



Complaints Procedure (2019-2020)

Date agreed: December 2019.

Date of next review: July 2020.

Approved by: Elena Vlasenko (School Director)

Introduction

Pushkin's School provides a friendly and safe environment in which pupils will be helped to achieve their best potential. The School Director sets the direction and tone of the school and is committed to working with parents in the best interests of their children. We recognise that sometimes things can go wrong, and parents or carers may need to make a complaint or raise concerns that they have with the school. This procedure explains what to do if this happens.

Principles

- This procedure covers all matters relating to the application of school procedures and the actions of staff working in the school, where they affect individual pupils.
- The school encourages resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible.
- Investigations will be full and fair, and all parties involved will be informed of the progress.
- Some complaints are not in the scope of this procedure, and the relevant procedure in other policies should be followed. This includes:
 - matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation (Allegations Against Staff Policy);
 - whistleblowing suspected wrongdoing (Whistleblowing Policy); and
 - grievances from members of staff (Staff Grievance Procedure).
- The school will not deal with anonymous complaints, unless they concern child protection matters.
- Complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. Any matter raised more than 3 months after the date of the incident may not be considered.
- At formal stages of the procedure, all written records will be retained.
- Any formal complaints will be dealt with fairly and efficiently, in a sensitive and impartial manner.
- All matters will be treated in confidence.

Stages of the Complaints Procedure

The procedure aims to reassure parents, carers and others with an interest in the school that:

- any complaint against the school will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way, with the aim of achieving a quick and satisfactory solution; and
- the school recognises that a willingness to listen to concerns/criticism, and responding positively to them, can lead to improvements in the school practices and provision for pupils.

It should be noted that most issues raised by parents, pupils or the community are concerns rather than complaints. The school is committed to taking concerns seriously at the earliest stage to resolve any issues, which is always in the best interest of children and their parents/carers.

Stage 1: Raising Concerns Informally

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response which will resolve the concern. Most concerns or complaints can be resolved informally by discussion with a teacher, the School Director or the School Manager. Through discussion at informal meetings, the School Director will clarify what the issues are, as well as the outcomes the parent/carer is trying to achieve. The School Director or School Manager may be writing notes during any informal meetings, and parents/carers ask for a copy of these notes. Alternatively, parents/carers can raise the concern to the School Director in writing, outlining the issue and the preferred outcome. The School Director will respond to the concern as soon as possible.

On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case the parent/carer will receive an informal but informed response within a few days. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way.

Stage 2: Raising a Formal Complaint

Parents/carers that are not satisfied with the reply given by the School Director or the School Manager should submit the complaint in writing, indicating that it is a formal complaint, to the School Director. The parent/carer may use the school's Formal Complaint Form which can be obtained from the School Director and School Manager. This form is also included at the end of this document (see Appendix 1). The written complaint should contain a brief description of the nature of the complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, names of individuals involved, and the preferred outcome.

If a parent/carer has a concern or complaint about the School Director, they are advised to contact the School Director as a first step. In most cases, concerns can be resolved immediately, and everyone involved can come to a mutual agreement.

The School Director will normally meet the parent/carer to hear the complaint and respond as soon as possible, even if it is an interim reply pending further investigation. At this stage, the complainant may be accompanied by a companion at any meeting to discuss the matter. 'Companion' refers to a person chosen by the complainant to accompany them, who is either a trade union representative or a workplace colleague.

In some circumstances the School Director may not be able to effectively deal with the complaint immediately as time would be required to investigate and prepare a response. If further time is required, the parent/carer will be informed of the timescale and the likely date by which a response will be issued.

Stage 3: Taking Unresolved Matters Further

This stage applies to any unresolved complaints after the procedure of the previous stage. In the rare case that this happens, the parent/carers may wish to voice their concern to the Local Council (which is different for each Pushkin's School branch). The Local Council may contact the School Director to investigate the issue further and advise on what the most appropriate outcome should be. Once the Local Council has concluded the investigation and the correct solutions have been implemented, the complaint will be considered as resolved.

Serial, Persistent or Unreasonable Complaints

There may be occasions when despite all stages of the procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to resurface the same issue, the School Director will inform the complainant in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is now closed.

Formal Complaint Form (2 pages)

To be completed by the parent/carers raising the complaint and given to the School Director.

Name: _____

First Name of Pupil: _____

School Branch: _____

Date: ____/____/____

DETAILS OF COMPLAINT

Outline the nature and reason for your concern or complaint. Please give specific details such as dates, times and witnesses where necessary. Attach any supporting evidence if necessary.

PREVIOUS ACTION

Have you taken any steps to resolve the complaint informally? If you have, why do you remain dissatisfied?

Alternatively, if this is a Stage 2 complaint, why was the matter not concluded to your satisfaction at Stage 1?

REMEDY YOU ARE SEEKING

Please state what your preferred outcome is and specifically what action or actions, in your view, are needed to resolve your complaint satisfactorily.