



PROSPECT HOUSE
SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 2026

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

Introduction

The school prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to their pupils. It is a fundamental tenet of the school's philosophy that its school be conducted with the active support of parents, in a partnership with parents at the level of each individual family, to achieve the best for the children. The procedure contained in this document, which applies to all parents of pupils at the school, including parents of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children, is intended to reflect the aim that any concern raised by a parent will be followed up with all appropriate seriousness. A concern is any issue that a parent wishes to raise with the school that affects their child, their family or that of another child or family.

Safeguarding Concerns:

If a parent has a concern about the safety or welfare of their child or another child, this should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Headmistress in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy. Safeguarding concerns will be handled under the school's safeguarding procedures, not the complaints procedure. However, if a parent is unhappy with how the school has handled a safeguarding concern, they may raise a complaint using this procedure.

What constitutes a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you raise in good faith.

If one parent raises a complaint, the school is likely to involve the other parent (where applicable), for example by inviting both parents to meet the headmistress and sending written communications to both parents. This is because the school considers it in the interests of maintaining an open dialogue with parents that both parents are kept informed.

References to 'school days' in this procedure are to term-time days for pupils.

Stage 1 – Informal resolution

Most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally, and within seven working days.

If a parent has a complaint it should normally be made to the class teacher, Deputy Head or the Heads of Lower or Upper School, as appropriate. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway to the parent's satisfaction. If the class teacher, Deputy Head or Heads of Lower or Upper School cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult one or more members of staff and/or seek guidance from the head or governors.

Complaints made to a member of staff will invariably be reported to the headmistress so that he/she may be aware of it and deal with it as described above.

The headmistress 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 seven school days or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the parent will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Complaints about the Headmistress:

If the complaint is about the Headmistress, the parent should write directly to the Chair of Governors, whose contact details can be found on the school website at www.prospecths.org.uk/our-community/governance/. The Chair of Governors will investigate the complaint and respond in writing, normally within 14 school days. If the parent is not satisfied with the Chair's response, they may proceed to Stage 3 (Panel Hearing).



Complaints about Governors:

If the complaint is about a governor, the parent should write to the Chair of Governors (or the Vice-Chair if the complaint is about the Chair). The Chair (or Vice-Chair) will investigate the complaint and respond in writing, normally within 14 school days. If the parent is not satisfied with the response, they may proceed to Stage 3 (Panel Hearing). The governor who is the subject of the complaint will not be a member of the complaints panel.

Stage 2 – Formal resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parent should put their complaint, or repeat it, in writing to the headmistress. If a parent wishes to raise a formal complaint then this should be made clear in any correspondence sent to the school: the letter or email should be headed "Formal Complaint". The headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the headmistress will meet or speak by telephone with the parents concerned, normally within three school days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. An attempt will be made to reach a resolution at this stage. Otherwise, the headmistress will respond formally and in writing normally within a further seven school days.

It may be necessary for the headmistress to carry out further investigations and/or to invoke the school's internal disciplinary procedure (where the complaint concerns a member of staff). If this means that the headmistress is unable to provide the formal response within seven school days, the school will inform the parents accordingly, although for reasons of employee confidentiality the parents will not be given information about any such disciplinary process. The timeframe for the investigation will be determined by the headmistress, based on the specifics of the complaint, and communicated to the parents, but will not normally exceed ten working days.

The headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the headmistress is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. If the headmistress has deemed it necessary or appropriate to invoke the school's internal disciplinary procedure, no final decision regarding the complaint will normally be made until that internal procedure has concluded. This is so that the disciplinary outcome is not prejudged. When the headmistress is in a position to issue the decision, he/she will also give reasons for the decision.

If either parent is not satisfied with the headmistress's decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel hearing

If a parent seeks to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the governor (in this procedure, "the convenor") to call hearings of the complaints panel.

The convenor will then refer the matter to the complaints panel for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matter or matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The convenor, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 school days.

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 three school days prior to the hearing.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person of their choice. This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The companion may address the panel, make representations on behalf of the parents and ask questions but may not answer questions posed by the panel to the parents.

