

## *Parental Complaints Procedure*

A copy of this complaints procedure is also available from the school office upon request.

The timescales set out below relate to term times only. References to "working days" mean Monday to Friday, when school is open during term time. The dates of terms are published on the school's website. If a complaint is received during the school holidays, we will respond to and address the matter as soon as is reasonably practicable.

At Priory School we have an 'open house' policy. If there is a matter concerning parents, please feel free to call in at the school office to speak to the Principal or the appropriate Head of School on an informal basis. If you prefer, you may make an appointment for a time that is more convenient to you.

In the majority of cases, your concerns can be addressed immediately and steps are taken on the day that the problem is brought to our attention, and most certainly within three working days.

In the unlikely event that you are not completely satisfied with the response after expressing your concerns in an informal manner, a more formal approach may be taken, and you should set out your concerns in the form of a written letter. We will acknowledge your letter within two working days of receipt. The school may need to arrange an investigation, the outcome of which will be reported to the Principal. We, again, will do our utmost to ensure that, if appropriate, steps are taken as soon as possible and most certainly we will aim to inform you of the outcome of any investigation and our proposed resolution within 14 working days from the date of receipt of the complaint.

If a satisfactory response is still not received, you should notify the Principal and a 'Panel Hearing' will be arranged within seven working days of the notification date, by the Principal. The complainant may attend such a hearing and be accompanied by another person. The hearing will consist of a panel of at least three people who are not involved with the matters dealt with in the complaint. One person will also be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel will make clear its decision and shall notify the Principal, the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained of its decision either orally at the hearing or subsequently and it shall be confirmed in writing to you by electronic mail where appropriate within seven working days. If you do not wish to receive the decision by electronic mail, a copy will be given or posted to you.

The decisions, findings and any recommendations will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the Principal and the Heads of School. Reasons for the decision will be given. The decision may include recommendations and will be sent to you, the Principal and, where relevant, any person about whom the complaint has been made.

A written record will be kept regarding all complaints that will indicate whether the concern was resolved at the preliminary stage, the formal written stage, or whether it was put before the panel. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be supplied to parents on request.

All aspects, that is, records, notes, letters and discussions, of the complaint will remain confidential, except to the extent required by paragraph 7 (k) of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003, that is where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of a school's inspection or under other legal authority. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will normally be destroyed following each school inspection. In exceptional circumstances some details will be retained for a further period as necessary.

