



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY STATEMENT

Complaints Procedure policy

Introduction

It is the aim of the College to work closely with parents for the benefit of their children. To that end we aim to establish an effective partnership with parents. We hope that parents will support College and PFA events throughout the year.

Inevitably there may be occasions when parents have queries or concerns which they feel need to be communicated to the College. In that event parents will find the staff of the College both accessible and approachable. Parents should contact the College office to arrange a mutually convenient appointment to meet with appropriate members of staff so that all concerned can give due time and consideration to the issues at hand.

The Headmaster will make himself available to meet parents, at short notice if necessary, to consider any urgent matters or concerns.

If parents have a complaint they can expect it to be treated by the College in accordance with the following procedure.

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 straightaway 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 as appropriate a head of department, head of year or even a Deputy Head or the Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the head of department/the Deputy Head/the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher or year head unless the head of department, the Deputy Head or the Headmaster considers it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The form teacher 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 10 working days of the appointment or in the event that the form teacher 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 Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet the parents concerned, normally within 10 working 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 in his discretion 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 the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Secretary to the Governors c/o the College 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 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 College. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governors. The Secretary 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 10 working days of the invocation of Stage 3.
- If the Panel considers 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 prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend.
- 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 relevant facts, the Panel will reach a decision (which may include recommendations) 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 Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Parents 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.