If possible, the panel will resolve the parent's complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out and on what date the panel will reconvene.

Within seven school days of the hearing (or final hearing) the panel will issue a written statement of its findings, decision and, if any, recommendations and send the statement to the parents, the headmistress, the governors and, where relevant, the person complained about.

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. This timeframe supercedes the above timeframes in the case of complaints regarding the EYFS.

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of the complaint being received. This timeframe applies to all stages of the complaints procedure (Stages 1, 2, and 3) for EYFS complaints. If the complaint reaches Stage 3 (Panel Hearing), the panel will aim to complete the process within this 28-day timeframe, but may extend it if necessary. The parent will be informed if the timeframe is extended.

Panel Hearing Procedure:

- The hearing will be held in private
- The panel will consider written and oral evidence from the parents, the Headmistress, and any other relevant parties
- The parents may call witnesses (with prior notice to the convenor)
- The Headmistress may call witnesses (with prior notice to the convenor)
- The panel may ask questions of all parties and witnesses
- The parents and Headmistress will have the opportunity to make closing statements
- The panel will deliberate in private and reach a decision by majority vote (or unanimous decision if possible)
- The panel's decision is final

Overall timeframe for Stage 3:

The school aims to complete Stage 3 (Panel Hearing) within 28 school days of the parent invoking this stage. However, this timeframe may be extended if:

- Further investigation is required
- Witnesses are unavailable
- The panel needs to reconvene
- If the timeframe is extended, the convenor will inform the parents and provide a revised timeframe.

If the parent does not attend the panel hearing:

If the parent fails to attend the panel hearing without good reason, the panel may proceed in the parent's absence and make a decision based on the written evidence provided. The panel's decision will be final.

Vexatious or Serial Complaints

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. However, the school reserves the right to refuse to investigate a complaint if it considers the complaint to be:

- Vexatious (made with the intention to cause annoyance or distress)
- Serial (the same complaint raised repeatedly without new evidence)
- Unreasonable (e.g., abusive, threatening or demanding an unreasonable response)

If the school decides not to investigate a complaint on these grounds, the Headmistress will write to the parent explaining the decision. The parent may appeal this decision to the Chair of Governors.

Anonymous Complaints

The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headmistress may decide to investigate an anonymous complaint if it raises serious safeguarding concerns or allegations of criminal activity. In such cases, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures and may involve external agencies (e.g., police, Local Authority).

Records

Where a panel has made findings or recommendations as provided for under paragraph 21 above, a copy of those findings and recommendations will be kept on the school premises (in the headmistress's office) and be available for inspection by the headmistress or the proprietor.



The school will keep a written record of all complaints where Stage 2 of this procedure, requiring formal resolution, has been invoked and of (i) whether they were resolved at that stage or proceeded to a panel hearing, and (ii) the action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they were upheld). The record will be kept for at least three years.

Confidentiality

All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State of a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them; where the school refers the matter to its external advisers, bankers or insurers; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Availability

This procedure is readily available to parents of pupils at the school. The school will also hold a file in the office detailing all formal complaints.

Application

The school has had a complaints procedure in effect since 1 September 2003. The procedure was most recently reviewed to check that it conforms with the requirements of (a) the ISS Regulations, and (b) Section 3 (The safeguarding and welfare requirements) of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (effective April 2017).

You can contact the school via the info@prospecths.org.uk

In addition or as an alternative to invoking the procedure contained in this document, parents of EYFS children may, if they believe that the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements, complain to the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). Ofsted's contact details may be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted on request.

Complaints to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI):

If parents believe that the school is not meeting the Independent School Standards, they may complain to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). ISI's contact details are:

Website: www.isi.net

Email: concerns@isi.net

Address: CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

Parents may also complain to the Department for Education (DfE) if they believe the school is not meeting the Independent School Standards. The DfE's contact details are:

Website: www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

Email: school.complaints@education.gov.uk

Complaints in the last academic year

There have been no formal complaints in the 2026-27 academic year.

