



Complaints Policy 2025-2026

Author:

C Phelps, Head

Approved by Board of Governors:

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**MORE
HOUSE
SCHOOL**

KNIGHTSBRIDGE

This Complaints Policy is available to parents of pupils currently on roll at More House School and is available on the School website. A copy can also be supplied by the School on request.

1. Introduction and Scope

1.1. The School enjoys close relationships with parents and, should a concern or complaint arise, it is expected that parents will contact the School as a matter of urgency so that the issue can be discussed with a view to resolution. If parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this policy.

1.2. A complaint refers to any expression of dissatisfaction, regardless of format, about the School, its provision, staff or actions.

1.3. All time scales in this document refer to term time. Working days refer to Monday to Friday. The time scale may need to be extended by a further 10 working days if relevant staff are unavailable during the School holidays, or if the complexity of the complaint requires it.

2. Aims

The School aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of pupils at the School, and others.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial;
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary;
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response;
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality;
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy;
- Make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate;
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process, and
- Consider how the complaint can feed into School improvement evaluation processes.

We try to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal policy will be followed.

The School will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints policy in full.

To support this, we will make sure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the School website.

Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

3. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which states that we must have and make available a written policy to deal with complaints from parents/carers of pupils at the School.

4. Scope

This policy does **not** cover complaints policy relating to:

- Admissions;
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN);
- Safeguarding matters;
- Suspension and permanent expulsion;
- Whistle-blowing;
- Staff grievances, or
- Staff discipline.

Please see the separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaints.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use the School premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The complainant

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- Follow these procedures;
- Co-operate with the School throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly;
- Ask for assistance as needed;
- Treat all those involved with respect;
- Do not approach individual Governors about the complaint, and
- Do not publish details about the complaint on social media.

5.2 The investigator

An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint and establish the facts. They will:

- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes;
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely, and
- Prepare a comprehensive report to the Head or Complaints Panel, which includes the facts and potential solutions.

5.3 The complaints co-ordinator

The complaints co-ordinator can be:

- The Head;
- The designated Governor appointed to handle the complaint, or
- Any other staff member providing administrative support.

The complaints co-ordinator will:

- Keep the complainant up to date at each stage in the procedure,
- Make sure the process runs smoothly by liaising with staff members, the Head, Chair of Governors, and Clerk to the Governors, and
- Be aware of issues relating to:
 - Sharing third-party information, and
 - Additional support needed by complainants; for example, interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person.
- Keep records.

5.4 Clerk to the Governors

The clerk will:

- Be the contact point for the complainant and the Complaints Panel, including circulating the relevant papers and evidence before Complaints Panel meetings;
- Arrange the complaints hearing, and
- Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the hearing.

5.5 Committee chair

The committee chair will:

- Chair the meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout, and
- Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the Panel, and are allowed to present their case.

6. Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened;
- Who was involved, and
- What the complainant feels would put things right.

6.1 Timescales

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident.

We will consider exceptions to this timeframe in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

When complaints are made out of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

If at any point we cannot meet the timescales we have set out in this policy, we will:

- Set new time limits with the complainant, and
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay.

7. Stages of complaint

We have adopted a 3-stage process for dealing with complaints:

- Stage 1 - informal resolution
- Stage 2 - formal investigation
- Stage 3 - review panel

7.1 Stage 1 - Informal Complaint

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

7.1.2. If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their daughter's form tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be

necessary to consult a Head of Department, Senior Teacher or Deputy Head.

7.1.3. Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, Senior Teacher or Deputy Head will be referred to the appropriate form tutor or subject teacher unless the individual receiving the complaint deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

7.1.4. The School will acknowledge informal complaints within 1 School day, which will confirm how the School intends to proceed, including an indication of the anticipated timescale.

7.1.5. The recipient of the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints, and the date on which they were received. A written response will be provided by the School within 10 School days following the complaint.

7.1.6. Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days, or in the event that the recipient of the complaint and parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents may proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this policy.

7.2 Stage 2 - Formal Complaint

7.2.1 If parents are not satisfied with the response to a complaint made in accordance with Stage 1 of this policy, or consider the complaint to warrant a more formal process, then parents should contact the Head via a [Formal Complaints Proforma](#). The completion of the [Formal Complaints Proforma](#) will invoke the formal complaints policy. The Head will decide, after considering the content of the [Formal Complaints Proforma](#), the appropriate course of action to take. If the Formal Complaints proforma is not filled out, then the written communication must clearly state that the complaint is being raised as a Stage 2 Formal Complaint.

