



Complaints Procedure

This is a whole school policy; it refers to and includes EYFS, after-school care and holiday clubs held on our premises.

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended). Copies are available on the school's website on the policies' page and from the school office on request from parents and prospective parents.

1. Introduction

Pownall Hall School prides itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated sensitively by the school in accordance with this procedure. The school will make details of this policy available to parents and prospective parents (as above) and will also provide details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. The school aims to complete the complaints process within 28 working days where practicable. Complaints may raise safeguarding concerns, which will be managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their son/daughter's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head of Key Stage in the first instance, followed by the Deputy Headteacher or Headmaster
- Complaints made directly to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff/ form teacher unless the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally.
- The form teacher/member of staff will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 days, or in the event that the form teacher/member of staff and the parent fail to reach a resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made, and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for the decision.
- If parents remain dissatisfied following Stage 2, they have the right to request a Panel Hearing (Stage 3).

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, they will be referred to an independent convenor, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The independent panel member (convenor) will be independent of the management and running of the school and not connected with the school. Each of the Panel members

shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The independent convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working days.

- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations will, if any, be sent by writing or electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents and where relevant, to the person complained about and will be available for the Headteacher and the Governors.
- A written record will be kept of all complaints to include whether the complaint was resolved at each stage, actions taken by the School plus outcomes and any recommendations

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by Part 6 Regulation 32(g) of the Regulatory Requirements for Independent Schools (09/215), where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

2. Early Years Foundation Stage

The named person for EYFS is the EYFS Coordinator, Georgia Flynn

The whole school policy applies to the EYFS, after school care and holiday clubs held on our premises with the following additions:

- Each record of complaint at this stage is kept for three years.
- Parents can make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish – 0300 123 1231
<http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints>
- Parents can make a complaint to ISI should they wish – 02076000100 complaints@isi.net
- If required, Pownall Hall School will provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.
- The school acknowledges the requirement to notify the complainant of the outcome of an investigation within 28 working days of having received the complaint.
- The school acknowledges that the setting must provide Ofsted and ISI, on request, a written record of all complaints during any specified period and the resulting action taken in respect of each one.

Monitoring and Review

These procedures will be monitored by the Headmaster and Chair of Governors and will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

Presented to Governors for approval

April 2026

Signed:

Mrs Eileen MacAulay, Chair of Governors

April 2026

Revision Log

Date	Changes Made	Version No
Sep 2008	Created	V1
Nov 2009	Reviewed	V2
Jan 2010	Reviewed	V2.1
Dec 2010	Reviewed	V3
May 2012	Reviewed	V4
Jun 2013	Reviewed	V5
Mar 2014	Reviewed	V6
May 2015	Reviewed	V7
May 2017	Reviewed	V8
May 2018	Reviewed	V9
May 2019	Reviewed	V10
May 2020	Reviewed	V11
May 2021	Reviewed	V12
May 2022	Reviewed	V13
May 2023	Reviewed	V14
May 2024	Reviewed	V15
April 2025	Reviewed - no amendments	V16
April 2026	Reviewed – amended introduction to include 28 days timescale for any complaints (not just EYFS)	V17

Next Review: April 2027

References

A Legal Requirement, an ISI Reporting Standard, OFSTED Standards for Boarding Schools and EYFS providers

A: Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended)

B: The Early Years Foundation Stage: Statutory Framework updated Jan 2024 (www.education.gov.uk)

Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel

The DfE has given the following guidance on the identity of an independent panel member.

‘Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired businesspeople, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered.’

Record of serious complaints made from April 2025 - April 2026:

0 serious complaint made