



THE
**WHITE
HOUSE**
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

**The White House Preparatory School
and
Woodentops Nursery**

Introduction and Philosophy

The White House Preparatory School and Woodentops Nursery aims to be a listening and responsive school. We encourage pupils, parents, and staff to inform us of their concerns while they are still minor ones, which can more easily be resolved. It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.

The School has long prided itself on 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 with care and in accordance with this Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

Scope and Availability

The White House Preparatory School and Woodentops Nursery makes its Concerns and Complaints Procedure available to all parents of current pupils on the School's website and in the School office during the school day. The School will ensure that parents who request it are made aware of this document and the form in which it is available.

- **Prospective Parents:** In accordance with regulatory requirements, this policy document and the number of formal complaints registered during the preceding school year are made available to prospective parents. However, the operational complaints procedure itself is strictly reserved for use by parents of current pupils.
- **Definition:** A concern or complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, a specific department, or an individual member of staff. Any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School falls within the scope of this procedure.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and efficiently. The School is here for your child, and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a concern or complaint raised in good faith.

CRITICAL NOTE: Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

If any concern or complaint raised by a parent highlights a potential safeguarding or child protection issue, or involves an allegation against a member of staff, this Concerns and Complaints Procedure will be suspended immediately. The matter will be redirected and handled strictly in accordance with the



Principal Mrs M. McCahery Cert Ed **Headmaster** Joe Knight BA Hons, PCGE, NPQH

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School's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, in line with statutory guidance from **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if a child is deemed at risk of harm.

Statutory Compliance Notice

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the School makes available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils, and provides on request to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State, or an independent inspectorate (ISI), details of this procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

For the Academic Year 2025–26, there was 1 formal complaint registered.

The Three-Stage Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- **Initial Contact:** Parents who have a concern or complaint are encouraged to raise it directly with the appropriate person. The Headmaster (or a member of the Leadership Team) welcomes children and parents into the school each morning, which can be a convenient moment for a brief conversation. Class Teachers and Key Workers are also regularly available.
- **Alternative Communication:** If an early morning conversation is not appropriate or possible, parents should email or message the relevant staff member, who will arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone call or a meeting. Given the small, close-knit nature of our school, staff will naturally liaise closely with the Headmaster or Principal when handling parental concerns.
- **Complaints Against the Headmaster:** If the complaint is directly against the Headmaster, parents must submit their concern directly to the Principal.
- **Acknowledge and Timelines:** During term time, our aim is to acknowledge receipt of the initial communication within **2 working days**. The timeline will naturally be longer during school vacations.
- **Resolution Window:** Our target is to resolve all informal issues within **10 working days** during term time. Parents will receive an explicit communication (in person, via phone, email, or letter) indicating that the matter has been resolved.



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- **Escalation:** A written record will be kept of all informal concerns, the date received, and the resulting actions. If it is not possible to arrive at a satisfactory resolution informally, parents may choose to escalate the matter to Stage 2 by writing formally to the Headmaster or Principal.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

- **Submission:** To initiate Stage 2, parents must submit their complaint formally in writing (via email or letter) to the Headmaster. Receipt of this formal complaint will be acknowledged within **2 working days**.
- **Investigation and Meeting:** The Headmaster, in consultation with the Principal, will carefully consider the complaint and aim to meet with the parents concerned normally within **7 working days** of receipt. This timeframe may be extended during school vacations.
- **Further Investigation:** Subject to the outcome of the meeting, the Headmaster and Principal will carry out any necessary further investigations. Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be meticulously maintained.
- **Decision:** Once the Headmaster and Principal are satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all relevant facts have been established, a final decision will be made. Parents will be informed of this decision and the underlying reasons in writing.
- **Complaints Against the Headmaster:** If the formal complaint is against the Headmaster, the Principal will handle the process independently. The Principal will call for a full report and all relevant documents from the Headmaster, brief necessary staff members, and meet with the parents to discuss the matter. Once satisfied that all facts are established, the Principal will issue a written decision with reasons.
- **Timeline:** The school will seek to conclude the Stage 2 process within **15 working days** of receiving the formal written complaint. If parents remain unsatisfied with this decision, they may initiate Stage 3 by writing to the Principal.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

- **Referral:** If parents invoke Stage 3 following an unresolved Stage 2 outcome, they will be referred to the Complaints Panel.
- **Panel Composition:** The Panel will consist of at least three persons who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. **At least one member of the Panel shall be**



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completely independent of the management and running of the school. Panel members are appointed by the school.