7.2.2 The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint.

7.2.3 If complainants need assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the School office via email (office@morehousemail.org.uk).

7.2.4 In term time, the Head will respond to the parents concerned, within 5 working days of receiving the [Formal Complaints Proforma](#), to discuss the matter. This would be extended to 10 days if during the School holidays. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

7.2.5 It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.

7.2.6 The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

7.2.7 Once the Head is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for their decision.

7.2.8 Parents will be informed of the decision within 10 working days of the formal complaint being made, or 20 days if the complaint has been received during the School holidays. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this policy.

7.3 Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

7.3.1 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should outline their complaint in a letter addressed to the Chair of Governors, whose contact details can be found on the Contact Us page of the website. Successful receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged by the Clerk to the Governors within 5 working days.

7.3.2 The Clerk to the Governors will assemble a Complaints Panel as instructed by the Chair of Governors and will forward the complaint for their consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three individuals not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. These will be two Governors and an additional person who shall be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Clerk.

7.3.3 The Clerk, on behalf of the Panel, will then schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days.

7.3.4 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 5 working days prior to the hearing.

7.3.5 The parents may attend the hearing and 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 the parent does not exercise the right to attend a panel hearing, the School is obliged to hold the panel hearing and to report on the outcome, and on any subsequent recommendations as detailed in the complaints policy.

7.3.6 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.

7.3.7 After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete and communicate, as set out below, within 10 working days of the hearing.

7.3.8 The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final.

7.3.9 The Panel's findings and recommendation, if any, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Chair of Governors and other Governors who were not part of the panel and, where relevant, the person against whom the complaint was made.

8. Confidentiality and Records

8.1 Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except as required of the School by paragraph 33 (k) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, namely where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

8.2 A written record will be kept for a minimum of 7 years of all formal complaints (Stage 2 of this policy), whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage (Stage 2) or proceed to a Complaints Panel hearing (Stage 3) and the action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether they are upheld).

8.3 Complaints which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse will be

retained for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. If a child for whom the School has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file. To allow the new school/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within 5 days for an in-year transfer, or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term, as outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

8.4 Anonymous complaints will not be investigated under this policy.

9. Persistent/Repeated Complaints

If the complainant contacts the School again on the same issue, the correspondence may then be viewed as 'repeated' or 'persistent'. We may stop responding to the complainant when the following conditions are met:

- We have taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns;
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of our position and their options, and/or
- The complainant contacts the School repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time.

The case to stop responding is stronger if:

- The complainant's communications are often or always abusive or aggressive;
- The complainant makes insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff, and/or
- We have reason to believe the individual is contacting the School with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience.

Where we decide to stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will consider any new complaints they make provided the concerns raised are materially different to those raised previously and/or are unconnected to the previous concern.

10. Complaints Procedure for Prospective Parents

10.1 More House School follows a three stage complaints procedure for pupils currently on roll with the school.

10.2 Any prospective parent or guardian wishing to raise a complaint, should follow the process for Stage 1 of the procedure by contacting the Director of Admissions and Marketing in the first instance. If the parent is not satisfied by the response from the Director of Admissions and Marketing or if the complaint warrants a more formal process, then the parent should contact the Head via a [Formal Complaints Proforma](#). The completion of the [Formal Complaints Proforma](#) will invoke the formal complaints policy. The Head will decide, after considering the content of the [Formal Complaints Proforma](#), the appropriate course of action to take.

10.3 If the matter is still unresolved or if the complaint is concerning the Head, then the parent should refer to Stage 3 and contact the Clerk to the Governors at clerk@morehousemail.org.uk who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

11. Appeals against Expulsion

11.1 Parents who wish to appeal against a decision regarding a pupil being expelled on a permanent or fixed term basis from the School, should refer to the Behaviour and Discipline policy.

12. External Agencies

12.1 Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 6(3)(f) of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as subsequently amended); by the Secretary of State, or where disclosure is required by the ISI under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority, in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Department for Education

Tel: 0370 0002288

Website: www.gov.uk/contact-dfe

ISI

Tel: 0207 600 0100

Email: info@isi.net