



THE TOWERS

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Date Approved:	12/04/2016 C Trelfa
Ownership:	Governing Body/Headmistress
Last Review:	September 2018
Next Review:	September 2019

Principle

This policy intends to support the school's aims as outlined in the Mission Statement.

"As a Gospel centred community, we aim to:

- build a loving environment where pupils will be enabled to grow in the knowledge and love of God and of each other;
- value each individual equally;
- enable all to flourish and develop their own talents; and
- teach individuals to value the unique gifts of those around them."

SEMPER FIDELIS - Always Faithful.

The policy is applicable to all pupils including those in EYFS who are currently registered and attending The Towers Convent School.

1. Legal Status

This policy has been prepared with reference to:

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1. In line with The Towers mission and value statement the whole school, including the early years' foundation stage wishes all those who come within its walls to feel comfortable and able communicate openly about anything which worries them.
- 2.2. Any person raising a complaint can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously, that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or body conducting and inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them.
- 2.3. Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to all complaints will be kept in a confidential file for three years whether the complaint is resolved at a preliminary stage or if it proceeds to a panel hearing.
- 2.4. This procedure is available online or on request from the school office and covers all of the School including the EYFS.

3. Stage 1 -Initial Concerns – Informal Resolution

- 3.1. If a parent, child, staff member or visitor has a concern. In the first instance we hope that they will air their concerns, wherever possible and appropriate, with the person involved. Indeed, we would prefer concern to be aired informally so that the concern can be resolved informally.
- 3.2. However, if more appropriate, parents are asked to speak with the child's subject teacher, Form Tutor or Head of Key Stage. Many queries are very often ironed out quickly in the initial stages and do not grow into bigger issues if dealt with quickly. Staff will aim to be as helpful as possible and apologise where this is necessary. If the person approached cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a member of the Senior Leadership Team. It may be appropriate for a parent/carer of a child in EYFS to contact Ofsted contact details: Tel 0300 123 1231 email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.
- 3.3. Should the school receive a written complaint about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements then this would need to be investigated and the complainant notified of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints needs to be available to OFSTED or ISI on request.
- 3.4. Complaints made to a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be referred to the relevant teacher or member of the care staff unless the member of the Senior Leadership Team deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- 3.5. The person receiving the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved

within one week (unless the complaint is received during a weekend or school holiday) or in the event that the recipient and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed to stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

- 3.6. In the event of a concern being of a serious nature, or that having aired your concern the matter has not been resolved within one week, the complainant is free to initiate stage 2 immediately.

4. Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- 4.1. The complaints co-ordinator at this school is the Headmistress.
- 4.2. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the complainant should write to the Headmistress, or her Deputy in the Headmistress's absence detailing the complaint within 7 days of the written or verbal complaint made by the parents under Stage 1. (If the complaint concerns the Headmistress (or Deputy) herself then the letter should be addressed to the Chair of Governors or Sister Mary Andrew).
- 4.3. The matter will be dealt with impartially in order to seek to reduce conflict and hostility.
- 4.4. An acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will be sent within 2 school days. The acknowledgement will include the time scale of 7 days estimated to complete the procedure in full. The complainant will also be informed of the progress of the case and any extension of the time required if this is indicated.
- 4.5. In most cases, a meeting will be arranged to speak with the complainant, at a mutually convenient time, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 4.6. It may be necessary for further investigations to be carried out.
- 4.7. The aim will be to address all points in the written complaint, ensure that the complaint is dealt with effectively and with appropriate redress if this is necessary.
- 4.8. Once the Headmistress, Deputy or Chair of Governors is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing within 7 days. Reasons will also be given for his/her decision.
- 4.9. Information received in confidence will be treated as such unless there is a need to refer the matter to a third party or outside agency in which case the complainant will be informed of this necessity. Where an improvement in services is indicated the matter (without revealing the identities of those involved) will be referred to the Senior Leadership Team for action or a change of policy.
- 4.10. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.
- 4.11. Complaints are reported, without identifying the individuals concerned, to the Trustees for the purposes of monitoring and review.

5. Stage 3- Panel Hearing

- 5.1. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to Sister Mary Patrick who has been appointed by the Trustees to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

- 5.2. 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. (Known as the independent visitor) Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Trustees. Sister Mary Patrick will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.
- 5.3. If the Panel deems 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 two days prior to the hearing.
- 5.4. The complainant 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.
- 5.5. If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- 5.6. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall implement within seven days of the Hearing. A copy of those findings and recommendations will be sent by electronic mail and Royal Mail to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and a copy will be available for inspection on the premises.
- 5.7. The panel will provide a copy of its findings and recommendations to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.
- 5.8. The panel will make available for inspection on the school premises by the Trustees and the Headmistress a copy of its findings and recommendations.

6. Footnote

If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the chair of the Trustees is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

7. Useful Contacts

Should you wish to discuss any issues with someone outside the school, the following people are among those who may be used as a resource. In particular for EYFS parents who believe that we are not meeting the EYFS requirements they should contact OFSTED or ISI.

- Lindsey Tunbridge-Adams
Children's Safeguarding Manager
Children's Safeguarding Unit, West Sussex County Council.
Second Floor, Bognor Health Centre
West Street
Bognor Regis PO22
1UT

Tel: 033022 23339 : lindsey.tunbridgeadams@westsussex.gov.uk
- The Chairman of the P.T.A. - The name will be supplied on request.

- Ofsted contact details: Tel 0300 123 1231 email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- ISI Contact Details Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9 - 12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA Telephone 020 7600 0100 Fax 020 7776 8849
- ISA Contact details Neil Roskilly, 01799581692 email: neil.roskilly@isaschools.org.uk
- Independent Schools Council contact details ISC St Vincent House 30 Orange Street, London WC2H 7HH Telephone 020 7766 7070
- Independent Visitor - Mrs E Laybourne, Head, Burgess Hill Girls, Keymer road, Burgess Hill West Sussex RH15 OEG. Tel: 07739 364899

8. There were two formal complaints in the academic year 2016-17, both of which were resolved at Stage 2.