



**PRENTON HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

**COMPLAINTS POLICY**

## INTRODUCTION

Prenton High School for Girls ("the School") prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. However, if parents/carers do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this procedure. The School makes its complaints procedure available to all parents/carers of students and of prospective students on the School's website. A hard copy is available from the School office during the school day. The policy is applicable to parents and carers of students only.

Parents/carers 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 or your child raises in good faith.

This policy applies to all complaints raised with the exception of those which have their own statutory processes, for example admissions, exclusions and data protection / freedom of information issues. All relevant complaints will be acknowledged within five school days. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible.

It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution (see Stage 1 below) and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way consistent with the School's Behaviour for Learning Policy. The Chair of Governors shall have a discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

For the avoidance of doubt this complaint policy applies to complaints brought by parents/carers<sup>1</sup> of pupils at the School. Complaints brought by persons other than parents/carers of pupils must be in writing and will be referred to the Headteacher who will respond in writing within 15 school days. If the complaint is against the Headteacher, then the complaint will be referred to the Chair of Governors who will respond in writing within 15 school days. The response will conclude the process

### 1 **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- 1.1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- 1.2 If parents/carers have a complaint they should normally contact their daughter's Form Tutor/Progress Leader. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parent's/carers' satisfaction. If the Form Tutor/Progress Leader cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 1.3 Complaints made directly to subject leaders, the deputy head or the Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher/progress leader unless the subject leader, deputy head or Headteacher deems it appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.

The Form Tutor/Progress Leader 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 7 school days or in the event that the Form Tutor/Progress Leader and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents/carers will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.

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<sup>1</sup> Parent has the meaning as defined in the Education Act 1996 section 576

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## 2 **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- 2.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents/carers should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the School has not met reasonable expectations.
- 2.2 An investigation will be carried out by a member of the Senior Leadership Team who may offer the complainant a meeting and who will speak to others involved and as appropriate. Whenever reasonably possible, any meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received.
- 2.3 The investigator will put her/his findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days of the meeting with the complainant or – if no meeting is arranged - within 25 school days of the complaint being received.
- 2.4 Any complaint relating to the Headteacher must be raised in the first instance with the chair of governors (or vice-chair in the absence of the chair) who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a governor to investigate in the same manner as set out above.

## 3 **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- 3.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the investigator, she/he may request that the complaint be considered by the complaints panel of the Governing Body which will usually comprise at least 3 people and which will include one person who is independent of the management and running of the School. That request must be in writing, addressed to the clerk to the governors at the School, within 10 school days of the response being sent to the complainant and must set out briefly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.
- 3.2 The clerk to the Governors will invite the School to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. The School will do this within 15 school days and at the end of that period (whether or not the School has responded) the clerk will convene a meeting of the complaints panel of the Governing Body. That meeting will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, the School and the members of the panel. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within 15 school days of the end of the School's response time. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied but legal representation will not be allowed.
- 3.3 The meeting is not a court case and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will have the opportunity to put her/his reasons for dissatisfaction and to enlarge on them but may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. The School will have the opportunity to present its view and each side, as well as the panel members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the panel.
- 3.4 The panel may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be:
- 3.4.1 sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
- 3.4.2 available for inspection on the School premises by the Headteacher.
- 3.5 The panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 school days, and the clerk to the governors will notify all concerned.
- 3.6 If a complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the chair of governors may write to the complainant to inform him/her that the procedure has been completed and the matter closed.

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4 **Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).**

- 4.1 Once the complaints process is concluded (or a complaint has been terminated due to undue delay or failure to lodge a stage 3 request within the time stated in the policy) the matter is closed. If the complainant is still not satisfied, then they may contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). There is an online procedure at <https://form.education.gov.uk>.

5 **Record Keeping**

- 5.1 Written records of all formal complaints and their outcomes (including at what stage they were resolved) will be kept and reviewed at least annually by the Headteacher.
- 5.2 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will 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.

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