



1. INTRODUCTION

This complaints policy covers all complaints to Eagle House Group and its provisions and sets out the different stages a complaint is to go through, the timescales involved and who should be involved in handling the complaint. The same procedure would also apply if the complaint was raised by an external party e.g. local authority or member of the general public.

This procedure seeks to create a positive approach to complaints. Complaints are valued as a means to continuously review and improve the services we offer.

From our experience, the majority of issues raised by parents/carers, the community or pupils are likely to be concerns rather than complaints. The Group is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures.

However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the Group's formal complaints procedure. For the Group to be able to investigate a complaint it needs to be made within one year of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year it will not be investigated.

The prime aim of Eagle House Group's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious or vexatious complaints may incur appropriate action by the Group (vexatious complaints policy)

2. OBJECTIVES

- To provide an effective means for parents/carers and their representatives to complain if they are dissatisfied with the service they receive.
- To ensure complaints are dealt with in a courteous and efficient manner and are resolved without avoidable delay.
- To provide parents/carers with a formal method of challenging decisions we have made.
- To obtain information about the public's perceptions about our services, to inform future policy and service planning.
- To maintain records of complaints made so that regular reviews can be produced for internal monitoring and public accountability.

3. HOW WE VALUE COMPLAINTS

Complaints give us valuable feedback in our continuing bid to develop high quality services and help to give parents/carers confidence that they will be given a fair hearing within set timescales.

All schools have a responsibility to respond to complaints promptly, efficiently and in a positive manner and to monitor outcomes.

4. PARENTS/CARERS BENEFITS

Our complaints policy aims to make it clear to parents/carers:

- How they can complain if they want to.
- What will happen when they complain?
- What they can expect us to do as a result of their complaint.
- What they can do if they are not happy with our response.

5. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

A complaint, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as:

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by our staff.

It is for the parent/carer to decide whether or not to make a complaint. It is important to remember that reporting a problem is not necessarily a complaint, but may be simply a request for an action or service.

A parent/carer may complain about the standard of service received because:

- we have not achieved the standard we say we will provide; or
- we have not provided the service to the standard which the parent/carer thinks is reasonable; or
- we are doing something which the parent/carer did not want us to do; or
- we are carrying out our duties in an unsatisfactory way; or
- our staff or contractors are behaving in an unacceptable way (including rudeness, violence or aggression); or
- we fail to do something which we have been asked to do; or
- we fail to do something which the parent/carer thinks we should have done, even if we were not actually asked to do it.

6. COMPLAINTS NOT COVERED BY THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Complaints staff may have about us as in relation to their employment should be made through the **grievance procedure (see Staff Handbook)**, or other internal channels. However, members of staff have the same rights to complain about our actions or services as other members of the public.

This complaints procedure cannot be used to deal with an issue which is part of any legal action taken by or against us.

7. RIGHTS

Parents/carers have the right:

- to confidentiality (if an investigation cannot proceed without the complainant being identified, the complainant will be given the option whether or not to continue)
- to be kept informed of the progress of their complaint
- to receive an apology if a complaint is upheld
- to be informed of any changes to our policies or procedures arising from a complaint.

This complaints policy does not affect the right of a parent/carer, individual or organisation to approach a local councillor or Member of Parliament for advice or assistance. If this results in a complaint being made by, or on behalf of an individual, it will be dealt with using this procedure.

This policy recognises that our staff have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy at all times by both parents/carers and managers.

8. COMPLAINTS AGAINST STAFF

If a complaint regarding staff actions or behaviour is found to be valid, then the issue will be referred to the appropriate Group Human Resource policy/procedure such as the disciplinary procedure and investigated. This will be regarded as an outcome for this complaints procedure.

9. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

We will keep a record of complaints, including dates received, acknowledged, responded, category of complaint, actions taken and lessons learned.

10. POLICY REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive of Eagle House Group to monitor this policy. It should be reviewed annually or when new relevant legislation is published.

Appendices:-

- *Appendix A: Complaints Procedure*
- *Appendix B: Guideline Notes for Provisions*

Document:	Complaints Policy and Procedure
Date adopted/written:	January 2010
Last Reviewed:	May 2017
Next review:	May 2018
Version:	Final



The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

The Eagle House Group Policy has four main stages. In summary they are as follows:

- **Stage 1:** Informal. A concern is raised informally with a staff member and a response will be received within 2 working days
- **Stage 2:** Formal. The complaint is heard by the Head of Education and a written response to the complaint given within 10 working days
- **Stage 3:** Appeal Review. The complaint is reviewed by the Eagle House Group Chief Executive within 10 working days
- **Stage 4:** Final panel meeting. The appeal decision is reviewed by panel and a decision given within 10 days

STAGE 1: INFORMAL. RAISING A CONCERN

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern.

