

SCARISBRICK HALL SCHOOL

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY



Rationale

Scarisbrick Hall School constantly aims to provide a quality service and in particular acknowledge the importance of parents and our partnership with them. In order to improve our service we enable our customers (parents and pupils) to give feedback and to acknowledge when we have exceeded or fallen short of expectations. Managers can then address any weaknesses and reward staff when they go the 'extra mile', demonstrating the school's vision and values.

It is vital to take all concerns and complaints seriously always seeking to resolve matters so that the customer is satisfied. One dissatisfied customer can seriously damage the reputation of the school even if there are hundreds who are happy with the service.

Development process

Policy written	October 2009
Approval of Policy by Directors	December 2011
Next major review	January 2013
Parents' consultation	Web site, VLE
Staff involvement	Staff Handbook, VLE
Directors' involvement	Reviews as and when necessary

Location and dissemination

A copy of the policy is made available to parents of pupils and can be found on the web site, in the Staff Handbook and in the School Office.

The content of the policy and its relationship to other policies

The policy should be considered in conjunction with The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003 and Customer Care Policy.

The Aims of the Policy

- to enable our customers to easily compliment us when we have exceeded expectations or to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied;
- to encourage our customers to give us feedback;
- to deal promptly and professionally with complaints always seeking to resolve issues to the satisfaction of our customers.



Managing Compliments

A suggestion box is displayed in the School Office and forms are available so that parents can give feedback. We are working towards having a touch screen and computer in the Office so that parents and visitors can give immediate feedback. A display of thank you letters in the reception area helps to demonstrate the school's commitment to high standards and service.

When a compliment is received a compliment form is completed (Annex 1), filed in the School Office and a copy sent to the Headteacher, line manager and person concerned.

A letter is sent to the originator of the compliment thanking him/her for giving the compliment.

If appropriate, ask the sender of the compliment if the letter may be part of a display.

Managing Concerns

Scarisbrick Hall School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils and students. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

The procedure has three clear stages;

1. Informal resolution
2. Formal resolution
3. Appeals Committee Hearing

Each of these stages have clear timelines and guidance to ensure that the matter is dealt with effectively.

Parents and others may raise issues and concerns over the telephone, in writing or in a verbal statement. The latter is normally dealt with immediately by a member of staff. Most expressions of dissatisfaction are not formal complaints.

All concerns must be treated seriously using the concerns and complaints forms (Annex 2). A copy of the form should be given to the Headteacher and then filed in the School Office.

A telephone reply may be the most effective way of dealing with a concern. However, full and clear notes of the conversation must be made.

The dissatisfied person should be informed of the way in which the matter is being dealt with. Any written communications must be printed on headed paper and approved by the Headteacher or nominated person.



Any promises made should always be fulfilled. Commitments should not be made on behalf of another person or department without first checking that they are able to meet that commitment.

Very often, the most appropriate action is to invite the dissatisfied person into school to informally discuss the issue and try to agree a resolution. It may be advisable to have a senior member of staff present, to assist or mediate.

It is important to be prepared for the meeting and to demonstrate good knowledge of the family, the pupil and the circumstances surrounding the complaint.

The person(s) dealing with the concern should put themselves in the place of the complainant and think how they would like to be treated. Staff must be polite and courteous at all times ensuring that the standards of customer care and hospitality are met.

Once a concern has been fully addressed this should be fully communicated to the complainant. Should a complaint not be resolved at this informal stage within 14 days the complainant should be advised to submit a formal written complaint as detailed in the section below.

Managing Complaints

The web site must give details of the complaints procedure. The Compliments and Complaints procedure is also displayed in the School Office. (Annex 3)

If a complainant is not satisfied with the informal process described under managing concerns and wishes a matter to be considered further they should write to the Headteacher who will:

- acknowledge the written complaint within **5 school days** of receipt and provide the opportunity to meet the complainant to discuss the complaint;
- investigate the complaint and make a written response within **10 school days** of receipt of the complaint. If this is not possible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised target date;
- include in the written response full reasons for the conclusions reached and what action, if any, the school proposes to take to resolve the matter;
- acknowledge that all correspondence and statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them

If the initial complaint is sent to the Directors, they will forward it to the Headteacher in order for the above procedure to operate.

If the Headteacher has been involved at the informal stage or the complaint involves the Headteacher, the complaint will be investigated by a Director.

If the complainant still remains dissatisfied, he/she will be advised that, in order to progress the complaint further he/she must notify the Directors in writing within **ten school days**, copying the original complaint form.

In such cases:

- a written acknowledgement of the complaint and a request for it to be heard by a Complaints panel will be sent to the complainant within **five school days**
- the letter will inform the complainant that the complaint will be heard by a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the management and running of the school within **twenty school days** of receiving the complaint. It will also inform the complainant of the right to submit any further documents other than the complaint form and that these must be available to the panel within **five school days** of receipt of the acknowledgement letter.
- The complainant will be allowed to be accompanied at the panel hearing if they wish;
- The Directors will send a copy of the letter of acknowledgement of the complaint to the Headteacher and request a written report in response to the complaint within **five school days** of receipt of the letter.
- The Directors will then convene a Complaints Panel meeting. The date, time and venue for the meeting will then be confirmed at least **five school days in advance**.
- The names of all parties and witnesses (if any) to attend the meeting and all relevant documents to be referred to at the meeting will also be provided to all people involved at least **five school days** prior to the meeting.
- Following the hearing, a written decision will be sent to both the complainant and the Headteacher within **ten school days** of the hearing.
- The letter will explain that the decision of the panel is final but that complaints can be taken to the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 163 of the 2002 Act.

The school will keep a written record of all complaints, and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.



Annex 1:



Date	
Name of person making the compliment:	
Name of person receiving the compliment: Pupil's name (if applicable):	
Pupil's Form (if applicable):	

Details of the compliment: (Attach copy of any written communication)

Action Taken: (who, what, when)

Reported To:

Review/Follow Up:

Annex 2:



Date	
Name of person making the complaint:	
Name of person receiving the complaint: Pupil's Name (if applicable):	
Pupil's Class (if applicable):	

Details of the complaint: (Attach copy of any written communication)

Action Taken: (who, what, when)

Reported To:

Review/Follow Up:

Annex 3:

Compliments and Complaints Notice for Display and in the School Prospectus.



We are pleased that you have chosen Scarisbrick Hall School. We very much value your opinion and you may wish to use the suggestion box in the school reception area. We may also invite your opinion via questionnaires and forums.

Please inform us when the service we provide exceeds your expectations. We particularly like to know about any member of staff who 'goes the extra mile for you'.

If you have any concerns please let us know straight away. If the matter is urgent and you wish to speak with a member of staff please come to the school office so that you can be signed in and the appropriate member of staff informed.

We will respond immediately to your concern and seek to work together to resolve the matter as speedily as possible.

If you feel the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may obtain a copy of the complaints procedure from the school office.