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Concerns and Complaints

Policy statement

In the case of concern we will give prompt and serious attention. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our school to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Parents, who have cause or serious concern as to a matter of safety, care or quality of education must report the matter immediately to Jenifer Capper who, as Head Mistress, is the Designated Senior Person (DSP).

Procedures

The procedure set out below has five stages, should they be needed. It is intended that it satisfies the school's aim to provide the quality of teaching and pastoral care of which it can be proud.

Parents/carers also have access to OFSTED* as the ultimate authority for matters related to day-care provision

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- Early Years: - any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the Room leader. If the Room Leader cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Early Years Co-ordinator who will deal with the matter or refer it to the Head Mistress if necessary.
- Main School: - if parents have a concern or complaint they should contact their child's Form Teacher. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head Mistress.
- The Room Leader / Form Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the Head Mistress.
- The Head Mistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases the Head Mistress will meet the parents concerned, normally within five days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If necessary the Headmistress will carry out further investigations.
- Silverhill School stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the Headmistress may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Headmistress meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- Once the Head Mistress is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Headmistress will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Summary log

Silverhill School is required to keep a 'summary log' of all complaints that reach stage two or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the Headmistress. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the Headmistress should have the support of a senior manager present.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and Headmistress cannot reach agreement, a panel of at least three external mediators are invited to help to settle the complaint. These people should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. Mediators have no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- Mediators keep all discussions confidential. They can hold separate meetings with the Headmistress and the parent, if this is decided to be helpful. Mediators keep an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice given.

Stage 5

- When the panel has concluded their investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the setting leader and the Head Mistress is held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediators' advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediators are present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached.
- A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

Allegation of abuse against a member of staff

In the case of the above the same procedure will be followed as in the case of concern for the care of a child.

If a member of staff is accused of lack of safety, care, or quality of education to a child the matter will be dealt with according to this 'Concerns and complaints' document.

The disciplinary procedures are set out in the staff contracts.

Concern or complaint from a member of staff

If a member of staff has cause for complaint against a parent, a child or another member of staff this will be referred to the Head Mistress immediately.

If appropriate the same procedure will be followed as above.

If the accusation is more serious the member of staff and the Head Mistress may deem it necessary to inform the police.

This will be done without delay.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.

- The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is: **0300 123 4666** these details are displayed on the notice board in the main house, in the coach house corridor and in the nursery.
- If a child appears to be at risk, Silverhill School and Day Nursery follows the procedures advised by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. (Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy for details of this)
- In these cases, both the parent and Silverhill School and Day Nursery are informed and the Headmistress or her appointee works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- A record of complaints against Silverhill School and Day Nursery and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Summary Complaints Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

This policy was adopted by	Silverhill School
Date	January 2018
Review date	January 2019
Name of signatory	Mrs Jenifer Capper
Role of signatory	Head Mistress