Complaints Policy

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1.0 Policy statement

Children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the school. 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 the parties involved.

Although this policy routinely refers to 'parents' we acknowledge that anyone is entitled to make a complaint.

2.0 Definitions

A 'concern' may be treated as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be generally recognised as 'an expression or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

3.0 Procedures

Making a complaint - Record Keeping

A record of all formal complaints against the school and/or the children and/or the adults working in our school is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint, how the complaint was managed, whether it was resolved following a formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing and action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether it was upheld).

All records related to this procedure are kept in the Complaints file for a period of three years from conclusion of the complaint.

If the complaint involves a detailed investigation, we may store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for the complaint.

All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Stage 1 Raising a concern or making a complaint on an Informal Basis

Anyone who has a concern or wishes to make a complaint about an aspect of our provision talks over, first, his/her concerns with the child's teacher. We recognise that it may also be convenient for a concern or complaint to be made on an informal basis via an email. If necessary, the relevant teacher will seek support to address the complaint, from colleagues or the Head of School. If appropriate, the nature of the concern/complaint will be discussed at the weekly staff meeting and if any changes to our practice are desirable to address the cause of the concern/complaint they will be implemented as soon as practicable thereafter.

Most concerns and complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

A response to Stage 1 complaints or concerns will be made within 7 days of the issue being raised. The response may be given verbally or, if the concern was raised via email, an email response will usually be provided.

Stage 2

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent can choose to move to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing on a formal basis. Parents should entitle their written communication as a 'Formal Complaint'.

For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints a senior member of the school team may record the complaint in writing and invite the parent to sign it.

Parents will be informed of the outcome of the investigation into the complaint within 28 days of making the complaint. This process may take longer if the complaint is received during the school holidays or at the end of term

When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record and stored in the Complaints File.

Stage 3

If the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with Stage 2, s/he may request a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the school's proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel hearing will take place within 28 days of the request for a hearing.

A parent may attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish.

The panel will make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be provided within 14 days to the parent/complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Head of School.

4.0 Code of Conduct for Parents

Cobham Montessori School values the positive relationships that we have with our parents and wider community and we will work extremely hard to resolve any concerns or problems that may occur.

In most cases, complainants are helpful, polite and patient, and they give us time to sort out whatever has happened so that everyone has been listened to and the problem is resolved. However, complainants can make investigating and resolving a complaint difficult, or they may behave in a way that is unacceptable or inappropriate.

We will never tolerate violence or abuse towards any member of the staff. This may include behaviour or language (verbal, non-verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel afraid,

threatened or abused; and it may include threats, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks and rudeness. In these instances, parents will be asked to desist from the behaviour, and/or leave the premises. In instances where parents refuse to leave when asked and their behaviour is still causing distress, the police may be called.

Parents should not approach any children in the school to investigate a problem. Parents should not question staff about sanctions that may have been put in place as this will be seen as intimidation or harassment of staff.

5.0 The role of the Office for Standards in Education(Ofsted), Department of Education (DfE) and the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership

Please refer to our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures and our Allegations Against a Member of Staff policy if your concern relates to any safeguarding matter.

If your concern relates to the imminent safety of a child,

please call the Police on 999.

Ofsted and the Department for Education will respond to complaints arising out of matters pertaining to registration requirements for Schools (and the Independent Schools Standards) or the EYFS Statutory Requirements.

Parents may approach Ofsted (if the complaint relates to Early Years provision) at any stage of this complaints procedure. The number to call Ofsted regarding a complaint is: 0300 123 4666 or via email on enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk . These details are displayed on our notice board.

Complaints about any educational establishment may also be made to Ofsted using the following online link:

https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints

The Department for Education (DfE) cannot investigate individual complaints about private schools. But it has certain powers as a regulator if the school is not meeting standards set by DfE for:

- education
- pupil welfare and health and safety
- school premises
- staff suitability
- making information available to parents
- spiritual, moral, social or cultural development of students

The link below provides the template for making a complaint to the DfE.

https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education

Appendix A

Cobham Montessori Summary Complaints Record 2026-27

No formal complaints were received during the years 22/23, 23/24, 24/25 or 25/26

Complaint Made By	Date of initial complaint	Stage	Nature of complaint and any ensuing actions	Date