



# Complaints Policy

Policy Updated

23 May 2017

Ratified by the Board of Governors

8<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Information relating to this Policy:

Prepared by: Jessica Ward, Principal

Checked by: Lucy Caddick, Director of School Operations

Approved for re-issue by Board of Governors: 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017

Date of implementation: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017

This Policy will be reviewed annually

Changes made at review 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Page 2 – made explicit that we will endeavour to resolve complaints within 28 school days and if an appeal hearing is required the School will endeavour to complete this within 28 school days.

Page 3 -

In most cases, the Principal will ask a member of the Senior Leadership Team to contact the parents concerned, normally within 7 school days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

Page 4 -

Made explicit that all time frames are 'school' days not calendar days

Change Made on 31 January 2018

Page 2 – section 108 or 109 of the Education Act 2008

## **Introduction**

Elmhurst Ballet School aims to provide a high standard of education and boarding for its students. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school with care and in accordance with this procedure outlined below. Elmhurst School for Dance makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of current pupils and of prospective pupils in the parents area on the school's website and on request from the school, and Elmhurst Ballet School will ensure that *parents of current pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.*

In accordance with paragraph Part 7 of the ISI Regulations April 2014, Elmhurst Ballet School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the ISI for the purposes of section 108 or 109 of the Education Act 2008, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

## **What Constitutes a Complaint?**

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. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

**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. A complaint can be made by a parent/guardian of a child who is currently a pupil at the school or by a parent/guardian who has a child who left the school within the last three months.**

## **Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints**

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 will normally complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 school days and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

**Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will normally be completed within a further 28 school days.**

## **Recording Complaints**

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- 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)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority request them, as described in paragraph (k), Part 7, ISI Regulations April 2014.

### **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 or Houseparent. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for the matter to be referred to the relevant Middle Leader.
- Complaints made directly to a Middle or Senior Leader will usually be referred to the relevant Tutor or Houseparent unless they deem it appropriate to deal with personally.
- The tutor or Houseparent will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved the parent/s will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.
- If the complaint is against the Principal and the parents are unable to resolve this with the Principal, parents should make their complaint via the Clerk to the governors to the Chair of Governors.

### **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 Principal. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Principal will ask a member of the Senior Leadership Team to contact the parents concerned, normally within 7 school days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for a further investigation to be carried out. The Principal will usually delegate this investigation to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The Senior Leader will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Senior Leader is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established they will report their findings to the Principal, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Principal will also give reasons for the school's decision.
- If the complaint is against the Principal, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Principal 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.

### 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 Governors who has been appointed by the Governors 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 and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 school 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 normally not later than 7 school days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint 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 make findings and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 school days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of governors and the Principal.

Number of Formal Complaints 2013-2014: Nil

Number of Formal Complaints 2014-2015: Nil

Number of Formal Complaints 2015-2016: 1

Number of Formal Complaints 2016-17: Nil

The Alternative Dispute Resolution for consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015 require the School to provide you on conclusion of the final stage of the School's complaints procedure with the name and address of an alternative dispute resolution provider who has been certified by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute as competent to resolve consumer disputes. However, please note that the School is not obliged to enter into alternative dispute resolution through this provider.