

**THE FALCONS  
PRE-PREPARATORY  
SCHOOL FOR BOYS  
INCLUDING THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**



**COMPLAINTS POLICY**

The Falcons School for Boys is an independent school and as such it is a self-regulating community independent of the state system of education. It has a culture based on mutual dependence of all its elements. Its integrity depends on everyone acknowledging the common aims and objectives and adhering to the policies and procedures of the school.

The Head teacher exercises an element of authority over parents, as well as pupils, in that parents are contractually obliged to ensure that their son conforms to the school's rules and regulations. The school, however, aims to work co-operatively and in partnership with parents. It is recognised that there are times when there will be issues that are not resolved to the satisfaction of parents, and that they will wish to make a complaint.

If parents or students do have a complaint, the school will treat it in accordance with the policy and procedures detailed below, which comply with the requirements of the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 under the Education Act 2002. It is hoped that complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly, sensitively and informally. Responding to complaints will be given the highest priority by the school and will be dealt with comprehensively.

### **Principles**

- The investigation into a complaint should begin on the day of its receipt where possible and practicable. Complaints could be received by telephone, in writing, electronically or in person.
- Staff should listen carefully and patiently to complaints. Even if the complaint is ill-founded, it is a matter of concern to the parent and/or the student. All complaints must be recorded, signed and dated, using the correct format provided by the school and passed to the appropriate person.
- Parents/students should be asked to put their complaint in writing. This is to ensure that there is no misinterpretation of the complaint and thus no conflict over the action taken.
- If the issue is simple (for example, a student is upset at the insensitive behaviour of one of his peers) and within the competence and authority of the member of staff receiving the complaint to resolve quickly, this should be done and the year group coordinator informed at the earliest opportunity via an Interview Form.
- With regard to more serious complaints (such as a complaint about the quality of teaching or insensitivity by a member of staff), an Interview Form will be completed by any member of staff receiving the complaint. The parent/student should be reassured that the complaint will be passed via the Interview Form to the relevant senior staff, in the first instance normally the Year Group Leader, who will follow Stage One of the Procedures.
- If the complaint concerns a Child Protection issue the complaint should be referred immediately to the Mr Milne or Mr Weyers. Very serious complaints of other types (for example, racial abuse) should be referred directly to the Head teacher.
- If the complaint concerns an allegation of abuse by a member of the school staff (for example, inappropriate relationships between a student and a

member of staff), the complaint should be referred immediately to the Head teacher.

- All complaints-related documentation, and a record of the action taken by the school, will be stored in a confidential file by the Head teacher.

### **Informal and formal procedures for responding to complaints**

#### **Stage 1 (informal resolution)**

- In many cases, the matter will be quickly resolved to the parent's satisfaction. If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their son's class teacher. Serious complaints received by other staff should be referred to the class teacher involved. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for her/him to consult the Head teacher. Complaints involving the quality of teaching will be dealt with by the Head teacher, the teacher involved and the person/s making the complaint.
- Complaints made directly to the Head teacher will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher unless it is felt to be more appropriate that the recipient of the complaint should deal with the matter personally.
- The Class Teacher will investigate the issue and will make a written record of all the concerns and complaints, the date on which they were received and the action taken. This will be passed, on completion of the investigation, to the Head teacher who will complete the School Complaints Form, evaluate the school response.
- The Head of Early Years records and holds a complaints booklet for complaints made within the EYFS
- If a student has a serious complaint, he should be advised to discuss his concern with his class teacher in the first instance. (If a student lacks confidence to do this, he should be advised to ask his parents to contact the class teacher on his behalf)

**Should the matter not be resolved within one week or in the event that the class teacher and parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.**

#### **Stage 2 (Formal resolution)**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head teacher. The Head teacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action.
- In most cases the Head teacher following his investigation of the issues, will meet the parents, normally within ten working days of receiving the written complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the Head teacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Head teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

- Once the Head teacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head teacher will also give reasons for his 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 advised to contact the chairman of Alpha Plus Group in writing. Alpha Plus will then set up a Complaints Panel and will call a hearing by this panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three members not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The independent member of the panel should be a person who has held a position of responsibility and who is used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. Serving or retired business people, civil servants, head teachers or senior staff at other schools and people with a legal background might be considered suitable.
- Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Head teacher. The Head teacher, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint in writing and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days of a meeting with the Panel.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter may be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the Panel Hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately 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 the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 10 working days of the Panel 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, recommendations will be sent in writing, and at the same time, to the parents, the Head teacher, Alpha Plus Group and, where relevant, the person complained of.

- Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidently. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

### **Responsibilities**

#### Alpha Plus Group will:

- Approve and advise on the complaints policy and procedures
- Hear and make decisions on appeals
- Receive reports on the number of formal complaints

#### The Head teacher will:

- Take responsibility for the efficient implementation of the policy and procedures.
- Hear parental appeals from decisions on complaints handled by other staff
- Present the school's case where the parent appeals to Alpha Plus Group
- Report on complaints annually to Alpha Plus Group
- Organise general staff training on how to deal appropriately with complaints
- Support teachers in handling complaints relating to health and safety issues or academic progress (course programme/unsatisfactory teaching/too much or too little homework/progress in a particular subject)
- Collate records of any complaints dealt with using the appropriate Complaints Form.

#### The Head teacher and the Child Protection Officers will:

- Handle complaints relating to Child Protection and discuss these with the Head teacher.
- Support the teachers in handling complaints relating to pastoral and welfare concerns (discipline/indiscipline/ inappropriate sanctions; bullying; overall progress of the student/unhappiness of the student)
- Collate records of any complaints dealt with and submit these to the Head teacher, using the appropriate Complaints form.

#### The Secretary will:

- Handle complaints relating to finance, accommodation, facilities or contract
- Collate records of such complaints dealt with at Stage One and submit these to the Head teacher

All Teachers will

- Deal with, and where possible, resolve complaints about overall student progress, discipline issues and pastoral care.
- Liaise with the SMT in resolving complaints about academic matters, programmes of study and teaching methods.
- Keep a record of each complaint (Stage One/Informal complaints) and the action taken by the school to resolve the complaints. This should be documented on an Interview Form, submitting the form to the Head Teacher as soon as the investigation into the complaint is complete.
- Liaise with the student's Class Teacher if appropriate.

All staff will:

- Be responsible for hearing any complaints brought to them by parents or students and for reassuring them that their complaint will be dealt with as soon as possible, and sensitively, by the appropriate member of staff.
- Inform the relevant member of staff of the complaint, according to procedures outlined above.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Alpha Plus Complaints Procedure.

Reviewed- 2011

**Example of a Complaints Form**

Name of parents making complaint  
.....

Name of son ..... Class .....

Member of staff receiving complaint  
.....

Date and time of receipt of complaint  
.....

Nature of complaint (include names of any members of staff involved)  
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Action taken /by whom?  
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Outcome  
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Complaints passed to ..... Date/time  
.....

Seen by:

í Class Teacher

í Secretary

í Senior Management Team

í Head teacher

To be stored in the Head teacher's confidential complaints file.