

THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL



Complaints Policy

The Children's Hospital School at GOSH & UCH			
Review Frequency	3 Years	Review date	2025
Other reviews			
Governing Committee Responsible	FGB		
Full Governing Body Ratification	24 March 2022		
Governor Approval (date)		Website	Yes
Staff Responsible	Jayne Franklin/J Hinks	Date Produced	2016

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This policy sets out the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

Aims

- To be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint
- To resolve a complaint wherever possible through dialogue and mutual understanding.
- To deal with concerns/complaints in a timely and thorough manner

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to the Children's Hospital School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure. Individuals who are not parents or carers of children that are registered at the school should address their complaints directly to the Headteacher.

Time scales

All concerns/complaints should be raised with the school as soon as possible, so that the key facts can be substantiated more easily. Concerns/complaints should be raised within 3 months of the event or where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 3 months of the last of these incidents.

Complaints may be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Complaints Process

Stage 1

In the first instance you should discuss your concern informally with the relevant member of staff. Most minor concerns will be resolved quickly and effectively at this stage. The

member of staff will, however, ensure that the Head Teacher's complaints log is updated with the details for monitoring purposes.

Stage 2

If you feel that the situation has not been resolved or that your concern is of a sufficiently serious nature you should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. If you are unable to attend a meeting with the Headteacher then your complaint to the Headteacher could also be made in writing or by phone.

Following the meeting and any necessary further investigations the Headteacher will reply to you in writing with all the appropriate information in relation to the complaint and information on any outcome.

Most complaints will be resolved by this stage.

Stage 3

If the situation is still unresolved and you wish to take matters further, depending on the details of the case, you can either:

- a) pursue the matter through [GOSH's PALS department](#) (Patients Advice and Liaison Service) or [UCLH PALS department](#)

Please click on the relevant link above for full details of the procedures to be followed.

Or

- b) make a formal complaint to the Chair of Governors. You should provide full details of the nature of the complaint and how it has been handled to date.

Please address your letter to:

Private and Confidential
Chair of Governors
c/o Clerk to the Governing Body
The Children's Hospital School at GOSH & UCH
Great Ormond Street NHS Trust
London
WC1N 3JH

If you have a complaint about the Head Teacher you should contact the Chair of Governors as outlined in b) above. The Chair will endeavour to resolve the issue through dialogue with the school but if you are not happy with the outcome you can make a formal complaint as outlined below.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Formal Complaints to the Governing Body

The Governors will first ensure that the earlier stages of the complaints procedure have been exhausted. Complaints still unresolved after Stage 2 should usually be made in writing and sent **within 10 working days of receiving the Head Teacher's written response.**

A Governors' Complaints Panel consisting of 3 governors (with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint) will be convened and a meeting will be arranged with enough notice period given so that everyone can attend. At least five school days' notice will be given of the meeting. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from the Children's Hospital School available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school.

At this meeting the issues round the complaint can be discussed and everyone involved will be invited to put forward their case.

After hearing all the evidence, the governors will decide on a course of action and inform the complainant and the Head Teacher in writing of the outcome **within a maximum of 15 school days from the date of the panel meeting.**

This may be to the effect that:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion so the complaint cannot be upheld.
- The complaint is not substantiated by the evidence.
- The complaint is substantiated in part or in full. Some details may then be given of action the school may be taking to rectify the situation or to review procedures to prevent a recurrence.

The matter has been fully investigated and that appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential under the Data Protection Act (e.g. where staff disciplinary procedures are being followed).

Further action

If you consider that the Governing Body has not acted properly in carrying out its investigation into your complaint you have the right to complain to the Local Authority (LA) as it has a responsibility to ensure that Governing Bodies act properly. The LA does not have the power to instruct the Governing Body to reverse its decision but will want to satisfy itself that the Governing Body has conducted the investigation fairly.

In the unlikely event that you will need to complain to the LA about the Governing Body's handling of the complaint please write to:

London Borough of Camden
Schools Complaints Advice
Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

email: school.complaints@camden.gov.uk
tel: 020 7974 2850

If, after the completion of the school's complaints procedures, you remain dissatisfied you have the right to refer your complaint to the Department for Education. The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the school. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
School Complaints Unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Monitoring and Review Procedures

The Governors monitor the complaints procedure to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head Teacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how and at what stage they were resolved.

As per the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2018 the details of complaints and their resolution will not be shared beyond those individuals directly involved.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Appendix A

Complaints not in scope of the procedure

Exceptions	Who to contact
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs Matters likely to require a Child Protection Inquiry	Concerns should be raised directly with Local Authorities
Exclusion of children from school	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions
Whistleblowing	The school has an internal whistleblowing policy for its employees and voluntary staff.
Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures	The school has its own internal grievance and disciplinary procedures.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

Policy for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

The Children's Hospital School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

The Children's Hospital School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information

- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact The Children's Hospital School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the Children's Hospital School