The Group requests that parents/carers make their first contact with the Class Teacher and/or Deputy Head of Education (Mitcham)/Senior Teacher (Sutton) (or if this is not appropriate the Head of Education) of the School in question. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within 2 working days.

The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to or call the school within 10 working days of the schools response and state what you would like the school to do. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

STAGE 2: FORMAL COMPLAINT

A formal complaint will be heard by the Head of Education or an appropriate staff member.

Formal complaints shall be put in writing and addressed to the Head of Education or an appropriate member of staff. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received.

The following information should be included in the complaint

- Your name
- Where and how you can be contacted
- The details of your complaint
- What you want the school to do about your complaint

The formal complaints procedure has two stages; the school will acknowledge receipt of the written complaint within 2 working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the provision has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will take place within 5 school working days of receiving the complaint. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible.

Following the investigation, the Head of Education will give a written response within 10 school working days of the original written complaint being received

Unavoidable delays – If a full response is not possible within the 10 working day deadline, the complainant will be sent an interim response (within this timescale) informing them of the reasons for the delay and an anticipated response date.

However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to or call the school within 5 school working days of getting the response. You will need to tell the school why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do.

STAGE 3: APPEAL REVIEW BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 2, then you will need to write to the Eagle House Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) giving details of the complaint within 5 working days.

The CEO will write to the complainant within 2 working days of receiving the complainant's letter confirming the invocation of Stage Two of the Complaints Procedure.

It is not expected that the CEO will conduct another investigation; their role is to ensure that the complaint has been heard and dealt with properly and fairly.

They will review the investigation and evidence and communicate their findings to the complainant within 10 working days.

- The CEO will respond in writing to the complainant to either:
- Confirm that the investigation is being reopened.
- Uphold the findings at Stage One.
- Advise the complainant what to do next if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome at Stage Three, s/he should inform the CEO in writing as soon as possible. The CEO will instigate the final stage of the appeal process.

STAGE 4: FINAL. COMPLAINT DECISION REVIEWED BY PANEL

If the matter has still not been resolved at stage 3, then you will need to write to the Eagle House Group Director, Mr. Paul Conrathe who will convene a panel comprising of 3 members including himself and an independent panel member from outside Eagle House Group.

The primary function of the complaints panel is to decide on the merits or otherwise of the complaint. However, the panel will also play an important role in attempting to resolve the complaint. The panel should reach a decision on whether the complaint is upheld or rejected and may call for certain action to be taken by the school or the parents.

The panel should invite written evidence from the complainant and the Head of Education on the complaint and the action taken to resolve it. Any written evidence should be circulated to all parties before the hearing.

The complainant will be invited to attend the hearing and bring someone to accompany them if required. The Head of Education will also attend the hearing. The meeting will take place within 10 school working days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 3 investigation.

All parties will be notified of the panel's decision in writing within three school working days after the date of the meeting.

If your complaint relates directly to the actions of the CEO or Directors of Eagle House Group, the final stage will be overseen by an independent specialist, David Braybrook, independent SEND consultant who specialises in this field and whose CV and full credentials are available at: www.davidmbraybrook.co.uk

All complaints at stages 3 and 4 should be addressed to:

**Eagle House Group
Schools' Business Office
95 Brighton Road
Sutton
Surrey
SM2 5SJ**

Eagle House Group keeps a written record of all complaints. This record also notes whether each complaint was resolved at the informal, formal or stage 3 or 4 stages. This record and all other documents, statements and correspondence relating to complaints is kept confidential but is available for inspection by HMI, Ofsted, and other duly authorised parties under Section 162a of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

Should you not consider the situation to be satisfactory after this; you should contact OFSTED at the Inspection and Registration Unit:

**OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD**

Helpline: 0300 123 1231

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- The Head of Education logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved.
- A continuous process of self-evaluation by the School Improvement and Strategy Group will monitor the process of dealing with complaints.
- The School Improvement and Strategy Group take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process and make any modifications necessary to this policy

FURTHER ADVICE

For further advice and guidance about the Eagle House Group's Complaints Procedure please contact the Group's Schools' Business Office at:

**Eagle House Group
Schools' Business Office
95 Brighton Road
Sutton
Surrey
SM2 5SJ**

Tel: 0845 074 2972

Fax: 020 8770 0488

Email: admin@eaglehousegroup.co.uk

This policy is compliant under section 7 (A-I) of The Education (Independent Schools Standards (England) Regulations 2003.



1. This policy is applicable to all Eagle House Group provisions and is to be used in all settings.
2. Each provision is required to keep a central written record of all complaints (a complaints register) and an indication of at which stage the complaint was resolved, the findings and the recommendations made.
3. These records are to be kept confidential and in a secure, locked cabinet with access limited to only senior managers, Ofsted, HMI or other authorised bodies.