



HILLVIEW
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Complaints Policy

CONTENTS PAGE

	PAGE
Introduction	3

APPENDICES

1. The legal right to complain	5
2. The stages of complaint	6
3. Other types of complaints	9
4. Official complaints form CF1	11
5. Official complaints form CF2	13

INTRODUCTION

At Hillview School for Girls, we aim to provide a high quality education and strong pastoral support for every child within our care enabling each child to unlock their pure potential. The positive partnership between parents and the school is vital and we aim to maintain a strong good working relationship with all of our parents and carers.

We recognise that, at times, parents and carers will have concerns or complaints that need to be raised with the school to safeguard the child, their education and the school in achieving the best possible provision.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Communication policy.

Staff and governors should refer to the Fairness at Work Policy should they wish to raise a grievance.

Aims

- To secure that the concern or complaint is resolved and actions identified
- To take on board concerns and complaints from parents and carers to secure outstanding provision and care
- To maintain effective and positive partnerships to support the child
- To provide parents and carers with an effective and efficient service to resolve their concern or complaint

Objectives

- All complaints will be managed under a standardised procedure that will provide the parent/carer and student (if required) with an appropriate forum to raise their concern/complaint
- All complaints will be dealt with in accordance to this policy and within the timescales identified
- All complaints will be dealt with in line with the Communication policy
- The manner of all parties involved in the complaint will be polite, professional and respectful to support the successful resolution of the complaint
- Urgent complaints will be identified as such and given priority.
- All concerns and complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully. Complainants will be kept informed of progress during, as well as at the end of each stage.

APPENDIX 1

1. The legal right to complain

1.1 Since 1 September 2003 governing bodies (GBs) of all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools in England have been required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2011, to have in place a procedure to deal with all concerns and complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. This does not limit complainants to parents or carers of students registered at a school. A complainant could be a member of the wider community or representing an ex-student. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

1.2 Hillview School is responsible for establishing its own concerns and complaints procedures and does this in line with KCC recommendations. This procedure has been established in accordance with Section 39 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Complaints Toolkit (DfE 2015).

APPENDIX 2

2. The stages of Complaint

2.1 Stage 1 – Informal Approach – “Parental Concerns”

The vast majority of concerns or complaints will be resolved at this stage

2.1(a) Parents and carers should address the complaint to the most relevant person within the school, this could be: the Mentor, the Teacher, the Curriculum Leader, Student Support Manager or the Leader of Community etc. If the concern/complaint is directed to the Headteacher at this stage then it will be redirected to the most appropriate member of staff.

2.1 (b) Parents and carers should send their complaint through admin@hillview.kent.sch.uk in line with the Communication Policy, this ensures that the complaint is dealt with by the most appropriate person

2.1(c) Most problems can be sorted out easily and swiftly if the school is made aware of them. It is important that parents contact the school first with their concerns as soon as they have become apparent. Members of staff may invite parents in to meet with them and will usually take notes. Parents are able to ask for a copy of these notes.

2.1(d) Should the complaint remain unresolved this should then be passed to the appropriate Senior Leader for further investigation.

2.2 Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

2.2(a) If the issue has not been resolved within Stage 1, the next stage is to raise a formal complaint by completing the ‘Complaints Form’ (CF1) and sending this, in writing, to the Headteacher. The complaints form (See Appendix 4) clarifies the complaint, what has already been done to try and resolve the issues and what the parent hopes to achieve to put things right.

2.2(b) The Headteacher (or nominated member of senior staff) will investigate the complaint. After the issue(s) has been investigated, parents may be asked to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to clarify information. Alternatively, parents may get a letter explaining the school's response and outcomes to the issues identified on the complaints form.

2.2(b)(i) Any complaint form sent into the school will be acknowledged within 1 working school day and investigated within 10 working school days.

2.2(b)(ii) Hillview, if asked, will help anyone who would like assistance to set out their complaint, including access to translation services where necessary.

2.2(b)(iii) If the complaint is against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will be forwarded the complaints form (CF1) and Stage 3 commenced.

2.2(b)(iv) If the complaint is against a member of the governing body or Chair of Governors, the Clerk to the Governing Body will be forwarded the complaints form.

2.3 Stage 3 – Complaint to Chair of Governors

2.3(a) If the parents complaint at Stage 2 is still unresolved, parents should inform the Chair of Governors (or representative) via an updated form, CF2 (Appendix 5). The Chair of Governors will investigate parental complaints as set out in CF2.

2.3(b) The Clerk to the Governors will acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint within 5 school working days and will respond to it within 20 school working days, or will inform the complainant how a complaint is being addressed and when to expect a response.

