

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE - SCHOOL & NURSERY

Legal Status:

- This policy incorporates the manner in which complaints are to be handled according to the Regulatory Requirements, Part 7, paragraph 33 (a) to (k) inclusive, The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations.

Applies to:

- The whole School and Nursery, out of school care, the breakfast club, the afterschool clubs, the holiday club and all other activities provided by the school, inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours;
- All staff (teaching and support staff), the Director and volunteers working in the school.

The record of complaints is kept for a minimum of three years.

Timescale:

- The process of dealing with a complaint in writing from the moment that it is received by the school to resolution will take no more than twenty eight (28) working days, except in circumstances in which the normal timescales are affected by issues that delay resolution; namely school holidays and other factors.

Availability:

- This policy is made available to parents, staff and pupils in the following ways: via the School website, is referred to in the Parent Handbook and on request, a copy may be obtained from the Office.

Monitoring and Review:

- The Nursery Manager/Headteacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records at which stage and how they were resolved. The record includes, at least: the person making the complaint, the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, any action taken and the outcome of the complaint.
- The Director monitors the complaints procedure, to ensure that all complaints are handled properly, taking into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and making any modifications necessary to this policy. They also retain details of the number of complaints, registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.
- The Director will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown

below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Introduction

Problems can and do occur in any organisation. We are committed to providing a first class service and to that end would like to make it clear our policy for dealing with any difficulties you might encounter. All matters will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively.

The purpose of this complaints procedure is to deal with complaints from the parents of pupils and staff. This complaints procedure does not apply to parents of prospective pupils and it does not cover exclusions. This complaints procedure does apply to past pupils but only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still a registered child at The Villa.

Complaints will be resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils. Parents have a right to make a complaint to the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Details of how this may be done are given at the end of this procedure. The School also has a 'Whistle Blowing Policy'.

The timescales indicated in the procedures below should allow for swift resolution of the complaint. There will be exceptional circumstances in which the normal timescales are affected by issues that delay resolution; namely school holidays and other factors. It is intended that all issues will be resolved within twenty-eight (28) working days of the first complaint being made.

This procedure provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are and whether they are resolved following an informal or formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing and action taken by the school as a result of these complaints regardless of whether they are upheld and provides that 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 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests them.

The Complaints Process

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Parents should bring their complaint first to the attention of the class teacher/key worker or to the school office if it is an administrative or procedural matter. The school will aim to address the issue directly and

orally by clarifying the school's policy and/or advising what appropriate action the school may take to correct any error that may have occurred. The concern will be acknowledged and parents should receive an initial response within 24 hours of the concern being raised. Sometimes it will be appropriate for the complaint to be discussed informally with the Nursery Manager/Headteacher.

It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally. Obviously, the more information the school gives to parents the less scope there is for misunderstanding. Parents will be encouraged to give feedback, preferably to the person involved. In most cases, discussion, explanation, further information or an apology, if appropriate, will resolve any issues. Every effort will be made to allay complaints at this stage and with the least possible formality.

Where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made then the parent (or parents) will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Procedure

If Stage 1 did not resolve the parent (parents) complaint they should formally write to the Nursery Manager/Headteacher. The parent should complete the Complaint Form (see end of Policy), setting out what action has been taken to date and explaining why they are still dissatisfied. This should be sent to the Nursery Manager/Headteacher within 10 days of stage one not providing resolution.

If the complaint relates to the Nursery Manager/Headteacher, please complete the Complaint Form and send it directly to the Director (see contact details in Stage 3).

The Nursery Manager/Headteacher will reply to acknowledge the complaint, and give a timescale for response (usually within 10 working days - *References to number of working days refer to term-time only*).

In most cases, the Nursery Manager/Headteacher will meet or speak to the parents involved to discuss the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the Nursery Manager/Headteacher to carry out further investigations. The Nursery Manager/Headteacher will:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved;
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- Meet with the complainant or contact them;
- Clarify what the complainant feels would resolve the issue;

- Interview those involved, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- Conduct each interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist questioning
- Keep notes of each interview.

When the investigation is complete, the Nursery Manager/Headteacher will meet the complainant to try to resolve the complaint. Any of the following may be appropriate at this point:

- An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part
- An apology
- An explanation
- A clarification of any misunderstanding
- An admission that the situation could have been handled better or differently
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it will not be repeated
- An undertaking to review school Policies in light of the complaint.

Where a parent is not satisfied with the response made to the complaint made then the parent (or parents) will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Formal Procedure

If the matter cannot be resolved to the parents' satisfaction then they have the right to raise the matter in writing with the Director, Dr Ivan Stoyanov. The Nursery Manager/Headteacher will pass a copy of the written complaint and details of the investigation carried out, to the Director.

Contact details:

Dr Ivan Stoyanov
Director
The Villa Pre-preparatory School & Nursery
54 Lyndhurst Grove
London
SE15 5AH

Or email: ivan.stoyanov@thevillaschoolandnursery.com

The Director will reply to acknowledge the complaint, and give a timescale for response (usually within 10 working days - *References to number of working days refer to term-time only*).

Stage 4 – Independent Panel

If the matter has not been resolved, the complaint can be heard by an independent panel, comprising of at least three people. None of this panel will be directly involved in the complaint; one of the panel members will be independent of the running and management of The Villa. The complainant is invited to attend the hearing and may be accompanied if they wish. The complainant, and where relevant, the person who has had a complaint made against them, will be given a written or emailed copy of the findings within 28 days of The Villa having received the written complaint. A copy of the findings and recommendations are available for inspection on the school premises by the Director and the head teacher.

Vexatious Complaints

This procedure should limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Director is able under this policy to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

Policy for Dealing with Complaints from Staff

The Villa aims to be a listening and responsive school. We encourage staff to inform us of their concerns while they are still minor ones, which can more easily be resolved. It is hoped that most concerns and complaints, will be resolved quickly and informally. However, we do understand that sometimes disagreements happen in the workplace and believe in a culture of openness and discussion to resolve matters between staff. We require staff always talk to their colleagues before making a formal complaint, in order to resolve an issue.

- All staff who have any complaint or cause for concern should speak to their line manager in the first instance. If this is not appropriate they should bring the matter to the attention of one of the Nursery Manager/Headteacher.
- A written record will be kept of all significant concerns and major complaints, the date on which they were received and the details of the subsequent investigation.
- All complaints will be investigated within fourteen working days and a formal letter will always be written as 'closure', indicating how the issue has been dealt with and what the outcome is.

When a member of staff is dissatisfied with the outcome and has discussed this with the Nursery Manager/Headteacher, the matter should be referred to the Director. In the case of an employment grievance, the procedure is outlined in the staff handbook.

In addition to the Complaints Procedure detailed above, parents may also make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish to, the relevant contact details are listed below.

Additional Requirements Relevant to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements are investigated and the complainant notified within twenty eight (28) days of the original complaint being made. The record of complaints is made available to Ofsted. If parents believe that The Villa is not meeting the EYFS requirements they can also make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish to; the relevant contact details are:

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD.
Telephone: 03001231231 Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Any correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential.

Number of official complaints during the academic year 2022/2023 is [0]

Number of official complaints during the academic year 2023/2024 is [1]

Number of official complaints during the academic year 2024/2025 is [0]

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Nursery Manager/Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your Name:

Pupil Name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address with Postcode:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to and what was the response?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so please give details.

Signature:

Date:

OFFICE USE

Date received:

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: