



**COMPLAINTS POLICY &  
PROCEDURE**

**COVERING BOTH SCHOOLS  
INCLUDING EYFS AND BOARDING**

<b>Governors' Committee normally reviewing:</b>	Governance Committee
<b>Date last formally approved by the Governors :</b>	Spring Term 2018
<b>Date Policy became effective :</b>	November 2009

<b>Period of Review:</b>	Annually
<b>Next Review Date :</b>	Spring Term 2019

<b>Person responsible for implementation and monitoring :</b>	Heads
<b>Other relevant policies :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding (Child Protection and Staff Behaviour) Policy</li> <li>• Anti-Bullying Policy</li> <li>• Equal Opportunities Policy</li> <li>• Sex and Relationship Education Policy</li> <li>• Teaching and Learning Policy</li> <li>• Curriculum Policy</li> <li>• Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• Educational Visits Policy</li> <li>• Admissions Policy</li> <li>• Disability Discrimination Policy</li> <li>• Support for Learning Policy</li> <li>• Behaviour Policy</li> <li>• Permanent Exclusion (Expulsion) Policy</li> </ul>

The following Policy covers both schools and encompasses the Aims and Ethos of the

Preparatory School

Mr Simon James  
Head, Preparatory School

and the

Senior School

Mr Chris Townsend  
Head, Senior School

[Aims and Ethos](#)

**SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

*Felsted is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all pupils and a 'culture of vigilance' to safeguard and protect all in its care, and to all aspects of its 'Safeguarding (Child Protection and Staff Behaviour) Policy'.*

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

*The aims of the School and the principles of excellent pastoral care will be applied to all children irrespective of their race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy or maternity; equally these characteristics will be recognised and respected, and the School will aim to provide a positive culture of tolerance, equality and mutual respect.*

# **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Felsted School (“the School”) makes its Complaints Policy and Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School’s website [www.felsted.org](http://www.felsted.org) and in the School office during the school day. The School will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available.

**Note that a working day for the purposes of this procedure is defined as a weekday (Monday to Friday) during term time, and that all references to ‘parents’ include guardians and carers.**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Felsted School is committed to delivering a high quality of academic teaching and pastoral care, welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and pupils, and takes seriously concerns and complaints that may arise.
- 1.2 Wherever possible the School seeks to resolve concerns and complaints rapidly through an informal process, resorting to a formal process only where informal means have not been successful.
- 1.3 As the School provides boarding accommodation, this Complaints Policy and Procedure is drawn up with regard to Standards 1, 2, 5, 8, 17 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.
- 1.4 This Policy also meets the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (“the ISS Regulations”), Part 7.
- 1.5 In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the ISS Regulations, the School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.
- 1.6 The Complaints Policy and Procedure has been created to deal with any complaint against a member of staff or the School as a whole, relating to any aspects of the School or the provision of facilities or services, including matters relating to admissions and exclusions. Appeals against permanent exclusions are heard under the Permanent Exclusion (Expulsion) Policy Appeal Procedure. Please refer to the Behaviour Policy, Permanent Exclusion (Expulsion) Policy and the Admissions Policy on the School website for further information.

## **2. AIMS**

We wish to ensure that:

- Parents or pupils who wish to raise a concern or make a complaint know how to do so, both initially on an informal basis and, if necessary, through a formal procedure;
- We respond to such concerns or complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- Parents and pupils understand that we listen and take concerns and complaints seriously and confidentially;
- We take action where appropriate;

- If a parent or pupil is not satisfied with the response to a formal written complaint, there is a procedure that they can follow and provision for them to attend a hearing before a Complaints Panel; and
- Pupils will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way where a complaint is made in good faith.