2.3(c) The Chair of Governors (or representative) will initially investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve the complaint through discussion with the Headteacher . They may contact professional advisors for advice and clarification. If the Chair of Governors (or representative) has been unable to resolve the complaint to the reasonable satisfaction of the parent/complainant concerned then the parent/complainant may request that the complaint be heard by the Governing Body's Appeal Panel under Stage 4.

2.3(d) In investigating and seeking resolutions The Chair of Governors will operate in line with all other policies.

2.4 Stage 4 – Complaint heard by Governing Body's Appeal Panel

2.4(a) Should parents decide to take their complaint to the Governing Body's Appeal Panel they should write in the first instance to the Clerk of the Governors giving details of the complaint (by providing an updated 'Complaints Form' (CF2) and asking that it is put before the panel. The Chair, or if the Chair has been involved at any previous stage in the process, a nominated governor, will convene a GB complaints panel. A date for the hearing will be fixed no later than 20 working days after receipt of the application.

2.4(b) The aim of the panel hearing will be to determine the way forward in order to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainants.

2.4(c) The panel will make its decision and notify the complainant within 5 working days of the date of the panel hearing.

2.4(d) If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the complainant may refer the matter to the Secretary of State via the School Complaints Unit (SCU) if he or she believes that the Governing Body has acted unreasonably, or has failed to carry out its duties properly.

2.4(e) The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

APPENDIX 3

3 Other types of complaints

The following types of complaints about education are dealt with in different ways. There are special arrangements under the Education Acts if parents want to appeal or complain about:

- 3(i) **Admission to schools:** Please see the school's Admissions Policy.
- 3(ii) **Exclusion from school:** This is clarified in more detail in the school's 'Behaviour Policy'. It is important to note that the Governors are unable to overturn or make any changes to a Headteacher's decision to fix-term exclude a student for 5 days or under.
- 3(iii) **Special education provision:** For further detail, please see the school's 'Special Educational Needs Policy.'
- 3(iv) **Sex & Relationships, Religious Education and Collective Worship:** Further information is detailed in the school's 'PSHE Policy'.
- 3(v) **Vexacious Complaints:** A complaint may be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing – *maliciously, aggressively, using threats, intimidation or violence, using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language, knowing it to be false, using falsified information or publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media.* In such cases, the school follows guidance as published by DfE 'Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures' (January 2016).
- 3(vi) **Serial, persistent complainants:** *Should a complaint have passed through all stages of the Complaints Policy and a complaint is raised by the complainant about the same issue, then the complaint will not be taken further unless new evidence has been included.*

3.1 The complainant may seek independent advice from a number of people. The school may seek advice from independent advisors, including legal advice or the Local Education Authority. The Authority cannot determine the outcome of a complaint.

3.2 There are many organisations who are able to advise parents:

- 3.2.1 Kent Parent Partnerships helpline is 03000 41 3000
- 3.2.2 NSPCC Child Protection including Bullying 0808 8005000
- 3.2.3 Department for Education and Skills www.gov.uk/contact-dfe
- 3.2.4 Kent County Council Education Services www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children

3.3 If, after this Academy-based process, the complaint is still not resolved to the parents' satisfaction, they should write to:

The School Complaints Unit (SCU)
Department for Education

2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Manchester M1 2WD

3.4 It should be noted that schools do not need to consider complaints made more than one year after the incident / situation. If a complaint is made about an issue that is over a year old Hillview will write to the complainant explaining that this is the case. Exceptional cases may still be investigated.

**APPENDIX 4
Hillview School for Girls
Official Complaints Form 1 (CF1)**



Please complete and return to the Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Student's name:

Year:

Your relationship to the student:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone Number:

Please state as clearly as possible 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?)

Complaint Form (CF1) PAGE 2.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem?

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

Signature:

Date:

Official Use Only

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Outcome:

Recorded by:

Date:

APPENDIX 5

**Hillview School for Girls
Complaints Form to Chair of Governors (CF2)**



Please complete and return to the the Chair of Governors, via the Clerk c/o Hillview School who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Student's name:

Year:

Your relationship to the student:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone Number:

Please state as clearly as possible 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?)

Complaint Form to Chair of Governors (CF2) PAGE 2.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem?

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

Signature:

Date:

<p><u>Official Use Only</u></p> <p>Date acknowledgement sent:</p> <p>By who:</p> <p>Complaint referred to:</p> <p>Date:</p>	<p>Outcome:</p> <p>Recorded by:</p> <p>Date:</p>
--	--

**Hillview School for Girls Governors'
Policy on Complaints Procedure for Parents and Carers**

Main compiler: Deborah Ellis, Assistant Headteacher

Date of approval by Governors: 8 December 2014

Most recent update: March 2018

Consulted:

Governors

Staff

SENDCO

Director of Administration / Finance

Personnel Manager

KCC Guidance

DfE: Section 39 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998

DfE: School Complaints Toolkit August 2014

Anticipated review date: March 2021