



The Froebelian School **Complaints Policy for Parents**

How we deal with Concerns or Complaints

The Froebelian School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes seriously complaints and concerns that may arise. This policy is available, on request, to any parents of pupils currently registered at the school and parents of pupils who have left the school as long as the complaint was made before the pupil left. It will show you how to use our complaints procedure.

A concern or complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response and/or action from the school.

We wish to ensure that:

- All parents, including those with children under 5 (i.e. in classes Lower Kindergarten and Kindergarten, also referred to as the Early Years Foundation Stage) wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- We respond to concerns and complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- Parents realise that we listen and take concerns and complaints seriously;
- We take action where appropriate.

Three Stage Process

The school follows a three-stage process to address concerns and complaints:

- Stage One: Informal
- Stage Two: Formal
- Stage Three: Panel Hearing

Note: Ideally, concerns or complaints should be presented **within three months** of the action or matter of concern to allow effective and timely investigation to take place.

Stage One: Informal

I am not sure whether to raise a concern or complaint.

If, as parents or guardians you have concerns or complaints, you are entitled to raise them. If in doubt, you should contact the school as we are here to help.

I don't want to raise a concern or complaint as such, but there is something bothering me.

The school is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas so please do make contact. The vast majority of concerns and complaints are resolved quickly and informally.

How should I express my concerns or make a complaint?

You can talk directly to a member of staff; write a letter, email or telephone. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you. We will keep a record of all written concerns or complaints.

Any member of staff will try to help. It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue - for example, to raise Music concerns with the Music Leader.

However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example, the EYFS Leader.

At this, informal stage, we will normally* deal with your complaint within two weeks.

What will happen next?

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. If a detailed exploration of the issues is needed, you will be given a response as quickly as possible, normally* within a week and definitely within two weeks. This will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed. We will keep a written record of this.

What happens about confidentiality?

Concerns or complaints are handled confidentially, and the correspondence and written evidence relating to them will be kept confidentially by the school except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Knowledge of a concern or complaint will be limited to the Head and those who need to be involved. The Chair of the School Council (governors) may also need to be informed. It is the school's policy that concerns raised or complaints made by parents should not reflect adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the concern or complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. You would be fully informed.

While information relating to specific concerns or complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous concerns or complaints may not be pursued. Action which needed to be taken through our staff disciplinary procedures as a result of concerns or complaints would be handled confidentially within the school.

Do you keep records?

We maintain a record of all written concerns and complaints, and of whether they are resolved at a preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. We also record any action taken by the school as a result of those concerns or complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). Such records are treated as confidential (see above).

Stage Two: Formal

What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns or complaint have been fully and fairly considered.

If you are not satisfied, you may write to the Head to request a meeting. At this stage, the concern or complaint will become 'formal'. The Head will respond normally* within a week of a formal concern or complaint being made and will seek to resolve any outstanding issues. Following consultation and/or further consideration, the Head will write normally* within two weeks to explain the outcome.

A written record will be kept of this process.

Stage Three: Panel Hearing

If I am still dissatisfied, may I appeal?

If the intervention of the Head does not bring about a resolution, you may write to the Vice- Chair of School Council c/o the School Office, providing a copy of your letter for the Head (unless it is inappropriate to do so). The Vice-Chair will respond normally* within a week and, if appropriate, will arrange for a panel to examine your concerns or complaint. The panel will convene normally* within two weeks and will consist of at least three persons, one of whom shall be independent of the current management and running of the school, and none of whom will be directly involved in the matter of complaint.

You will be invited to a meeting with the panel which the Head will normally attend. If a parent does not exercise the right to attend a panel hearing, this does not remove our obligation to hold the hearing in conformity with this policy. The arrangements for the panel hearing will be reasonable in order to facilitate parents exercising their right of attendance.

You may be accompanied by one other person, but legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The panel will present findings and recommendations and these will be communicated to all relevant parties (e.g. the full governing body, the Head, the person(s) complained about and the person(s) who made the complaint). They shall also be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Head. Following this review, the chair of the panel will write to you, the School Council and the Head normally* within 28 days to explain the outcome and this letter will formally close the complaint.

* NB – please note that the time frames specified in each stage above refer to response times when concerns or complaints are raised during term-time. If concerns or complaints fall outside of term-time, we will still endeavour to respond to parents quickly. However, any information gathering or investigation deemed necessary will be dependent on the availability of the staff members involved.

Exclusions

Exclusions are not covered by the Complaints Policy but fall under the school's Admissions, Misbehaviour and Exclusions Policy. Exclusions may be permanent or temporary. Temporary exclusions will be for a fixed term and may be internally or externally applied.

In the event of expulsion or removal of a child being required, the Headteacher will advise parents of the procedure (of which copies are available on request) under which a written application for a review of the decision may be made.

Provision for children under 5 (the EYFS), Ofsted & ISI

Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education – a government body), and ISI (the Independent Schools Inspectorate) have particular responsibility for monitoring standards regarding the provision of care and services for children under five years of age as required by the EYFS Framework.

Having followed the steps set out in the rest of this complaints procedure (i.e. a written complaint has been made, investigated and the investigation outcomes have been shared within 28 days), if any parents wish to complain to Ofsted and/or ISI regarding the school's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements for children aged under five, they may write to:

Ofsted
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 123 4666

ISI
9-12 Long Lane
London EC1A 9HA
Tel: 0207 6000 100
E: info@isi.net

NB: We will notify any complainant who has complained in writing regarding our EYFS provision of the outcome of an investigation normally* within 28 days of receiving the complaint. We will also provide Ofsted and/or ISI, on request, with a written record made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. Furthermore, we maintain a record of any such complaints for a minimum of three years.

The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to raise concerns or make a complaint and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children in our care. Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this could be regarded as vexatious and would fall outside the scope of this policy.

The number of formal concerns/complaints made in the previous school year.

Please contact the School Office for information on the number of formal concerns/complaints in the previous year.

Policy Updated: October 2022

Review Date: October 2023

Signed (Headteacher):



Signed (Chair of Governors):

