



**RYDE SCHOOL  
WITH UPPER CHINE**

# Complaints Policy

Policy date:	September 2024	
Date of next review:	Summer Term 2024-25	
Owner(s):	WT	
Approval body:	Governing Body	
Intended audience:	Pupils, parents and staff	
ISI Regulatory Paragraph No:	Paras. 33 and 32(3)(f)	
Location (tick as appropriate):	Website	✓
	Parent Portal	✓
	Staff Portal	✓
	Inspection folder	✓

# Introduction

Ryde School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. Ryde School makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website and in the Head Master's PA's office during the school day. Ryde 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, and of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Ryde School will also make available, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

## What constitutes a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The School will also ensure that no parent or pupil will be penalised for a complaint raised in good faith.

## What constitutes a parent of a current pupil?

A parent of a current pupil is one whose child is a current registered pupil attending the School. This procedure does not cover matters relating to admissions, and therefore pupils who have not yet joined the School. Once a child has left the School, the child is no longer a current pupil, so again the procedure would not apply. A parent whose child has left the School may escalate a complaint that they have already registered informally, or at any formal stage, but cannot initiate a new complaint.

The only exception to this is if the complaint is a review of a decision taken by the Head Master to expel or require the removal of a pupil under clause 8 of the School's Terms and Conditions as outlined in the Parent Contract. In such a case, a review must be requested by no later than five working days from the date of the decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil.

"Parent(s)" means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a current pupil about whom the complaint relates.

**The School is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you raise in good faith.**

# The Three-Stage Complaints Procedure

## Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's form teacher (in the Pre-Prep or Prep School) or tutor (in the Senior School). Complaints regarding boarding should normally be dealt with by the Housemaster or by the Head of Senior School/Head Master if it is regarding the Housemaster. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher/ tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with senior colleagues before responding to the complaint. He or she may also refer the parents and complaint directly to a senior colleague such as the Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Prep, Head of Senior School or one of the Deputy Heads.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, Head of Year/Section, Head of House or a Deputy Head will usually be referred to the relevant tutor unless the person receiving the complaint deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally. Even then, the tutor/form teacher can expect to be involved in any subsequent discussions.
- The staff involved in receiving a complaint at this stage 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 seven working days or in the event that the tutor and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents should proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this policy.
- If, however, the complaint is against the Head Master, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors whose contact details are available from the Clerk to Governors on request.

## Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to one of the following:
  - ❖ If the child is in the Pre-Prep (N-2) to the Head of Pre-Prep.
  - ❖ If the child is in the Prep (3-6) to the Head of Prep.
  - ❖ If the child is in the Senior School (Y7-U6), to the Head of Senior School.
  - ❖ If the concern is to do with boarding, to the Head of Senior School.
- Receipt of the written complaint should be formally acknowledged within two working days and the recipient will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, that will mean meeting the parents concerned, normally within seven working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

- It may be necessary for the recipient to carry out further investigations.
- Written records of all meetings and interviews will be held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the person investigating 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 this decision in writing. Reasons will be given for this decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, then parents should usually proceed to the Head Master who, unless he has been involved directly with the case already, will review the complaint. Should parents remain unsatisfied after meeting with the Head Master, or if he has already been involved, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this policy.

## Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be directed by the Head Master to the Chair of Governors.
- Complaints under this stage should be brought within 20 working days of the concern arising or of the outcome of Stage 2 being communicated if relevant. Any supporting evidence accompanying a complaint must be provided alongside the grounds for complaint.
- Once the Chair of Governors has been informed, the matter will be referred to a Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors and one should be the Chair of the Panel. The Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint within two working days and will schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days.
- 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 be supplied to all parties not later than five working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not (normally) be appropriate.
- 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.
- After due consideration of the merits of the complaint and all facts they consider relevant, **the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and decide whether to:**
  - ❖ dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part;
  - ❖ uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and
  - ❖ make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within five working days of the Hearing. The Panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent in

writing to the parents, the Head Master, the Governors and, where relevant, the subject of the complaint. The recommendations will be kept as detailed below in the Record of Complaints on the school premises for inspection by the Head Master and Chair of Governors.

- Any complaint about a decision taken by the Head Master to expel or require the removal of the pupil under clause 8 of the School's Terms and Conditions will be governed by this Stage 3 of the School's Complaints Procedure.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Education and Skills Act, or where any other legal obligation prevails. Parents and pupils may contact ISI (Tel: 020 7776 8849) or the DfE should they be dissatisfied with the school's response to a complaint.

## **Record of Complaints**

The School will keep a copy of formal letters of complaint in the 'Complaints File' which will be inspected regularly by the Chair of Governors. A central record is kept of stage 3 complaints and the Heads of Pre-Prep, Prep and the Senior School keep central records of complaints at stage 2 which includes a summary of the complaint and actions taken by the School. Even where a complaint is not upheld, the School may well conclude actions need to be taken and these should also be recorded in the file.

In the 2023-24 academic year the School received thirteen (13) complaints at Stage 2 and none (0) at Stage 3.

## **EYFS Complaints**

Written complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 days and will be shared with ISI and/or Ofsted if requested. Information as to how parents can contact ISI if they believe EYFS requirements are not being met are posted in the foyer.

## **Response to Pupil or Parent Complaints**

The School wishes to improve by hearing constructive criticism or by acting appropriately when something has gone wrong. It is part of our practice to survey parental and pupil opinion regularly to encourage concerns to be raised with us.

The School will not penalise or deal unfairly with any pupil or parent who makes a complaint in good faith.

## Summary of procedures

PROCEDURE STAGE	DETAILS	TIME SCALE
Stage 1	Follow up and discussion with parents completed.	7 working days
Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal acknowledgment</li> <li>• Meeting with parents to discuss complaint</li> <li>• Any further review needed</li> <li>• Decision taken and communicated in writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 working days since receipt</li> <li>• 7 working days since receipt</li> <li>• 14 working days since receipt</li> </ul>
Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal acknowledgment</li> <li>• Circulation of details and related matters to all parties</li> <li>• Hearing</li> <li>• Decisions and recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 working days since receipt</li> <li>• 5 working days prior to the Hearing</li> <li>• 10 working days since receipt</li> <li>• 5 working days since the Hearing</li> </ul>