



Emmanuel Christian School

Parent Complaint Procedure

Introduction

It is expected that parents whose children are enrolled at Emmanuel Christian School will be supportive of the school values and ethos and will take every opportunity to get to know both the staff and how the school functions on a day to day basis.

On the school's part, we actively encourage parent involvement in the life of the school. Indeed, many parents are teachers, support workers, volunteers and maintenance staff. This has the added benefit of producing an open environment, which is a good foundation for home - school relationships to develop and for any difficulties that may arise to be resolved.

In our imperfect world there are inevitably times when mistakes are made and a parent in the school has reason to complain. Complaints may come in various forms and can refer to many aspects of school life. Even the smallest complaint should be handled sensitively as they can damage relationships and become the source of division within the school. We always welcome constructive criticism and feedback. This often prevents queries from building into frustration and complaint.

In the context of this policy, a “**Working Day**” is a day that the school is in session.

Complaints Procedure

If parents do have a complaint, they can expect to be treated by the school according to this procedure, and in a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Stage One:

Informal Complaint Heard by Form Teacher/Heads of Lower, Middle or Upper School

Response: Usually within 10 Working Days, unless during the holidays or other mitigating circumstances outside the school's control – in this case the school will maintain contact and give a new, reasonable timeframe.

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns (usually verbal, email or letter) can be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint, they should straight away contact the Class Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult with the Heads of Lower, Middle or Upper School as appropriate.

- Complaints made directly to the Heads of Lower, Middle or Upper School will be referred to the Form Teacher unless it is deemed inappropriate for the Form Teacher to deal with the matter personally.
- The Form Teacher will have support from the Head of School as appropriate, but if they are unable to resolve the complaint with the parent(s), then parent(s) will be advised to proceed to Stage Two of this procedure.
- The Form Teacher or Head of School will also ensure that the Head Teacher is aware of the complaint and any action taken.
- If the complaint concerns imminent danger or matters relating to health and safety or child protection / safeguarding, parent(s) are advised to approach the Head Teacher directly from the outset.

Stage Two:

Formal in Writing Complaint Heard by Head Teacher Request in writing, within 10

Working Days of the completion of Stage One, Response: Usually within 5 Working Days

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis through Stage One, then the parents should make their complaint formally in writing to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- If the complaint is against the Head Teacher, the complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors who may delegate consideration of the complaint to a nominee.
- Usually the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) will speak to the parents concerned to discuss the matter within 5 Working Days of the commencement of Stage Two. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) to carry out further investigations in which case a reasonable timeframe will be communicated to the parents.
- The Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) will keep written and dated records of all meetings and interviews in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) is satisfied that so far as it is practicable all of the relevant facts have been established, they will inform the parents of their conclusion in writing. The Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) will also give reasons for their conclusion. Correspondence will be stored confidentially.

Stage Three:

Formal Complaint Heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel Request in writing within 10 Working Days of the completion of Stage Two.

Panel Hearing: Usually within 20 Working Days of the request in writing. Parent(s) may choose to attend the Appeal Panel and can bring a friend but cannot have a legal representative to make legal representations on their behalf at the hearing.

Response: Normally within 20 working Days.

- If parents are not satisfied with the conclusion of Stage Two, they should advise the Chair of Governors in writing within 10 Working Days. The Chair of Governors will act as the Convenor to call the hearing of The Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint or in Stages 1 and 2 including one member that is independent of the day-to-day management and running of the school. The Convenor will appoint each of the Panel members. The Convenor will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 20 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 2 Working Days prior to the hearing. Parents may choose whether or not to attend and whether or not to be accompanied to the hearing by one other person who may be a relative, teacher or friend.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how this should be carried out – communicating an appropriate timeframe to the complainant.
- After due consideration of all the facts, the Panel will reach a conclusion within 20 Working Days of the hearing and may make recommendations. The Panel will advise the parents of its conclusion in writing, and the reasons for it. The conclusion of the panel will be final. The Panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head Teacher, the Governors, the Proprietor and where relevant, other individual(s) concerned with the complaint including the person complained about.

Other Relevant Information

Additional requirements apply for EYFS settings beyond those which apply to the main school. Parents can contact the OFSTED Complaints and Enforcement Team by phone on 0300 123 4666 or by email on enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints will be made available to ISI on request.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by the Regulations, or where disclosure is required during the school's inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act.

In the event that the complaint involves or relates to a teacher, then the teacher will be kept fully informed in writing of the procedure being adopted in relation to the

management of the complaint and supplied with copies of all documentation. In the event of a Panel Hearing, the teacher will have the right to make representation to the Panel.

The school will keep records of formal complaints and action taken, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice and in most cases for a period of at least six years after the pupil leaves the school, and be used for review of processes by the Head Teacher and SLT.

Statistics relating to the number of complaints received each year will be reported and made available on the school website and on request.

The Governor with responsibility for the Safeguarding Children procedures will as a matter of course, report on the school's effectiveness and compliance with child protection issues and such issues will be an item on the agenda of a formal Governor's meeting.

Chair of Governors: Mr Julian Mercik

Safeguarding Officers: Mrs Caroline Vickers (Governor) and Mr Andy Harris (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Independent Panel: To be appointed when the Complaints Appeal Panel is convened from outside the school's day to day management and running of the school.

Reviewed: June 2024

Next Review: June 2026