

# ROEDEAN

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PUPILS WISHING TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

### **Introduction**

Roedeane School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if you do have a complaint about any aspect of School life you can expect it to be dealt with by the School in accordance with this procedure.

In the Junior School, although parents generally initiate complaints on the pupils' behalf, the policy below will be followed.

### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. A complaint may be made if you think that the School has, for example,

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something it should have done
- Acted unfairly

A complaint may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department in the School or about an individual member of staff.

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively.

*I don't want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me*

The School is here for you, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Please talk to a member of staff about your worries.

*I am not sure whether to complain or not*

If as pupils you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them. If in doubt, you should contact a member of pupil School Council, a Peer Listener, your Tutor Prefect or any member of staff. They will hopefully help you to decide if you wish to make a formal complaint.

*What will happen next?*

If pupils have a complaint, then a member of staff will help you to complete a Complaints Form which is available from the Houses or from the Senior Tutors. You can expect the complaint to be treated by the School in accordance with the procedure outlined below.

*What happens about confidentiality?*

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Headmistress and those directly involved. In some cases, the Chairman of Council may also need to be informed. It is the School's policy that complaints made by pupils should not adversely affect them in their day to day lives in School.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the School aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police, in which case you would be fully informed.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

Action which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints would be handled confidentially within the school.

*Is there anyone I can talk to outside of Roedean?*

If you have a complaint or concern which you feel cannot be addressed directly with the School you can contact OfSTED directly on **08456 404040** and they will advise you how to proceed. You can also talk to Childline on **0800 111111** or the School Counsellor ([counsellor@roedean.co.uk](mailto:counsellor@roedean.co.uk)).

**The School recognizes and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.**

### **PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS MADE BY PUPILS**

#### **STAGE 1: Informal Resolution**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

1. All members of staff are encouraged to deal with a pupil concern that lies within their area of responsibility. However, if pupils have a complaint they should normally contact their Housemistress or an appropriate member of academic staff. The pupil completes a Complaint Form available from the Houses or the Senior Tutors. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway to the pupil's satisfaction.
2. If the initial person contacted is unable to resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/ her to consult the most appropriate member of the School Leadership Team.
3. Pupils making a complaint should be aware that they cannot be guaranteed confidentiality as members of staff receiving a complaint are expected to notify the Headmistress prior to, wherever possible, taking action. It is also possible that the Pupil's parents or guardians will be informed.
4. Complaints will normally be acknowledged as soon as practicable and within at least five working days. Pupils will be told what is happening to their concern or complaint and, if a more detailed response is needed, by what date it will be received.
5. Once a complaint has been lodged, it will be investigated and the relevant department or member of staff against which the complaint has been lodged given the opportunity to respond.
6. Once the complaint has been investigated, the action plan, which may include an apology, if one has been found to be appropriate, will be explained to the pupil and implemented. The results should be reviewed after an appropriate interval.
7. Should the matter not be resolved totally, or with a satisfactory action plan in place within two working weeks, or in the event that the Housemistress, or another member of staff who is dealing with the complaint, fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

#### **STAGE 2 - Formal Resolution**

1. It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved at the Informal Stage. However, if a complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, pupils should put their request for formal resolution in writing to the Headmistress with the agreement and knowledge of their parents. At this stage the procedure follows that of a complaint made by a parent.

2. Complaints will normally be acknowledged within five working days of receipt of the written complaint.
3. On receipt of the written complaint the following procedure will be followed:
  - a. If she has not been involved at the Informal Stage, the Headmistress or her appointed representative will, in most cases, speak to the pupil and her parents within 3-5 working days of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter and, after considering the complaint, attempt to reach a resolution.
  - b. If the Headmistress has been involved at the Informal Stage, the procedure will be that she refers the matter to the Chairman of Council (and informs the parents that this stage has been reached), in which case the Chairman of Council or his/ her appointed representative will, in most cases, speak to the parents within 3-5 working days of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter and, after considering the complaint, attempt to reach a resolution.
  - c. If the complaint seems to the parents to have been mishandled by the Headmistress, the pupil and her parents will be able to write directly to the Chairman of Council, who will follow the same steps set out at 3(b) above.
  - d. It may be necessary for the Headmistress/Chairman of Council (or their representatives) to carry out further investigations and, if this is the case she/he will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
  - e. Once the Headmistress/Chairman of Council 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. The Headmistress/ Chairman of Council will also give reasons for his/her decision.
  - f. If the complaint is against the Headmistress, the Chairman of Council will call for a full report from the Headmistress, and for all relevant documents. On the basis of these, the Chairman may decide to call a briefing from individual members of staff and will, in most cases, speak to the parents to discuss the matter.
  - g. Once the Chairman of Council 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, with reasons given for his/her decision.
  - h. If, following receipt of the Headmistress's or the Chairman's decision, the pupil and her parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they may request a meeting with the Headmistress or the Chairman at a mutually convenient time.
  - i. If, after the meeting with the Headmistress or Chairman of Council, parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure which involves an Appeal Panel Hearing (see parents' complaints policy available on the Intranet and website).