

Complaints Policy

The procedure will be as follows:

1. Any person who has a complaint or is in dispute should firstly determine the appropriate procedure to be followed. The complaint procedure will be kept in the head teacher's office and a copy will be given to all new parents as they join the school. Normally the complainant should first approach the person they have a complaint against to attempt a resolution but, a parent should not complain directly to a pupil. Such meetings should be informal and private and used to discover the facts. ("Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down." Proverbs 26:20) When problems first occur, our personality and temperament can be affected by anger. It would be appropriate to take time to "put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, ..." and "put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another ... (Colossians 3: 1-17) before this first meeting. All such meetings will be logged in the complaints record file and the head teacher and governors will be informed of the incident.
2. If the matter is not resolved or either party is unhappy with the outcome, then the complainants should write to the head teacher and governors and they will reply within one week of receiving a written complaint. The reply will include what actions have been taken and what recommendations have been suggested.
3. If the complainants are unsatisfied with this initial response then they can request a panel hearing by writing to the head teacher / governors.
4. The head teacher / governor will reply and inform the complainants that a hearing will take place in front of 3 people who have not been involved in previous consideration of the complaint. The reply will state the intended date of the hearing (within 3 weeks of writing back to the complainant – this allows enough notice for all parties to be informed).
5. The governors are responsible for the appointment of the panel. One person on the panel will be a Wendy Cunnah, wife to Spencer Cunnah who is pastor of Wycliffe Church, Sheffield). She is independent of the management and running of the school.
6. Parents will be allowed to attend and be accompanied to a panel hearing if they wish.
7. The panel will conduct an open investigation into the matter. The findings of the panel will be recorded and distributed to the complainant, Governors, Head Teacher and, where relevant, the person complained about. Actions and recommendations will be recorded. A time frame will be stated for any actions that need to be put in place after the panel hearing. The time frame will depend on the actions. If disciplinary action is required then this will be prompt (within 1 week). If any repairs etc are required from a safety aspect then an appropriate time scale will be set.
8. All matters concerning the complaint will be documented - including the informal stage, any complaint letters, panel findings etc. Once actions have been completed they will be recorded.

The documents will be kept in a confidential file. Copies will be available to registration authorities and HMI / ISI when they inspect.

In any dispute, a decision by the complaints panel will be the schools final decision.

Last review : March 2010

Principles behind the Complaints Policy

Good, positive relationships between children, parents, staff and Emmaus School are vital if we are to achieve our school aims. If disputes occur they will be taken seriously, dealt with promptly, and resolved in a biblical manner.

The following principles will guide our policy and practice:

- We will make every effort to resolve complaints and disputes to the satisfaction of all sides.

“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble.” (Hebrews 12: 14-15)

- We will always try to resolve complaints and disputes within the school community.

“If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgement instead of before the saints?” (1 Corinthians 6: 1)

- We will not consider that the School is always right and we hope parents will have the same attitude towards their own views.

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourselves with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.” (Romans 12: 3)

- We expect that forgiveness will be a part of the resolution of any complaint whatever the outcome for the parties involved.

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” (Colossians 3: 13)

- No one should be accused of wrong doing without appropriate corroboration by others.

“One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offence he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” (Deuteronomy 19: 15)

- We all make mistakes.

“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, ...” (James 3: 1-2)

- If a matter concerns a breach of the Law people should be free to contact the appropriate authorities.

“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.” (Romans 13: 1)

- Established procedures should be followed so that disputes can be settled quickly and fairly.

“Let all things be done decently and in order.” (1 Corinthians 14: 40)