



AMDG

DONHEAD PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Complaints Policy (including EYFS)

Policy owner	Catherine Hitchcock
Approval body	Board of Governors
Approval date	September 2026
Next review date	September 2027

1. Purpose and principles

Donhead Preparatory School is committed to providing high-quality teaching and pastoral care. Where a parent has a concern or complaint, the school will respond carefully, fairly and as promptly as practicable in accordance with this policy.

The school will make this policy available to parents of pupils on its website and from the school office during the school day. Parents of prospective pupils will be informed, on request, where and how the policy is available.

In accordance with Part 7, paragraph 33 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the school will provide, on request, details of this procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate.

2. Scope

This procedure is available to parents of current registered pupils. It also applies to former pupils where the complaint was first raised while the pupil was registered at the school. Complaints from prospective parents do not fall within the formal procedure, although the school will seek to respond appropriately to any concerns raised.

3. What constitutes a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about a real or perceived problem where a parent seeks a response or action from the school. It may relate to the school as a whole, a department, an individual member of staff, an action taken or a failure to act.

All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and sensitively. Information will be shared only with those who need it in order to consider and resolve the matter, subject to the school's legal and regulatory obligations. A pupil will not be penalised because a parent raises a concern or complaint in good faith.

4. Three-stage complaints procedure

Stage 1: Informal resolution

- Most concerns and complaints should be capable of prompt, informal resolution.
- A parent should normally raise the matter with the child's Form Teacher. Where it concerns a specialist subject, the subject specialist will work with the Form Teacher. The Form Teacher may consult the Headteacher where necessary.
- The Form Teacher will make a written record of the concern or complaint and the date on which it was received.
- If the matter is not resolved within seven days, or the parent and the school do not reach a satisfactory resolution, the parent will be advised to proceed to Stage 2.
- A complaint about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors. A complaint about a governor should be addressed to the Chair of Governors. A complaint about the Chair should be addressed to the Vice-Chair or another governor with no prior involvement, who will arrange for it to be considered impartially under this procedure.

Stage 2: Formal resolution

- If the complaint has not been resolved at Stage 1, the parent should submit it in writing to the Headteacher, setting out the nature of the complaint and the outcome sought.
- The Headteacher will acknowledge the complaint and determine the appropriate course of action. In most cases, the Headteacher will speak to or meet the parent within seven days of receipt.
- The Headteacher may carry out further enquiries and will keep written records of meetings, interviews and other evidence considered.
- Once the relevant facts have been established so far as practicable, the Headteacher will write to the parent with the decision and reasons.
- Where the complaint is about the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will carry out or arrange the Stage 2 investigation. The Chair may request a written response and relevant documents from the Headteacher, speak to staff and meet the parent. The Chair will write to the parent with the decision and reasons.
- If the parent remains dissatisfied, the parent may request consideration at Stage 3.

Stage 3: Panel hearing

- A parent wishing to invoke Stage 3 should write to the Clerk to the Governors, explaining why the Stage 2 outcome is unsatisfactory and the outcome sought.
- The complaint will be referred to a panel of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters complained of. At least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The Clerk will acknowledge the request and arrange a hearing as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.
- The Panel may request further particulars or documents in advance. Copies will normally be provided to all parties at least seven days before the hearing.
- The parent may attend and may be accompanied by one other person, such as a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- The Panel may make findings and recommendations and may decide that further enquiries are required.
- The Panel will write to the parent with its findings, decision and reasons, normally within seven days of the hearing. The Panel's decision will be final.
- A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be provided to the parent and, where relevant, the person complained about, the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher. The findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headteacher.

5. Timescales

Complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. A formal complaint will be acknowledged within five working days when received during term time and as soon as practicable during a school holiday. The school's target is to complete Stages 1 and 2 within 28 days where the complaint is made during term time.

Stage 3 will be completed within a further 28 days where the request is made during term time. During school holidays, all stages will be progressed as soon as practicable.

A written complaint concerning the school's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 days of the complaint being made.

6. Records and confidentiality

The school will keep a written record of every complaint made under the formal procedure. The record will state whether the complaint was resolved at Stage 2 or proceeded to a Stage 3 panel hearing, the action taken by the school as a result, and whether the complaint was upheld in whole or in part. The record may also include:

- the date the matter was raised;
- the names of the parent and pupil;
- a description of the complaint;
- investigation notes and witness statements, where relevant;
- the names of those handling the complaint at each stage; and
- copies of relevant correspondence, including emails and notes of telephone conversations.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is required by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, where another legal obligation applies, or where disclosure is otherwise permitted by law.

On request, the school will provide the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 with the written record of complaints made during any specified period and the action taken in response. Records concerning the fulfilment of EYFS requirements will be retained for at least three years from the date on which the record was made and made available to Ofsted or ISI on request. All records will be stored securely and retained in accordance with the school's records-retention and data-protection arrangements.

The Headteacher will report annually to the Board of Governors on the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure and their outcomes.

7. EYFS concerns and external regulators

Parents may contact Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) if they believe the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Ofsted can be contacted on **0300 123 4666** or at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. ISI can be contacted at concerns@isi.net. Contacting a regulator does not prevent a parent from using the school's complaints procedure.

8. Contact details

Headteacher

Donhead Preparatory School

33 Edge Hill

London SW19 4NP

Email: headteacherpa@donhead.org.uk

Chair of Governors

Correspondence should be marked private and confidential and sent care of the school at the postal or email address above.

9. Annual complaints information

Number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding academic year: **0**