



THE DOWNS MALVERN

Complaints Policy

This policy is relevant to all sections of the school, EYFS, Pre-prep and The Prep School.

The School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns that may arise. Many concerns that pupils and parents have do not necessarily call for complaint, but should still be brought to the school's attention. Help can only be given about issues that are known. This policy is available to the parents of pupils and of prospective pupils. It is applicable to all pupils in the school including those in the EYFS.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction, which needs a response.

The school will endeavour to deal with complaints **within a reasonable time** and in a courteous and efficient way, and where appropriate, will take action.

It is the school's policy that complaints should not rebound on the children.

Complaints Procedure

This is a 3 stage procedure with specific timescales in order to resolve any issue as quickly as possible.

STAGE 1 INFORMAL

1. Wherever possible it is best to raise an issue face to face with the person most closely concerned with the issue. Please make an appointment with the person concerned to allow for a suitable period of time to be available to discuss the issues fully. This normally results in the matter being resolved immediately and to your satisfaction.
2. You may ask for a meeting with a senior member of staff to raise your concern and again the matter will normally be resolved quickly to both parties' satisfaction. In this instance the time frame to manage the complaint will be immediate and feedback will be verbal providing that a satisfactory outcome has been achieved.
3. Complaints dealt with informally as above should be resolved within seven working days of the complaint being made.

STAGE 2 COMPLAINT IN WRITING

4. If your complaint cannot be satisfactorily dealt with on an informal basis, you may make a more serious complaint in writing and the school will;
 - a. acknowledge your complaint in writing **within five working days**.
 - b. inform you how the matter will be dealt with and how matters will proceed.
 - c. carry out any necessary investigations.
 - d. Send a letter to explain the conclusion to you, along with reasons for it and any action being taken or proposed.

5. Your complaint or concern will remain confidential and all information treated with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Head and those directly involved. The Chair of Governors may have to be informed.
6. We cannot rule out the possibility of the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly the identities of those involved. This would only be likely to be necessary where a child's safety is involved or an illegal act has occurred. You will be kept fully informed.
7. Whilst information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we may not be able to pursue anonymous complaints.
8. Action, which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints, will be handled confidentially within school.
9. A complaint of this nature should be managed within **fourteen working days**.

STAGE 3 A PANEL HEARING

If You Are Not Satisfied With the Outcome

1. We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome and feel that your concerns have been taken seriously.
2. If you are not satisfied and notify the Headmaster **within five working days**, the Headmaster will advise that you refer the matter to the Chair of the Governors. Alternatively, you may wish to write direct to the Chair. The Chair of Governors will ask for a full report from the Head and will examine all of the facts thoroughly before responding. This may result in a positive solution but if it does not, the Chair will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be accompanied but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.
3. The Chair of Governors will:
4.
 - a. Acknowledge your complaint in writing **within five working days**.
 - b. Inform you how the matter will be dealt with and how matters will proceed.
 - c. Carry out any necessary investigations.
 - d. Send a letter to explain the findings and recommendations to you and, where appropriate, any other involved party, along with reasons for it and any action being taken or proposed. This will also be made available within school for inspection and kept on premises by the Head
 - e. This should be managed within a **period of fourteen days** from acknowledging your letter but will be dependent on both parties being available to meet within this period.
5. If this meeting does not bring a resolution you may, **within five working days**, ask for the matter to be referred to a panel of at least 3 individuals, (not necessarily Governors of the school) who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. In addition to the Governors this panel will have one more member who is independent of the management and running of the school. It is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Chair of the panel will invite you to a meeting and you will be asked to present any papers you may have for circulation before the meeting. Again you will be entitled to be accompanied. This panel will:

- a. Acknowledge your complaint in writing **within five working days**.
 - b. Inform you how the matter will be dealt with and how matters will proceed.
 - c. Carry out any necessary investigations.
 - d. Send a letter to explain the findings and recommendations to you and, where appropriate, any other involved party, along with reasons for it and any action being taken or proposed. This will also be made available within school for inspection.
 - e. This process should be complete **within 21 days** from acknowledging your complaint.
6. If your concern has still not been dealt with to your satisfaction, you may wish to seek independent legal advice. You may also wish to contact Ofsted Tel: 0300 123 1231 or ISI Tel: 020 7600 0100.

Written records of all complaints will be kept confidentially by the school together with supporting evidence, correspondence, and statements relating to individual complaints and will be made available to inspectors or the secretary of State if required. This record will state whether the complaint was resolved at a preliminary stage or progressed to a panel and will be kept for a minimum of three years.

- This policy is available to all staff and boarders
- Pupils are not penalised for making a complaint in good faith
- Boarders and their parents are informed how to contact Ofsted regarding boarding welfare and this information is displayed prominently around the school.

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
0300 123 1231

- All written records of complaints are reviewed annually by both the Headmaster and the chairman of Governors
- Complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils

Alastair S Cook
Headmaster
August 2021

Review August 2022