



## COMPLAINTS POLICY

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**Committee Member responsible:** Julian Reece

**Reviewed by:** Toby Spence

**Adopted by Committee:** September 2010

**Last reviewed:** December 2016

**Revised annually by School:** February 2018

**Date of next formal review by School Committee:**  
January 2019

**Signed:** Seren Wildwood  
*Clerk of School Committee*

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

Sibford School Complaints Policy applies to Sibford Senior School, both day and boarding, and Sibford Junior School, including our Early Years and Foundation Stage. The procedures described comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations (The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014) also known as the registration standards or ISSRs; the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (made under section 87 of the Children Act 1989 (NMS) and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) under the Childcare Act 2006. These regulations are laid down by the Department for Education.

In accordance with, and beyond the requirements of, these regulations, Sibford School makes all of its policies available to parents and prospective parents on the public area of the school's website – [www.sibfordschool.co.uk](http://www.sibfordschool.co.uk); printed copies can be made available on request to the Head or viewed in school.

### **Introduction**

Sibford School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if current parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this policy. In all cases:

### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Form Tutor or Boarding House Parent as appropriate. In many cases, the matter will be resolved to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Tutor/Boarding House Parent cannot resolve the matter alone at this stage, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a senior colleague.
- Complaints should be made in the first instance to the Form Tutor or Boarding House Parent unless it is deemed appropriate that the matter should be considered by a senior colleague. It may be necessary for a colleague to re-direct the complaint to another colleague; in such circumstances the complainant will be kept fully informed about who is handling the complaint.
- The Form Tutor/Boarding House Parent, or senior colleague, 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 10 working days or in the event that the Form Tutor/Boarding House Parent and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this policy.

## **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will arrange to meet with the parent(s) concerned, normally within 10 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 Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head 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 Head will also give reasons for the decision taken.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this policy.

## **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- If parent(s) seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should let the Head know, or contact the Clerk of School Committee. The complaint will be referred to the Assistant Clerk (or another appropriate member of School Committee in his/her absence), who has been authorised by School Committee to convene the Complaints Panel.
- The Convenor, in consultation with the Clerk, will appoint a Complaints Panel which will consist of at least two Committee members (who have not been directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint) and one additional person who shall be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and 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 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 all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within five working days of the Hearing. 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. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in

writing to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained of. Copies of the findings and recommendations (if any) will be kept on file and made available for inspection at the school by the Head and the Clerk of School Committee.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Whilst we endeavour to resolve any complaint in the timescales indicated above, there may be cases, perhaps for reasons of holiday or illness, when a deviation from the normal timescale is necessary. In these circumstances the school commits to explain the reasons for any such deviation and, in all cases, to set an absolute time limit of 28 term-time working days to cover the period from the lodging of the complaint to its resolution.

A written record of all complaints, stating whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, along with any action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld), will be kept by the school.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will 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 access to them.

There were no (0) complaints registered under the formal procedure in the year 2016-17.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Under EYFS regulations concerning The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements (Section 3, 3.74-3.75) Sibford School undertakes the following additional responsibilities:

Any written complaint about the fulfilment of the EYFS regulations will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 days. The record of any such complaint will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

Parents who wish to make a complaint if they believe Sibford School is not meeting the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements can contact Ofsted or ISI as follows:

## **Who can I contact if I have a Complaint?**

First read through our complaints policy and follow through the suggested steps. If you still wish to contact someone outside the school the following are the appropriate contacts:

### **Independent Schools Inspectorate      OR      Department for Education (DfE)**

ISI  
First Floor,  
CAP House,  
9-12 Long Lane  
London EC1A 9HA

Telephone: 020 7600 0100  
Email: [info@isi.net](mailto:info@isi.net)

Website: [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)

Department for Education  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
MANCHESTER  
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0370 000 2288  
[www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/private-schools](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/private-schools)

Website: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

If concerns relate to bullying or possible child abuse, parents should contact Tracy Knowles, Assistant Head (Pastoral) (Sibford School Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead) on 01295 781223 or email [tknowles@sibfordschool.co.uk](mailto:tknowles@sibfordschool.co.uk).

If the complaint is concerning the Child Protection Officer, the parent should contact the Head, Toby Spence, on 01295 781201 or email [tspence@sibfordschool.co.uk](mailto:tspence@sibfordschool.co.uk)

If the complaint is about the Head, then parents should go directly to the Clerk of School Committee (Chair of Governors), Seren Wildwood, [swildwood@sibfordschool.co.uk](mailto:swildwood@sibfordschool.co.uk) . If this complaint concerns a possible Safeguarding/Child Protection issue about the Head, the Clerk of School Committee will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and be guided by them.

Should you wish to speak to someone outside the school regarding bullying or possible child abuse, then, in addition to ISI and/or DfE, you can contact the child protection unit of Oxfordshire Social Services Department.

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related policies

Child Protection and Safeguarding  
Health and Safety  
Curriculum