

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

The School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents or pupils do have a complaint (other than in relation to disciplinary matter which is the subject matter of a separate procedure), they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

What constitutes a complaint

A complaint is an expression of genuine dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. A complaint may be made if a parent (or pupil) thinks that the school has, for example

- * Done something wrong
- * Failed to do something it should have done
- * Acted unfairly

A complaint may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department in the school or about an individual member of staff

Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. Parents can be reassured that we listen to them and take complaints seriously.

If you are in any doubt about whether a complaint should be passed on, please do contact your child's Form Tutor, Head of Year, relevant Boarding staff or the Bursary in the first instance to discuss the matter.

Recording Complaints

A written record of all concerns and complaints will be made and, where applicable, may include the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of Parent
- Name of Pupil
- Brief statement of issue
- Location of file (if applicable)
- Staff member handling the issue
- Brief statement of outcome]

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally**.

- All members of staff are encouraged to deal with a parental or pupil concern that lies within their area of responsibility. However, if parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son's / daughter's subject teacher, tutor or (if appropriate) boarding Housemaster/mistress. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the person cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him / her to consult either a head of department or the Deputy Head.
- Complaints made directly to a head of department, the Deputy Head or the Head will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher, housemaster / housemistress unless that person deems it appropriate for him / her to deal with the matter personally. Pupils wishing to make complaints should fill in the Pupil Complaint Form, available in the Pupil Handbook.
- The form teacher, tutor or (if appropriate) boarding housemaster 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 one week** or in the event that the form teacher, tutor or (if appropriate) boarding housemaster and the parent **fail to reach a satisfactory 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, then the parents should **put their complaint in writing** to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will meet / speak to the parents or pupils concerned, normally **within 2 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 Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will **keep written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parent will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his decision.
- **If parents or pupils are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3** of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents or pupils seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors who has been authorised 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 **at least 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. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors.** The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally **within 15 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 days prior to the hearing.
- **The parents or pupils may 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' or pupils' 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, which it shall complete **within 5 days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it.** The decision of the Panel will be final. **The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.**

Parents and pupils can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Dr S.J. Wormleighton
Headmaster

C Gatherer
Headmaster

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