



PARENTAL COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Responsible for Policy	
Author	Deputy Head
Approval	Compliance Committee
Review Dates	
Policy Date	Summer 2026
Next Review Date	Summer 2027
This policy applies to Hazelwood School and Hazelwood School Nursery (including EYFS)	

This Policy applies to parents of all pupils (including parents of Hazelwood School Nursery) currently at Hazelwood School. 'The School' means Hazelwood School including the Nursery, a wholly owned subsidiary of Hazelwood School providing care and education for children aged 9 months to four years, located in the centre of Oxted.

Background

Hazelwood School and the Nursery are proud of the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure. Parents should not be reluctant to express their concerns due to fear that they will not be taken seriously or that their child will be prejudiced because of doing so. The School encourages parents to escalate matters which concern them and will treat all such concerns seriously, following them up promptly, politely and confidentially. The School will not discriminate against any pupil because of any parent raising a complaint.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is any matter about which the parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the School. It may be made about the School as a whole or about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. We recognise that it is right and appropriate for a parent to make a complaint if they believe the School has done something wrong or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unreasonable or unfairly.

Records & Confidentiality

A record of all complaints against the School and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting is kept for three years, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 350 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2016; where disclosure is required during the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails. Complaints will also be disclosed on request to the Secretary of State.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is anticipated that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their child's form teacher or room leader. The form teacher or room leader must decide if, at that stage, it is a complaint or simply a need for clarification. A response should be given within 3 working days, and within 5 working days during holiday periods (or as soon as reasonably possible).
- In many cases the matter will be resolved immediately by this means to the parents' satisfaction. It is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved at this stage and in which case no written record is required. However, if the form teacher or room leader cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the relevant Head of Department, the Nursery Manager, or one of the Deputy Heads.
- Complaints made directly to the Head, Heads of Year, Deputy Heads or Nursery Manager will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher or room leader to deal with in the first instance unless they deem it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally. The resolution of the complaint may also be delegated to the Head of Department
- The form teacher, room leader, Nursery Manager, Deputy Heads or Head will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days or in the event that the form teacher, room leader, Nursery Manager or Deputy Heads 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.

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 Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will meet with or speak to the parents concerned, normally within five working days of receiving the written complaint, or within eight working days during holiday periods (or as soon as reasonably practical), to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations. This may be delegated as appropriate but is usually delegated to the Deputy Heads or another member of the Management Team.
- Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to investigating the complaint will be kept.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, 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 will also give reasons for this decision. This will be communicated to parents within ten working days of the initial stage two meeting with the Head (or as soon as reasonably practical). If the ten working day limit is not achievable, the Head will inform the parents as soon as possible to inform them of when they can expect a response. A copy of that response may also be provided to any individual member of staff complained of, as deemed appropriate by the Head.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure. At this stage and with complaints regarding fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements, EYFS parents will be provided with, in writing, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of:
 - OFSTED 0300 123 1231 www.ofsted.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare
 - Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI): 020 7600 0100; www.isi.net

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred by the Head to the Chair of 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 at least three people, selected by the Chair of Governors, not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One member of this panel must be independent of the management and running of the School.
- One of the Governors will act as the Convenor, on behalf of the Panel. They will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within 28 days, but it may be substantially less if the matter is of urgency.
- 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 five working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents and any member of staff about whom the complaint may be made and who the Panel wishes to appear at the Panel Hearing, may be accompanied by 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 facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which will normally be completed within a further fourteen days of the Panel Hearing. In cases concerning EYFS, complainants will be notified within 28 days of the complaint having been received.
- The decision of the Panel will be final.
- The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Chair of Governors and, where relevant, the person of whom a complaint has been made. This will be shared within 5 working days of the final hearing.
- A copy of the correspondence, findings and recommendations will be kept at the School for inspection by the Head or Chair of Governors. If requested by Ofsted and/or ISI, the Panel will provide a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken because of each complaint.
- A written record of complaints will be kept which shows whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or at the Panel hearing, and the date of resolution of each complaint (in a Complaints Log as attached). A written record will be kept of action taken by the School as a result of these complaints regardless of whether the complaint is upheld or not.

- All 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 109 of the 2008 Act requests them.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. All parents have the right to know how many formal complaints were received during the previous school year and this information can be requested from the Head. This Policy is available to all parents on the School's website.

This Policy operates in conjunction with the standard Terms and Conditions set out and agreed by parents on acceptance of a place at Hazelwood School. Attention is drawn to Clause 8.18 Complaints Procedure (Hazelwood School) and E2 Concerns/Complaints (Hazelwood School Nursery

Retention of documents

From September 2020, the DfE as regulator has advised that complaints which do not have safeguarding implications should be retained for a minimum of 7 years (a period determined by the 6- year inspection cycle with allowance for unforeseen circumstances). Where there is a safeguarding angle: 'Records concerning allegations of abuse must be preserved for the term of the Independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.'

Further Information

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted), the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

Parents may approach Ofsted or the ISI directly at any stage of this complaint's procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of our registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the National Standards for Day Care are adhered to.

The address and telephone number of Ofsted are:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street Manchester M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231

The address and telephone number of the ISI are:

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA
Tel: 0207 600 010

For the academic year 2025 – 2026, Hazelwood School received 2 complaints under the PARENTAL COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Complaints Log - Summary

Date Complaint received:

**How it was received (verbal, letter, email): Name
of the Complainant:**

Name of the Child:

Brief overview of complaint:

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution date:

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution date:

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing:

Stage 3 - Findings and recommendations made to parents: