



Emanuel School

Complaints Policy

Emanuel School is committed to providing a high level of teaching and pastoral care for its pupils. However, if a parent does have a complaint they can expect it to be treated by the school with care and in accordance with this procedure.

This procedure applies to complaints raised by parents of current pupils, and is not applicable for complaints raised by parents of prospective pupils or by parents of former pupils (unless the complaint was initially raised whilst the pupil was still registered at the school).

Complaints are dealt with either informally or formally. The school hopes that it will be able to resolve most complaints informally (stage 1) but there is a formal process (stage 2 and 3) which should be used should the situation arise.

If a parent or guardian of a pupil has a complaint or a significant concern in relation to that pupil, the school will seek to resolve that complaint promptly, fairly and, if possible, informally. A complaint is defined as any matter about which a parent or guardian of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school.

Separate procedures apply if a pupil has been expelled or has been asked to leave (Exclusion Policy).

A concern about the safety of a pupil should be notified immediately to an appropriate member of staff who will be best placed to take urgent action. It should also be confirmed in writing to the headmaster.

The procedure will also be followed where the complaint concerns the way the school uses and processes personal data. Anyone can make a complaint (not only parents) and it will be dealt with by the bursar rather than the form tutor. He is contactable at data.protection@emanuel.org.uk.

References to *working days* mean Monday to Friday, when the school is open during term time excluding bank holidays. The dates of terms are published on the school's website. In the event that the application of this definition is likely to introduce excessive delays, due to intervening school holidays, the school's approach is to take sensible and reasonable steps so as to minimise any hardship or unfairness arising from such delays. Where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in a delay to the timescales for a stage of the complaints procedure, the school will notify the parents and inform them of the new timescales as soon as possible.

This document is made available to all parents on Firefly and upon request on the school site during the school day.

Informal Resolution (stage 1)

- A parent with a complaint shall wherever possible, in the first instance, contact the pupil's form tutor or teacher who shall do everything possible to resolve the matter as soon as reasonably possible to the parent's satisfaction.
- The form tutor or teacher will make a dated record of the complaint and resolution and upload this as a secure note on EMA. They should let their head of year and head of section, or head of department know they have done this.



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- If the form tutor or teacher is not able to resolve the matter alone, he or she may seek assistance from the head of year/head of school/ head of department or from a deputy head or the headmaster.
- Where a parent initially contacts a head of year, head of school, head of department, deputy head or the headmaster, he or she will refer the complaint to the pupil's form tutor or teacher unless, they feel it is not appropriate to do so.
- The form tutor, or relevant colleague (as above) will normally acknowledge the complaint within 2 working days and alert their line manager to the fact they have received a complaint
- The parent will normally receive a response to the complaint within 10 working days of the complaint being made.
- If a parent is not satisfied that the matter has been resolved they may proceed to stage 2 of this procedure.

Formal Resolution (stage 2)

The procedure for making a formal complaint to the school is as follows:

- a) Any parent who wishes to make a formal complaint should make the details of the complaint or concern known to the headmaster in writing stating that it is made under stage 2 of the school's complaints procedure.
- b) The headmaster will normally acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days. The headmaster may request further particulars of the complaint from the parent if required.
- c) The headmaster will consider the complaint and investigate it as appropriate (which may involve delegating tasks to the deputy head: pastoral or to other members of staff).
- d) In most cases, the headmaster normally will speak to and/or meet with the parent concerned to discuss the matter within 10 working days of the complaint being made. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage
- e) The parent will normally be informed of the headmaster's decision and his reasons within 15 working days of the formal complaint being made.
- f) If the parent is not satisfied with the headmaster's response to their complaint at stage 2, they should proceed to stage 3 of this procedure.

Formal Resolution (stage 3)

- a) If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome at stage 2, they should contact the CEO & Clerk to United Westminster & Grey Coat Foundation in writing giving full details of the complaint and stating the outcome which is sought. The CEO & clerk, Mr Philip Cottam is contactable on philip.cottam@uws-gch.co.uk.
- b) The clerk will normally acknowledge the request in writing within 5 working days and make provision for a full merits hearing before a panel of three persons who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and in compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.



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One member of this panel will be independent of the management and running of the school.

- c) The role of the panel is to establish the facts surrounding the complaints by considering the documents provided by both parties and any representations made by the parties at the hearing. The panel is not empowered to make any financial award nor impose sanctions on staff, pupils or parents. At the hearing the panel will attempt to achieve a resolution.
- d) The hearing will normally take place within 15 working days of the clerk receiving the details of the complaint (the panel will not usually sit during school holidays). Parents will normally be given at least 7 working days notice of the date of the hearing and of the composition of the panel.
- e) 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 normally be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- f) Where a parent has requested a hearing, it will take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. Unless such notice is given, the panel hearing will proceed whether or not the parent decides to attend and will consider the parent's complaint in their absence
- g) Parents and any person being complained about may attend the hearing and may be accompanied. A parent may be accompanied by a friend or relative. Legal representation is neither necessary nor appropriate but if the parent wishes to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, acting in his or her professional capacity, the school must be notified at least 5 working days before the hearing.
- h) The hearing will be a private proceeding chaired by one member of the panel (chosen by themselves). All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the chair. If the hearing is terminated for this reason, the original decision will stand. Any parent who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and their comment will be minuted.
- i) The complainant, the chair of governors and headmaster, and where relevant the person complained about, will normally receive a copy of any findings and recommendations within 5 working days of the hearing. The decision of the panel will be final. A record of this will be kept on the school premises (for examination by the governors and the headmaster).
- j) If there is a problem the clerk will normally inform those concerned within 2 working days that there will be further consideration or a delay.

Confidentiality and records

- a) Written records will be kept of all complaints at stage 2 or 3, including whether they are resolved at stage 2 or at a hearing. The school will also record any action arising as a result of these complaints, regardless of whether the complaint has been upheld.



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- b) Records of complaints will be retained for 7 years, unless there is a safeguarding implication where the records will be retained for the term of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached the normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.
- c) The correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential except so far as where a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education Act 2008, or the Secretary of State, requests access to the records or other documents involved in the complaint so far as is required of the school by paragraph 33 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 or where any other legal obligation prevails.
- d) The school is required to declare the number of complaints registered under stage 3 of the formal procedure during the previous year to parents of pupils or prospective pupils and on request to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State, or a body approved under section 163 (1)(b) of the Education Act 2002.

Unreasonable complaints

Where repeated attempted are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of this policy.

Statement of the number of complaints registered under stage 3 of the formal procedure for the academic year September 2020 - August 2021: 1

Date of statement: 1st September 2021