



Complaints Policy & Procedures

Complaints Policy (Including EYFS)

Policy Review Date: January 2021

Reviewed By: J Callaway & SLT

Next Review: January 2022

(or following incident, legislation or interim guidance)

Distribution

Please note that 2 copies of this policy are printed as standard and distributed to the following areas:

- 1) Staff Room
- 2) School Office

This policy is also made available on the school website.

Updates and Amendments to Policy

Date	Section Heading	Update Details	Page N°
January 2021	Policy statement	Update due to COVID-19 Highlighted in Blue	4

CONTENTS

Section	Title	Page N°
1	Policy Statement	4
2	Stage 1 Informal Resolution	4
	Stage 2 Formal Resolution	4 & 5
	Stage 3 Panel Hearing	5
3	Additions in respect of the EYFS and Out of School Hours care & activities	6
	Complaint Record	6
	Monitoring & Review	6
	Further Action (ISI, Ofsted, DfE)	6&7
	APPENDIX 1: Avalon School Complaint Form	8&9

SECTION 1: POLICY STATEMENT

Avalon School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents/carers do have a complaint they can expect to be treated sensitively and fairly by the School in accordance with this Procedure. This Complaints Policy has been written with regard to the Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSR – January 2015). It applies to our whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and out of hours care and extra-curricular clubs. It can be obtained by parents from the School's Website or the Office on request. This procedure only applies if the child is enrolled at the school when the initial complaint is made.

Please note that the term "working day" refers to a day during the normal school term, when school is in session.

During disruption caused by Covid-19 it may not be possible to meet the timescales set out in this document. The school will clearly communicate with parents if this is the case and will propose alternative timescales.

SECTION 2:

STAGE 1 - INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Any matter about which a parent or carer of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is regarded as a complaint.
- If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their child's form teacher or key person in EYFS. In most cases the matter will be resolved swiftly, normally within 2 working days, to the parents' satisfaction. For the purposes of clarification a reference to 'working days' is when school is in session during term time. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a member of the Senior Leadership Team about the complaint with the aim of finding a resolution within a further 2 working days.
- Complaints made directly to the Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant Form teacher unless the Headteacher deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Form teacher will make a written record of all complaints on the day that they are received. Should the matter not be resolved within a specified period of time, normally within 7 working days, or in the event that the Form 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.
- At the end of each school year the stage 1 informal complaints are filed and kept confidentially, in the pupils' non-academic files, if appropriate.
- All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Parents will be assured that their children will not be penalised if they raise a complaint.

This policy does not cover complaints made by the following:

- Parents of pupils who have left voluntarily or as a result of being excluded (except where the complaints processes was started when the pupil was still being educated at the school)
- Pupils
- Prospective pupils and their parents, and the failure to admit such pupils

STAGE 2 - FORMAL RESOLUTION

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher using the school complaints form, see appendix 1 of this document, or speak to the Headteacher in person. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate action to take.
- In most cases, the Headteacher will meet with or speak to the parents concerned normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter and as soon as practicable during school holidays, indicating that action is being taken and the timescales involved. If possible, resolution will be reached at this stage.
 - It may be necessary for the Headteacher, or another designated member of staff, to carry out further investigations.
 - The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint in stage 2.
- Once the Headteacher is satisfied that all of the relevant facts, as far as is practicable, have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing as soon as possible and within a further 5 working days. The Headteacher will also give reasons for his/her decision. Where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in a delay, the complainant will be notified of this and informed of the new timescales as soon as possible.
 - If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they will be advised to proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.
- The headteacher will record any actions taken as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether they are upheld) in the complaints record.
- If the complaint is about the Headteacher, parents should write to the Chair of Governors using a sealed envelope.

STAGE 3 - PANEL HEARING

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to a person independent of the management and running of the school, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The designated independent panel member will have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The panel will consist of 3 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. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The independent panel member, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 working days of receiving the request for an Appeal.

- 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.

- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate at the hearing. If parents request to be accompanied they must inform the panel as to who the person is, their relationship with the parents and any relevant professional qualifications they hold.

- If possible the Panel will resolve the parents concern immediately, without the need for further investigation.

- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how this will be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will form a decision and may make recommendations which it shall complete within 7 working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The panel's findings and, if any, its recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents / complainants, the Headteacher, the Governors and, if relevant, the person complained of. The record of the panel's findings will be available on the premises for inspection by the Headteacher and the Board of Governors.

- Once this stage has been reached the panel hearing will go ahead even if the parent subsequently decides not to attend.

- Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State, or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act, requests access to them, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

- If it is found that the school has not met its requirements in relation to managing complaints because of the way a particular complaint has been handled, the Secretary of State has no power to compel the school to alter its decision on that complaint, only to take regulatory action designed to address the failure to meet the complaints standard, so that future complaints are dealt with properly.

- The record of complaints is kept for a minimum of three years.

- A written record of complaints is limited to those made in writing under the formal part of the Procedure and whether they were resolved at that stage or proceeded to an Appeal Hearing.

- The School will also keep a record of informal complaints to enable patterns of concern to be monitored.

- Parents should see the school's Exclusion Policy for procedures and can use the same process for exclusion appeals, as outlined above for the hearing of complaints.

SECTION 3: ADDITIONS IN RESPECT OF THE EYFS AND OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE AND ACTIVITIES:

Written complaints by parents/carers about the school's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 working days of the receipt of the complaint/s.

The written record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted or ISI on request.

Parents/carers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can take their complaint to Ofsted and/or the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI). (See below for contact details).

Recording Complaints

- A written record will be kept of any complaint made, detailing:
 - Whether the complaint was resolved following an informal route, formal route or panel hearing.
 - Actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld)
 - The number of Stage 2 and Stage 3 Panel complaints made are held on the school's website

MONITORING AND REVIEW:

These Procedures will be monitored by the Headteacher and the Board of Governors and updated as necessary in accordance with current ISSR and relevant legal obligations. They will be reviewed annually.

FURTHER ACTION

ISI

If anyone wishes to refer a complaint to the Independent Schools Inspectorate they may be contacted via the details below.

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA
www.isi.net/contact

OFSTED

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD
<https://online.ofsted.gov.uk/OnlineOfsted/public/ContactUs.aspx>

If a child is in EYFS the parent will have the option to contact OFSTED about his/her complaint.

DfE

The final stage of appeal is to the Secretary of State for Education. Complainants should be advised to write to The School Complaints Unit (SCU) at: Department for Education 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate Manchester M1 2WD

APPENDIX 1 - AVALON SCHOOL COMPLAINT FORM

To be used in accordance with our complaints policy. This form should be used if stage 1 (informal resolution) has not satisfied you and you wish to move to stage 2 (formal resolution). Please complete and return to the school office, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant)
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant)
Address: Postcode: Day tel: Mob tel: Email:
Please give details of your complaint:
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: