



**COPTHORNE
PREP**

COPTHORNE PREP SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY 2025–2026

This is a *whole School policy applying to all members including EYFS*

Version: THREE

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Approved by: Mrs Anne Fletcher, Chair of Governors

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

The school maintains a written record of all complaints, whether resolved through the formal procedure or proceeding to a panel hearing, and the actions taken as a result (regardless of whether they are upheld). This includes complaints relating to EYFS.

The titles of Chair, Vice Chair, Head of School, and Bursar are used in a general, non-gender-specific sense.

2. What Constitutes a Complaint?

- A complaint is any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school.
- It may involve dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem, whether about the school as a whole, a specific department, or an individual member of staff.
- Complaints may arise if a parent believes the school has done something wrong, failed to do something it should have, or acted unfairly.
- All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Pupils will not be penalised for complaints raised in good faith.

3. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- Most complaints are expected to be resolved quickly and informally.
- Parents should normally contact their child's class teacher.
- If unresolved, the class teacher may consult the Head of School.
- A written record of all concerns and complaints will be kept, including the date received.
- If unresolved within seven working days (during term time), or if a satisfactory resolution is not reached, parents will be advised to proceed to Stage 2.
- If the complaint is against the Head of School, it should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

4. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If not resolved informally, parents should submit the complaint in writing to the Head of School.
- The Head of School will consider the complaint and determine the appropriate course of action.
- Normally, the Head of School will meet or speak with the parents within seven working days (during term time).
- Further investigation may be required.
- Written records of all meetings and interviews will be kept.
- Once all relevant facts are established, the Head of School will inform parents of the decision in writing, with reasons.
- If the complaint is against the Head of School, the Chair of Governors will request a full report and relevant documents, and may meet with the parents. The Chair will then inform parents of the decision in writing, with reasons.
- If parents are not satisfied, they may proceed to Stage 3. If no response is received within 28 days of the decision, the matter will be considered closed.

5. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents wish to invoke Stage 3, they will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors (the Bursar), who will arrange a Complaints Panel hearing.
- The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the complaint, one of whom is independent of the management and running of the school.
- The Bursar will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing within 10 working days.
- Further particulars may be requested and shared at least 5 working days before the hearing.
- Parents may attend and be accompanied by one other person (e.g., relative, teacher, or friend). Legal representation is not normally appropriate.
- The Panel may resolve the complaint or decide on further investigation.
- After considering all relevant facts, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.
- Parents will be informed of the decision and reasons within 5 working days of the hearing (unless further investigation is needed).
- A copy of the findings and recommendations will be sent to the parents, the person complained about (if relevant), the Chair of Governors, and the Head of School. It will also be available for inspection on the school premises.

6. Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

- Complaints will be acknowledged within five working days during term time, and as soon as practicable during holidays.
- The school aims to complete Stages 1 and 2 within 20 working days during term time.
- Stage 3 will be completed within a further 20 working days during term time.
- 'Working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time.

7. Recording Complaints

The school may keep additional records including:

- Date of issue
- Name of parent and pupil
- Description of issue
- Investigation records
- Witness statements
- Staff involved
- Correspondence (emails, phone records)

A written record will be kept of all complaints and actions taken, whether resolved informally, formally, or at panel hearing.

All records will remain confidential except where disclosure is required by the Secretary of State or an inspection body under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

The school will provide ISI, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action taken.

8. EYFS

- Written complaints relating to EYFS requirements will be investigated and outcomes shared within 28 days.
- A record of all EYFS complaints and outcomes is kept and made available.
- Parents may contact ISI directly if they believe EYFS requirements are not being met:
 - ISI: 020 7600 0100 or concerns@isi.net

9. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Governors