### **3. STAGE 1 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

- 3.1 Parents may talk to, email, write a letter to or telephone the School directly and should clearly state in any communication on what basis they are contacting the School. The School will treat any matter so communicated as an issue of concern unless it is specifically stated to be a formal complaint. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- 3.2 The communication may be to any member of staff, though normally a significant matter should be addressed to the Housemaster or Housemistress at the Senior School or to the Head of Phase or Boarding House Parents in the Preparatory School. A significant academic matter should be addressed to a member of the Leadership Team.
- 3.3 The member of staff 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 15 working days or fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.
- 3.4 If the complaint is against the Headmaster, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chairman of Governors. The Chairman of Governors or a Governor nominated by the Chairman of Governors will review the complaint.

### **4. STAGE 2 – FORMAL RESOLUTION**

- 4.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster of the Senior School or the Preparatory School.
- 4.2 The School will acknowledge a formal complaint within five working days, explaining how it proposes to proceed and setting a date (not normally more than 15 working days from the date of receipt of the formal complaint) by which time a response will be provided. A detailed exploration of the issues will then take place and the response will set out the School's conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed. The School hopes that parents will be satisfied with the outcome and will understand that their concerns have been fully and fairly considered.
- 4.3 If the complaint is against the Headmaster, the complaint should be addressed to the Chairman of Governors. The Chairman of Governors or a Governor nominated by the Chairman of Governors will review the complaint.
- 4.4 Knowledge of formal complaints will be limited to the Headmaster, those directly involved and the Chairman of Governors. Any action taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints would be handled confidentially within the School.
- 4.5 If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **5 STAGE 3 – PANEL HEARING**

- 5.1 Parents have a right to appeal against the response to a stage 2 formal complaint. An appeal notice should be addressed in writing (email or letter) directly to the Headmaster setting out the reasons for continuing dissatisfaction and requesting a hearing by the Complaints Panel (“the Panel”). Where the complaint involves the Headmaster, then an appeal notice should be addressed to the Chair of Governors c/o the Clerk to the Governors.
- 5.2 Upon receipt of an appeal notice the Headmaster will refer the matter to the Clerk to the Governors who will inform the Chairman of Governors. The Chairman of Governors (or a Governor nominated by the Chairman of Governors) will ask the Clerk to the Governors to convene a Panel consisting of three persons nominated by the Chairman and not directly involved in the matter detailed in the formal complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School.
- 5.3 Wherever possible, the Panel shall meet within 15 working days of receipt of an appeal notice. If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of its meeting. Copies of such further particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than three working days prior to the meeting.
- 5.4 The parents may attend the meeting of the Panel and may be accompanied by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. If parents are unable to attend on the date of the meeting they may request a postponement, which the Clerk to the Governors may seek to accommodate. Only one such postponement may be sought and it may result in the meeting being held more than 15 working days after receipt of the appeal notice.
- 5.5 The Panel meeting is not a court case and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The parents will have the opportunity to put their concerns that were previously put in writing. The School will have the opportunity to give its account and each party as well as the Panel will be able to ask questions. The parents will have an opportunity to make final comments to the Panel.
- 5.6 The Panel may reach a decision at the meeting or may seek such additional information as it may direct prior to reaching a decision. After due consideration of all the facts it considers relevant the Panel will make findings, and may make recommendations. It has no power to compel the School to take action.
- 5.7 The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its final decision and the reasons for it as soon as possible and normally within 15 working days of the meeting, (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the meeting), and within 28 (calendar) days for EYFS matters. The decision of the Panel will be final and represents the conclusion of the School’s procedure. A copy of the Panel’s findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, the Headmaster, Chairman of Governors and, where relevant, any person complained about. A copy of the decision and any recommendations will also be made available for inspection at the School premises by the Governors and the Headmaster.
6. **WRITTEN COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EYFS**

- 6.1 The School will provide ISI and/or Ofsted , on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.
- 6.2 Parents may also complain directly to ISI, or Ofsted if they believe that the School is not meeting the EYFS requirements:  
ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net.  
Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 123 4666 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

