



# The Gregg & The Gregg Preparatory Schools



## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. The Gregg Schools Trust (The Trust) has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the relevant school in accordance with this procedure.
2. All complaints will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. The Trust reserves the right to involve external agencies in accordance with its Safeguarding policy if the nature of the complaint is deemed to compromise the welfare or safety of a child/children.
3. Parents of students can request a copy of the Trust's complaints procedure via the schools' websites and from the relevant school office during the school day, and will ensure that parents of students who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.
4. In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, The Trust will make available to parents of students and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of the Complaints Procedure, the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year and the action we have taken irrespective of outcome.

### What Constitutes a Complaint?

5. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unfairly.
6. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you (or your child) raises in good faith.

7. A complaint relating to action taken under the school's Exclusion Policy will be dealt with by the school as an appeal under that policy rather than under the Complaints Procedure.

### **Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints**

8. All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 20 working days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.
9. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing will be completed within a further 20 working days if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

### **Recording Complaints**

10. Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all complaints, what action has been taken and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. At the schools' discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:
  - Date when the issue was raised
  - Name of parent
  - Name of student
  - Description of the issue
  - Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
  - Witness statements (if appropriate)
  - Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
  - Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
11. 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 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them

### **12. Stage 1 - Informal Resolution**

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

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's tutor/form teacher initially. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the tutor/form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Assistant Headteacher (AHT) for a Gregg School complaint, and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for The Gregg Preparatory School complaint, if appropriate.
- Complaints made directly to the AHT or SMT will usually be referred to the relevant tutor/form teacher unless the AHT/SMT deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The tutor/teacher 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 tutor/teacher 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 procedure.
- If, however, the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of the Trust.

### 13 **Stage 2 - Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then 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 meet the parents concerned **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, as far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and within 10 working days parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If the complaint is against the Head, the Chair of the Trust will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Chair may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair will give reasons for his/her decision.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

#### 14 **Stage 3 - Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to The Clerk to the Trustees who has been appointed by the Trust to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. A member of another school/college will be recruited as the independent person. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of the Trust. The Chair of the Trust, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and **within 15 working days**.
- If a Trustee is selected to sit on a panel, he/she has the option to decline if their commitments at that time mean that they are unable to give the complaint the highest priority.
- Trustees sitting on a Complaints Panel must notify the Clerk of any periods of more than a day that they are uncontactable e.g. holiday, work commitments etc.
- 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. Copies of all correspondence will be copied to the Clerk at the time of writing or receipt.
- The parents may 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 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.
- The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within 5 working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

- The Panel will write to inform the independent panel member of the outcome of the Complaints process when it has been concluded.

**15 The following statement is required by OFSTED for parents of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage:**

All parents have the right to complain directly to Ofsted and /or ISI should they so wish. Contact details are:

- Ofsted 0300 123 4234 or [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)
- ISI 0207 600 0100 or [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

The setting will provide Ofsted (and ISI), on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint, taking account of the EYFS requirements. The Setting is also required to notify complainants of the outcome of an investigation in 20 working days of receiving the complaint. The record of any such complaints and the action taken by the school will be kept for at least three years and will be made available on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headteacher.