

# FHS

Francis Holland Schools

**Name of Policy**

**Author**

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**Regulation Description**

**Complaints from Parents of Current Pupils**

SLT

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Complaints Procedure

The manner in which complaints are handled

<b>Revision History</b>	
This section should be completed by the reviewer each time this policy is reviewed	
<b>Changes made</b> [brief description of edits]	<b>Date</b> [Term and Year]

**Application of this document:**

This policy applies to both Sloane Square and Regent’s Park, and to the EYFS as well as junior and senior schools. Where there are differences in procedures between the schools this has been clearly highlighted in the appendices

**Availability of this document:**

Copies of this document may be downloaded from our website <http://www.francisholland.org.uk>, Firefly or are available on request from the school office:

Francis Holland School (Regent's Park, Ivor Place, London NW1 6XR or Francis Holland School (Sloane Square), 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8JF.

## **Complaints from Parents of Current Pupils**

Francis Holland Schools Trust welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes seriously complaints and concerns they may raise.

The Trust recognises and acknowledges parents' entitlement to complain and wishes to work with them in the best interests of the young people in the Trust's care.

**A complaint is any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School. It will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response.** The Trust wishes to ensure that:

- parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- the Trust responds to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- parents realise that the Trust will listen and take complaints seriously; and
- the Trust will take action where appropriate.

It is hoped that complaints and concerns will be addressed quickly and informally. If parents raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to their satisfaction.

References herein to complaints include any matters of genuine concern.

Reference to "**Working Days**" means days other than: Sundays, public holidays in the UK, half term holidays and Christmas holidays. In calculating the number of days, the day of receipt of the complaint and the day of despatch of the response shall not be counted.

The complaints procedure can be found on the School's website and is thereby made available to parents of pupils, and parents of prospective pupils. Information on the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure is available to parents of pupils and can be obtained by contacting the Head of the relevant School.

This procedure applies to parents of current registered pupils. It does not apply to parents of prospective pupils or to parents of past pupils (unless in the case of past pupils the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered as a pupil).

### **Stage 1 - Informal Resolution**

#### *To the Form Tutor*

If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their daughter's Form Tutor. The Form Tutor will keep a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received. In many cases, the complaint will be resolved immediately by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the complaint is of an academic nature, it is likely that a Form Tutor will discuss it with, or refer the complaint to, the relevant Head of Department. If the Form

Tutor cannot resolve the complaint alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a senior colleague.

Parents should expect a response within **5 working days** explaining how the School proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a further **10 working days**. If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, parents should expect a response within **5 working days of the start of the next term** explaining how the School proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a further **10 working days from the start of the next term**.

The response will provide an outcome of the complaint, explain the conclusion, the reasons for it and, if appropriate, describe any action taken or proposed.

Parents may prefer to take the complaint directly to a more senior member of staff, for example, the Deputy Head and the provisions of this Stage 1 – Informal Resolution shall apply.

## **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

In the event that parents are not satisfied with the response (whether from the Form Tutor, or other senior member of staff) under Stage 1 above, they should put the complaint and the reasons why they are not satisfied with the response in writing either to the Head or, if the complaint is about or implicates the Head, to the Chairman of Governors.

*EITHER*

*To the Head*

Parents should expect a response within **5 working days** explaining how the School proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a further **10 working days**. If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, parents should expect a response within **3 working days of the start of the next term** explaining how the School proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a further **10 working days from the start of the next term**.

Within the time periods set out above:

- (i) In most cases, the Head will speak to the parents concerned. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary, however, for the Head to ask the Deputy Head or another appropriate member of staff to carry out investigations.
- (ii) The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Once s/he is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made with a written response to parents, informing them of the decision, giving reasons for the decision and, if appropriate, describe any action taken or proposed.

OR

*To the Chairman of Governors (if the complaint is about or implicates the Head)*

If the complaint is about or implicates the Head, parents may write to the Chairman of Governors with their complaint by contacting the Clerk to the Governors at the following address: Francis Holland Schools Trust, 35 Bourne Street, London SW1W 8JA, email clerk@fhst.org.uk.