## **7. RECORD KEEPING**

- 7.1 A complaints log is kept of all formal complaints that are made and includes details of whether these have been resolved following a formal procedure or have proceeded to a panel hearing. The complaints log also states the action taken by the School as a result of these complaints, regardless of whether they have been upheld. These logs also include all serious concerns in which the Headmaster has been involved.
- 7.2 At the Senior School, the complaints log is kept in the Headmaster's Office.
- 7.3 At the Preparatory School, the complaints log is kept in the Headmaster's Office.
- 7.4 The Complaints Log at each school shall be reviewed by the Headmaster regularly and not less than on a termly basis.
- 7.5 In addition, the Deputy Heads, Assistant Heads and Heads of Phase in the Preparatory School keep a log of concerns and informal complaints raised with them, and which they have dealt with easily and promptly.

## **8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

## **9. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)**

At the conclusion of stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure, the School will provide parents with the name and address of a certified ADR entity to deal with any unresolved dispute, should both parties wish to engage in ADR. However, the School is not required by law to enter into ADR and may do so at its discretion.

## **10. VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS**

The decision of the Panel at stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure is final. If parents attempt to reopen the same issue, the Chair of Governors will inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. If the parent writes again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be recognised as vexatious and there will be no obligation on the part of the School to respond.

## **11. CONTACT DETAILS FOR ISI AND OFSTED**

- 11.1 **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**  
CAP House,  
9 - 12 Long Lane,

London EC1A 9HA  
Tel: 020 7600 0100 Fax: 020 7776 8849  
Email: concerns@isi.net

11.2 **OFSTED**

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
Tel: 0300 123 1231  
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

11.3 Parents of pupils who board may contact ISI in relation to any concern about the pupil's welfare.

11.4 Parents may contact either Ofsted or ISI if they have a concern about the EYFS provision at the School.

11.5 In 2016/17 the Heads Office at Felsted School dealt with 2 formal complaints.  
In 2016/17 the Heads Office at Felsted Preparatory School dealt with 0 formal complaints.

Mr C J Townsend  
Headmaster  
Felsted School

Mr Simon James  
Headmaster  
Felsted Preparatory School

## **SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PUPILS – FELSTED SENIOR SCHOOL**

*This section is particularly addressed to pupils.*

### **1. If you are unhappy, or worried about a problem or wish to make a complaint, you should talk to someone. That person might be:**

#### ***IN SCHOOL:***

- Your Housemaster, Housemistress or their assistants
- Your Tutor or another member of the teaching staff
- Alex Keane (Independent Listener) - 07707 602167
- The School Doctors  
Dr Jas Gill & Dr Sara Thompson – 01371 822791  
or at Blandford Medical Centre - 01376 347100
- The Medical Centre (tel: 01371 822791) or House Matron
- The Deputy Head (Welfare), Mrs Megahey, [kam@felsted.org](mailto:kam@felsted.org) (tel: 01371 822673)
- The Headmaster, Mr Townsend [cjt@felsted.org](mailto:cjt@felsted.org) either at home or through an appointment with his PA (tel: 01371 822606)

#### ***OR IT MIGHT BE, OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL:***

- Your parents
- National Drugs Helpline (tel: 0800 776600)
- Childline (tel: 0800 1111)
- Office of the Children's Commissioner - 0800 528 0731
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)  
Email: [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk) (online contact form)  
Telephone: 0870 000 3344

### **2. Do not be afraid to speak if you have a concern or complaint about your or someone else's welfare**

- 2.1 Everyone at the School is concerned about your welfare and there is always help available. If you have any concern it is much better to say something than it is to stay silent.
- 2.2 You can contact any of the people listed above as a first step.

### **3. Key principles**

- 3.1 A written record is kept of all complaints and their outcome, for regular review by the Head or a senior member of staff.
- 3.2 If you have a concern or complaint, you can always speak to your parents and ask them to contact someone at the School on your behalf, unless circumstances make this impossible, when you could raise the complaint yourself.



