



## **Purpose**

We want all pupils and their families to be happy with the education and package we offer and the policies and procedures we follow. Most queries or concerns can be resolved satisfactorily through discussion or by providing clarification or further information. However, when a more serious concern is raised, Hopefields has adopted a procedure that explains how to complain and what to expect in response.

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure, for all parties, a fair and consistent approach to dealing with complaints.

## **Scope**

The Complaints Procedure provides a supportive framework for dealing with all matters relating to the conduct and actions of members of the Hopefields community and the application of the Provision's procedures as they affect individual pupils.

The procedure may be used by a member of Staff, parent, carer, local resident, or any person within the community who has a genuine interest in Hopefields. An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under the procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances.

All complaints will be investigated by an appropriate person (normally the Director) depending on the nature of the complaint.

As part of any investigation, all relevant parties will be given an opportunity to comment.

## **Principles**

Comments, concerns or complaints should be raised as soon as possible. They will be dealt with:

- fairly, thoroughly and promptly
- safely - nobody will be victimised as a result of a complaint being made
- efficiently and helpfully.

Outcomes could include;

- an explanation or clarification an apology from either party;
- an assurance, where appropriate, that the same thing will not happen again,
- action to put matters right.



## **Timescales**

Complaints should be raised as soon as possible. Any complaint raised more than one month after the incident has occurred will not be considered, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The designated timescales apply during term time and additional time will be required over school holiday periods.

Where the Directors are unable to comply with the timescales for reasons beyond their control (such as the complexity of the complaint or the availability of witnesses) they will inform the complainant, within seven calendar days of receipt of the complaint.

## **Procedure**

Complaint relating to a member of staff, other than the Directors.

Many areas of concern can be dealt with quickly and harmoniously through discussion. Any concerns or complaints should be referred initially to the individual concerned and this may be by letter, by email, by telephone or in person by an appointment made at a mutually convenient time.

Every effort should be made by all involved to resolve the complaint and bring about a speedy resolution for all parties.

In the case of more serious concerns, it may be appropriate to discuss these with a senior member of staff or directly with the Directors, who will normally be able to resolve the matter and take any necessary actions to put matters right.

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage (detailed above) the complainant must write to the Director within fourteen calendar days of receiving the outcome of first complaint.

The Director will provide a copy of the complaint to the member of staff against whom the complaint has been made and will investigate it. Complainants will be asked to complete a Complaint Form and suggest a preferred resolution to their concerns. Members of staff will be advised to record their recollection of the event for future reference.

The complainant, and staff member, should include details that might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.



In addition, the Director may meet with the complainant, who may be accompanied by a friend/representative to clarify the complaint.

The Director will be responsible for collecting such other evidence as she/he deems necessary. Where this involves an interview with a member of staff, who is the subject of the complaint, the employee may be accompanied by a work colleague or representative. In addition to receiving a copy of the complaint, the member of staff will be provided with any additional evidence presented by the complainant or collected by the Director.

The investigation will be undertaken as soon as possible and will be completed within fourteen calendar days of receipt of the formal complaint. The Director will inform the complainant and the member of staff concerned, in writing, of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:

- the concern is not substantiated by the evidence;
- the concern is substantiated in part or in full and an explanation and/or an apology given. Some details may then be given of the action the Director may be taking to put matters right or an assurance, where appropriate. However, details of the investigation or of any disciplinary procedures will not be released;
- there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld;

The Director will confirm that consideration of the complaint is now concluded.

### **Complaint relating to the Director/s**

Most areas of concern can be dealt with quickly and harmoniously through discussion. Any concerns or complaints should be referred initially to the Director and this may be by letter, by email, by telephone or in person by an appointment made at a mutually convenient time.

The Director will make every effort to resolve the issue and bring about a speedy resolution within seven working days that is satisfactory to both parties.

Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or by providing further information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage.



## Formal Stage

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage, complainants will be asked to send a copy of their complaint in writing, and suggest a preferred resolution to their concerns. The Director will be advised to record their recollection of the events for future reference.

The complainant and Director should include details that will assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

The Director at this stage will consult legal advice.

The investigation will be undertaken as soon as possible and will be completed within twenty one calendar days of receipt of the formal complaint. The Legal Representative for Hopefields Education Limited will inform the complainant and the Director in writing, of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:

- the concern is not substantiated by the evidence;
- the concern is substantiated in part or in full and an explanation and/or an apology given. Some details may then be given of the action the Director may be taking to put matters right or an assurance, where appropriate. However, details of the investigation or any disciplinary procedures will not be released;
- there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld

The complainant will be told that consideration of his/her complaint by the Hopefields legal representative is now concluded.

If the complaint involves a child protection issue, child protection arrangements will come into force involving the Children's Services and potentially the police.

To conclude, any case will be dealt with on an individual basis but the Director reserves the right to close the complaint if the complainant is deemed to be "vexatious", and to determine that the matter is now concluded. It is vital that full notes of the reasons for this are made.