Within **5 working days** of receipt of the complaint, the Clerk will refer the complaint to the Chairman of Governors who will nominate a Governor to consider the complaint and, via the Clerk, write to you with the name of the nominated Governor. If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, parents should expect a response within **5 working days from the start of the next term.**

The nominated Governor will ask for a report from the Head and will examine matters thoroughly before responding and will normally do so within **10 working days, from the date of their nomination.** If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, parents should expect a response within **10 working days from the start of the next term.**

Before responding, the nominated Governor will normally speak to the parents concerned, although if there is a meeting, the time limits set out above may extend the timeframe within which the nominated Governor would respond but this should be by no longer than **10 working days from the date of the meeting.** If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

The nominated Governor will keep written records of all meetings held in relation to the complaint. Once (s)he is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made with a written response to parents, informing them of the decision, giving reasons for this decision and, if appropriate, describe any action taken or proposed.

### **Stage 3 - Appeal**

Should the matter not be resolved at Stage 2 (above) parents may wish to invoke an appeal **within 10 calendar days of the date of written notification of the school's decision,** by notice in writing to the Clerk to the Governors at the following address: Francis Holland Schools Trust, 35 Bourne Street, London SW1W 8JA.

The Clerk will refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors who will refer the matter to a Complaints Panel (the "Panel") who shall be selected by the Chairman of Governors. The Panel shall comprise 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, and one of whom shall be appointed the chairman of the Panel. The chairman of the Panel, in consultation with the Chairman of Governors, reserves the right to substitute members of the Panel with other members of the Council of Governors.

A hearing before the Panel ("Hearing") will take place as soon as practicable, and normally within **15 working days** (this may be longer if the complaint is received during holiday periods

but shall not be longer than 10 working days from the start of the next term) of receipt of the notice by the Clerk.

Parents will be asked if there are any papers they would like to have circulated beforehand. If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related information be supplied in advance of the Hearing. Copies of all papers shall be supplied to all parties usually not later than **5 working days** prior to the Hearing.

The parents may be accompanied to the Hearing by one other person. This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate and only allowed in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the chairman of the Panel.

The Hearing shall not be conducted in an adversarial way and the primary concern of the Panel is to deal with matters fairly and, therefore, the chairman of the Panel has discretion to conduct the Hearing (including deciding on who may attend) in any way which will achieve this. The chairman of the Panel can give directions, which may include adjourning the Hearing in order to request further information (from either the parents or the School or third parties) or otherwise carry out further investigations or call witnesses. At the Hearing the Panel shall consider the merits of the complaint in full.

After due consideration of all the facts the Panel considers relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make findings and recommendations, which it shall complete within **10 working days** of the Hearing.

The decision of the Panel will be final.

The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Chairman of Governors and, where relevant, the person(s) complained about.

The Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by Governors and the Head.

### **Queries or complaints about this procedure**

Please direct any queries or complaints about this procedure to the Clerk to the Governors at [clerk@fhst.org.uk](mailto:clerk@fhst.org.uk).

### **Records**

A written record of all formal complaints shall be kept and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure (i.e. Stage 2) or proceed to Appeal (i.e. Stage 3) and action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). These records will be kept for a minimum of 3 years.

### **Confidentiality**

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially, although the Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection, as referred to above.

It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Furthermore, knowledge of the complaint (and any relevant papers) will usually be limited to the person to whom the complaint is addressed, the Head, the Chairman of Governors, the Bursar, the Clerk to the Governors and those directly involved.

Action which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints will be handled confidentially within the School.

### **Additional EYFS Arrangements**

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements in particular will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation **within 28 days**.

### **Anonymity**

Anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

### **Information requests**

The complaints procedure is for genuine complaints or concerns and should not be used simply to obtain information from the School. Parents' rights to information are governed by the standard terms and conditions and by law.

Please refer to our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice on the Trust website for details on how we process and use this data, and what rights you may exercise regarding your data under the law.

### **Leavers**

If parents wish to complain about something affecting their daughter after she has left the School, this must take the form of a letter to the Head or Chairman of Governors **within one** month of leaving. At the discretion of the Head or Chairman of Governors, such complaints may be dealt with outside of these procedures.