- 3.3 If you want to raise a concern or complaint yourself, it is best to start with the person who is most concerned with that area of school life or who is most likely to be able to help. For example:
- A House matter, speak to your Housemaster or Housemistress
  - Academic work, speak to Mrs Capewell / Mrs Stefanini
  - Pastoral, bullying, welfare, or well-being, speak to Mrs Megahey (Deputy Head Welfare)
  - Behaviour or actions of a member of staff, speak to a senior member of staff – a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Deputy Heads or the Headmaster.
- 3.4 Complaints will be resolved either to the satisfaction of the person complaining, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.
- 3.5 If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you within five working days to respond to your concerns and explain how it is proposed to proceed.
- 3.6 If the person you contact needs to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding, then you will be given a date not more than 14 working days later by which time you will receive a response.
- 3.7 Pupils are NOT thought less of, punished or penalised in any way for making a complaint in good faith.
- 3.8 Pupils or their parents may appeal against a decision made by the School as explained in the main Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Mr C J Townsend  
Headmaster  
Felsted School

## **SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PUPILS – FELSTED PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

*This section is particularly addressed to pupils.*

- 1. If you are unhappy, or worried about a problem or wish to make a complaint, you should talk to someone. That person might be:**

### ***IN SCHOOL:***

- Your Form Tutor, Head of Phase, Boarding House staff (07788 319002) or another member of the teaching staff
- Health & Wellbeing Assistants (Day or Resident) – located in the Evans block by the Library - 01371 822784; 07764 332936
- The Medical Centre - 01371 822791
- Reverend Little - 07730 412647
- The Deputy Head, Mr Searle, [tjs@felsted.org](mailto:tjs@felsted.org) , Tel: 01371 822614 or in his office in Evans Block
- The Headmaster, Mr S C James, [scj@felsted.org](mailto:scj@felsted.org), Tel 01371 822612, either knock on the door or make an appointment with Miss Prior – 01371 822612
- Mrs Charmaine Stanton-Bennett (Independent Listener) [charmaine.stantonbennett@gmail.com](mailto:charmaine.stantonbennett@gmail.com).
- Sharing/Caring Box in each Phase with Comment/Suggestion/Ideas Boxes in Hamilton House for Boarders .

### ***OR IT MIGHT BE, OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL:***

- Your parents
- National Drugs Helpline (tel: 0800 77 66 00)
- Childline (tel: 0800 1111)
- Office of the Children's Commissioner - 0800 528 0731
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)  
Email: [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk) (online contact form)  
Telephone: 0870 000 3344

- 2. Do not be afraid to speak if you have a concern or complaint about your or someone else's welfare.**

- 2.1 Everyone at the School is concerned about your welfare and there is always help available. If you have any concern it is much better to say something than it is to stay silent.
  - 2.2 You can contact any of the people listed above as a first step.

- 3. Key principles**

- 3.1 A written record is kept of all concerns and complaints and their outcome, for regular review by the Headmaster.
  - 3.2 If you have a concern or complaint, you can always speak to your parents and ask them to contact someone at the School on your behalf, unless

circumstances make this impossible, when you could raise the complaint yourself.

- 3.3 If you want to raise a concern or complaint yourself, it is best to start with your Form Tutor or Head of Phase, for example:
- Courtauld House – Mr Stringer  
Cloisters – Mr Fincher  
Ffreme Court – Mrs Green  
Stewart House (including EYFS) – Mrs Atkins
  - Behaviour or actions of a member of staff, speak to a member of the Leadership Team, the Deputy Headmaster (Mr Searle) or the Headmaster (Mr James)
- 3.4 Complaints will be resolved either to the satisfaction of the person complaining, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.
- 3.5 If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you within five working days to respond to your concerns and explain how it is proposed to proceed.
- 3.6 If the person you contact needs to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding, then you will be given a date not more than 14 working days later by which time you will receive a response.
- 3.7 Pupils will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way where a complaint is made in good faith.
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Mr Simon James

Headmaster

Felsted Preparatory School