quickly, within 5 working days, or in the event that the class teacher/tutor/EYFS manager and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in writing in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.

If the complaint is to do with the Montessori nursery in East Grinstead and fails to resolve within 5 working days, the matter should be referred in writing in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure to the Executive Manager, available in the neighbouring Effective Education Centre. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution, will then be followed by the Executive Manager.

Any written concerns, complaints or indeed any communications for Trust Management can be handed in to the receptionist or put in the Service Alert box in the school's main Reception. These communications are always acted upon and answered.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution:

a. If parents decide to make a formal complaint in writing to the Executive Head, when it is received he/she will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

b. The Executive Head will meet the parents concerned (if they live in the local area) or speak on the phone to the parents (if they live abroad) within seven days of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

c. It may be necessary for the Executive Head to carry out further investigations. Details of any inspections, investigations, minutes of meetings and interviews together with all correspondence to do with the complaint will be held in confidence.

d. Once the Executive Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, an immediate decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The reasons for the decision will also be explained. This should take no longer than 10 working days from the time of receiving the complaint.

Details of the Executive Head's findings and decision are recorded in the Complaints Log, together with any action taken by the school as an outcome of the complaint (regardless of whether it is upheld and;

e. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

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Stage 3 – Panel Hearing:

a. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to The Chief Executive of the Greenfields Educational Trust whose office, Trust Management, is located in the Administration Building at Greenfields School. The Chief Executive is appointed by the Trust Management to call Hearings of the Complaints Panel.

b. The matter will then be referred to the 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 shall be independent of the management and running of the school*. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by Trustee Management. The Chief Executive on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a Hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within 10 working days.

c. If the Panel deem 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 shall be supplied to all parties not later than 3 working days prior to the Hearing.

d. The parents 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.

e. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation, but should further investigation be required, the Panel will decide how it should be conducted.

f. After due consideration of all facts, the Panel will reach a decision within 7 working days of the Hearing. The Panel will then write/email the parents informing them of their findings and recommendations, and the reasons for their decision. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations will also be sent, where relevant, to the Head of Boarding and the person complained of and be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Executive Head.

Details of the outcome of the Hearing and Panel's decision will be recorded in the Complaints Log.

Complaints Procedure for Boarders

The above policy and procedure is applicable to Boarding, including students, boarding staff and parents.

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Students cannot be penalised for lodging a complaint in good faith.
Any parent, if they consider that their complaint has not been satisfactorily or appropriately resolved, may contact:

Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)
CAP House
9 – 12 Long Lane
London EC1A 9HA
Tel: 0207600 0100

Complaints Procedure for Parents of Children in the EYFS Area of the School and the Montessori Nursery in East Grinstead.

The Complaints policy and procedures for the EYFS area of Greenfields School and the Montessori nursery in East Grinstead are part of the procedures laid out above. Complaints will be resolved within 28 days and a record of the complaint and the outcome is made in a separate EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) Complaints Book and kept for three years.

Parents with a child/children in Greenfields may wish to contact:

Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)
CAP House
9 – 12 Long Lane
London EC1A 9HA
Tel: 0207600 0100

Parents with a child/children in the Montessori nursery in East Grinstead may contact:

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester MK1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231

The Complaints Logs are regularly reviewed by the Head Teacher, the Trust and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and must be kept for a minimum of three years.

All Complaints Logs are available for ISI (Independent Schools' Inspectorate) and Ofsted to see.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept

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confidential except so far as is required of the school or nursery by Paragraph 7(k) of The Education (Independent Schools Standards)(England) Regulations 2003; or except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act request access to them or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Written by Veronica Tupholme

Trust Management for Academics and Standards

Issued December 2004

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