

Complaints Policy

Policy Statement

Caterham School recognises that parents will, from time to time, have concerns about the progress, achievement, behaviour or welfare of their son or daughter. Parents are encouraged to make those concerns known to staff so that they can be addressed in partnership with the school.

For the purpose of our Complaints Policy and procedures the term 'parents' includes

A record of formal complaints - and their outcomes - is kept by the Executive Assistant to the Headmaster, Catherine Acton, in both electronic and hard copy in her office. The record is reviewed regularly by the Headmaster.

The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the last school year (2022-23) was none.

In the case of parents with pupils in the EYFS setting, should parents feel that the EYFS requirements have not been met in full, parents are also free to make a complaint to ISI/OFSTED if they so wish. Relevant contact details are set out below.

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

Phone: 020 77768849 or e-mail via the ISI website: info@isi.net

OFSTED: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M21 2WD

Phone: 0300 123 1231 or e-mail enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The School's written record of complaints identifies those complaints relating to boarding provision, and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). All complaints follow the School's procedure.

Concerns and Complaints Procedure

A vital aspect of working in a close partnership with parents is that we want to know when things are, in the view of parents, not going right. If you have any concerns

However, if you feel that an expression of concern has not been handled properly by a member of staff, please contact the Principal Deputy Head (Senior School) or Deputy Head (Prep).

We keep a written record of every serious concern or complaint; this record will include the date on which the complaint was received and will be logged with the Head's Executive Assistant. We will endeavour to acknowledge a written notification by telephone, e-mail or letter within five working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the holidays. In the event that the relevant staff and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint by writing directly to the Headmaster.

A complaint about the Headmaster should be directed to the Chair of Trustees.

What to do if you remain dissatisfied? Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

If you remain unhappy, please contact the Headmaster in writing. Receipt will be acknowledged within 24 hours during term time and usually within five days during school holiday periods. The Headmaster (or delegated person) may ask to meet you for an initial discussion of the problem. Either in the first instance or in due course full written details of the nature of the complaint, any relevant documents and full contact details should be sent by email or hard copy. It can be helpful were parents also to indicate what they envisage as the desired outcome.

The Headmaster will conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, upon the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Headmaster will speak to and/or meet with the parents concerned to discuss the matter, normally within 10 term-time working days of receiving and acknowledging the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations that may delay a resolution. The Headmaster may ask a senior member of staff to act as investigator and/or may involve one or more of the Trustees. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Headmaster 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 his findings and decision in writing, within 28 term-time working days of the start of the stage 2 process. The Headmaster will give reasons for his decision. (The Headmaster of the Preparatory School will consult the Headmaster of Senior School before making his final decision).

Panel Hearing – Stage 3

If having discussed the matter with the Headmaster, you still feel dissatisfied then please 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. No member of the panel may have had any direct involvement in the matters detailed in the complaint. You can write to the Chair of Trustees at ChairOfTrustees@caterhamschool.co.uk, who will acknowledge the request within 5 working days.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

At the Panel Hearing, the complainant(s) may be accompanied by one other person such as a relative or friend. Legal representation will only be permitted if the Chair considers it appropriate. If it is considered appropriate the Chair will inform the complainant(s) to that effect so that they may choose to be legally represented at the Panel Hearing if they so wish. Should they decide to be so represented they shall inform the Chair at least seven days before the date set for the Panel Hearing that that is their intention. If the complainant(s) choose to be legally represented the Chair will notify the other parties of that decision to enable them to have legal representation at the Panel Hearing should they so wish.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within seven days of the meeting or Hearing or as soon as reasonably practicable. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within seven days.