- **Scheduling:** The Panel will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable, normally within **21 working days** during term time (extended during vacations).
- **Documentation:** If the Panel requires further particulars of the complaint or related evidence, copies of such documentation must be supplied to all parties no later than **7 working days** prior to the hearing.
- **Attendance:** Parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person (e.g., a relative, teacher, or friend). Legal representation is not normally deemed appropriate.
- **Findings and Recommendations:** If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately at the hearing. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will determine how it should proceed. After due consideration of all relevant facts, the Panel will reach a final decision and may issue findings and recommendations, completed within **7 working days** of the hearing.
- **Distribution of Findings:** The Panel's written findings and recommendations will be:
 1. Sent directly to the parents/complainants;
 2. Sent to the Headmaster and the Proprietor;
 3. Sent to the person about whom the complaint was made (where relevant); **and**
 4. **Made available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Headmaster.**
- **Finality:** The decision of the Panel is final.

Recording and Retention of Complaints

The School maintains a secure and strictly confidential written record of all formal complaints. In accordance with **Paragraph 33 of Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards)**

Regulations 2014, this log explicitly details:

- Whether the complaints were resolved at the formal stage (Stage 2) or proceeded to a panel hearing (Stage 3).
- The specific actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints, regardless of whether the complaint was upheld or rejected.



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At the school's discretion, and for detailed record-keeping, the complaints log may contain:

- Date the issue was raised, parental names, and pupil details.
- Clear descriptions of the issue, witness statements, and investigation notes.
- Names of staff handling the issue at each stage.
- Copies of all correspondence, emails, and phone logs.

Confidentiality & Legal Disclosures

Correspondence, statements, and records relating to individual complaints will be kept strictly confidential except to the extent required by Paragraph 33(k) of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014; where disclosure is required by the Secretary of State; or where disclosure is required during an official inspection under **Section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008**.

Data Retention Periods

- **EYFS Records:** In strict compliance with the Statutory Framework for the EYFS, records of complaints relating to Early Years provision will be retained for a minimum of **3 years**.
- **Main School & Safeguarding Records:** For the main preparatory school, and for any records intersecting with safeguarding, Special Educational Needs (SEN), or serious clinical injury, documentation will be securely retained for a significantly longer period (typically until the child reaches the age of 25) in compliance with UK GDPR and the Limitation Act 1980.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Provision

For children in our EYFS provision (Woodentops Nursery/Kindergarten), the three-stage process detailed above applies. However, the following additional statutory protections are in place:

1. **28-Day Resolution Window:** For all written complaints relating to the fulfilment of EYFS statutory requirements, the complainant will be fully notified of the outcome of the investigation within **28 calendar days** of the school receiving the complaint.
2. **Regulatory Reporting:** The School will provide Ofsted and/or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action taken.



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Parents who believe the school is not meeting its regulatory EYFS requirements reserve the right to contact the statutory regulators directly at any point:

- **Ofsted Contact Details:**

- **Phone:** 0300 123 4666 (Childcare and Provider Concerns)
- **Email:** enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- **Address:** Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

- **ISI Contact Details:**

- **Phone:** 020 7600 0100
- **Email:** concerns@isi.net
- **Address:** ISI, CAP House, 9–12 Long Lane, Barbican, London, EC1A 9HA

Policy will be reviewed annually			
Policy reviewed:	Sept 26	By:	Principal & Headmaster
To be reviewed:	Sept 27	By:	Principal & Headmaster



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