



OUR LADY'S

## **Our Lady's Preparatory School and Day Nursery**

### **Complaints Procedure Policy 5.1**

#### **Background to the Policy**

As per the ISS Regulations 2014 (amended) and the EYFS requirements independent schools are required by law to adopt, make available and apply a complaints procedure in order to comply with the standards against which Ofsted / Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspections will be carried out.

The term "parent" has been used throughout this policy to denote parent, guardian or carer, as applicable, as the person(s) legally responsible for a child attending Our Lady's as a pupil.

Our Lady's trust that children at the school and their parents will be pleased with the standard of education and care that your child receives at Our Lady's. However, there may be an occasion when a parent of a pupil may wish to express their concerns or may wish to make a complaint. This policy explains how such parents can do this and how we deal with concerns and complaints at Our Lady's.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with and by reference to the Behaviour Policy and is available on our website and on request.**

#### **What does the School consider to be a complaint?**

A complaint is a communication of dissatisfaction with what the parent(s) view as a problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, any part thereof or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school or a member of staff has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

It should be noted that all concerns/complaints (even those minor in nature) are recorded (as this is a regulatory requirement) and kept in the Complaints Folder (online) in the Headmaster's office, as any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is deemed a complaint.

#### **Stage 1: Informal complaints**

1. Parents and others should raise complaints/concerns with the child's class teacher or in the

case of the Nursery with the Room Senior. Staff should acknowledge the concern/complaint within five days. If after this first step in the complaints procedure, parents are not happy, they should then speak with the Deputy Manager and /or Manager of the Nursery or in the case of the school with the Deputy Headmaster or Headmaster.

2. If the parent believes that the complaint/concern is more serious or sensitive they should talk to the Headmaster who will investigate, and then report back either in writing, or more usually at this informal stage, through an interview with the complainant, within five working days.
3. Every effort will always be made to resolve the problem at this informal stage. Parents who remain dissatisfied at this stage will be informed by the Headmaster or Deputy Headmaster that they have the opportunity to make a formal complaint.

### **Stage 2: Formal Complaints**

1. Formal complaints should be made in writing to the Headmaster and will be investigated by the Nursery Manager and Headmaster in the case of the Nursery and by the Deputy Headmaster and Headmaster (School) in the first instance.
2. In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or at least speak with the parents concerned, within **5 term-time working days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be agreed at this stage.
3. Written complaints about the fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within **28 days**. The record of complaint must be made available to Ofsted and or ISI on request. Please see details at the end of this policy.
4. It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations. Further investigations will be conducted within 5 working days.
5. The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
6. Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made within a further 5 working days after further investigations and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.

If the complaint directly concerns the Headmaster however, parents should contact the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

### **Stage 3: Panel Hearing**

If having discussed the matter with the Headmaster, the parent still feels dissatisfied, they should contact the Chair of Trustees who will convene a panel of at least two Trustees and one person

independent of the management and running of the School to consider the complaint.

The Department for Education (DfE) provides the following guidance on the identity of an independent panel member:

*“Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered”*

No member of the panel may have any involvement with any matter detailed in the complaint. You can send a letter to the Chair of Trustees at the following address:

Chair of Trustees, Our Lady’s Preparatory School  
C/o Our Lady’s Prep School  
Crowthorne  
RG45 6PB

The Chairperson will acknowledge the request within 5 working days. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will determine how it should be carried out. Investigations will aim to be conducted within 5 working days.

After the investigation has been completed, the Panel will endeavour to convene within 10 working days.

(If at all possible, the Panel will resolve the parents’ complaint appropriately and immediately without the need for further investigation).

At the Panel Hearing, the parent/s may be accompanied by another person.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete as soon as reasonably practicable. All complaints registered within one week of the end of a half term/term may take additional time to resolve.

The Panel will send written confirmation of its decision to the parents and the reasons for it within seven working days of reaching this decision. The Panel’s findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the complainants/parents, the Headmaster, Trustees and, where relevant, the person(s) about whom the complaint was made. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the findings and recommendations can be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and will be available for inspection on the School premises by the Headmaster/Chair of Trustees.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under sections 108 and 109 of the 2008 Education and Skills Act, as amended, requests access to them; or where any other legal obligation prevails. A written record will be kept of all complaints whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing and the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Parents are always welcome to address their serious concerns on any matter to the Headmaster.

Written records of all serious complaints and their outcomes (including at what stage they were resolved) will be kept and reviewed at least annually by The Chair of the Trustees, The Headmaster and The Deputy Headmaster.

Once a complaint has been resolved the SLT and Trustees will review the content of the complaint and if necessary put in place procedures to prevent a similar incident.

This review will be recorded in the Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees.

Parents may also contact Ofsted/ISI by the following means:

Email: ofsted@ofsted.gov.uk  
Ofsted Helpline Telephone Number: 0300 123 4666  
Ofsted Address: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate,  
Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

Phone Number: 0207 600 0100

ISI Address: Independent Schools Inspectorate  
First Floor, CAP House  
9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

**One complaint has been recorded last academic year 2022-2023.**

**Any complaints that were made to Our Lady's were resolved informally during stage 1 of the procedure and did not reach stage 2 as a result. The reaching of stage 2 as part of this process would mean a complaint had taken on formal status.**

**The Complaints Policy does not apply in the case of pupils excluded from school under the terms of the Behaviour and Exclusions Policy.**

**Monitoring & review**

The School will review this Policy every year and any guidance or advice published by the DfE or other relevant bodies will be monitored on an ongoing basis, in the event that ad-hoc amendments or revisions are appropriate beyond this timeframe.

**Reviewed: 29 August 2023**

**Signed:**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Stone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and 'S'.

**M A Stone**

**Headmaster**

**To be reviewed: 12 months from "Reviewed" date**