

Complaints Procedure

Our school is committed to providing a safe, stimulating, consistent and accessible service to children and their parents/carers. We always aim to provide high quality services for everyone, but accept that sometimes things do not always go to plan. In such circumstances, we want to know so that we can put them right and learn from our mistakes.

All settings are required to keep a 'summary log' of all complaints that reach stage two or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors

This policy constitutes High Elms Manor School's formal Complaints Procedure. It will be displayed on the premises at all times.

Under normal circumstances, the Complaints Co-ordinator- Liadain O'Neill will be responsible for managing complaints. All complaints made to staff will be recorded in detail in the Complaints Folder. The Complaints Co-ordinator will ensure that each complaint is fully investigated.

If there is good reason to believe that the situation has child protection implications, the Designated Safeguarding Person will be informed who will then ensure that the local social services department is contacted, according to the procedure set out in the Child Protection policy. If any party involved in the complaint has good reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed, then the police are contacted.

Stage One

If a parent/carer has a complaint about some aspect of High Elms Manor School's activity, or about the conduct of an individual member of staff, it will often be possible to resolve the problem by simply speaking to the individual concerned and/or to their line manager. As outlined in the Partnership with Parents/Carers policy, High Elms Manor School is committed to open and regular dialogue with parents/carers and High Elms Manor School welcomes all comments on its services, regardless of whether they are positive or negative.

In the first instance, parents/carers are encouraged to speak directly to the relevant member of staff, if deemed appropriate. If not, the manager of the department i.e. The Nest, Little Elms, High Elms should be approached and they will try to resolve the problem. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found, then Stage Two of the procedure will formally come into operation.

Stage Two

If informal discussions of a complaint or problem have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, parents/carers should put their complaint in detail and in writing to the Complaints Co-ordinator. Relevant names, dates, evidence and any other important information on the nature of the complaint should be included.

High Elms Manor School will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible – within five working days at least – and fully investigate the

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matter. If there is any delay, High Elms Manor School will advise the parent/carers of this and offer an explanation. A full and formal response to the complaint will be sent within 28 days of having received the complaint.

The formal response to the complaint from High Elms Manor School will be sent to the parent/carer concerned and copied to all relevant members of staff if appropriate. The response will include an account of the findings; any actions taken as a result, recommendations for dealing with the complaint and any amendments to High Elms Manor School's policies or procedures emerging from the investigation. The complaint will be filed in the complaints folder. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage Three

If the parent/carer is still not satisfied with the outcome the Complaints Co-ordinator will arrange a time to meet the parent/carer concerned and any other relevant individuals, such as members of staff, to discuss the complaint and High Elms Manor School's response to it. The parent/carer should have a friend or partner present if required.

An agreed written record of the discussion is made as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage Four

If at the conclusion of the stage three process parents/carers remain dissatisfied with the response they have received, the original complaint along with High Elms Manor School's response will be referred to a panel hearing which the parent/carer will be invited to attend.

An external mediator is invited to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved. When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between all involved is held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached.

A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it within 15 working days. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

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A record of complaints against our setting and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed. The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Summary Complaints Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request. Records of all complaints must be retained for a period of at least 3 years from when the record was made.