

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

The School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils and aims to provide the best service that it reasonably can for its pupils and parents. However, inevitably, there will be occasions when issues of concern may arise. The School will usually try to resolve these informally but understands that this may not always be possible. It is the intention of the School to provide a response to any complaint within one week of the initial contact with the parent or other complainant (afterwards referred to as 'the parent'). Any information provided as a result of a complaint being raised is subject to the School's Confidentiality Policy. The School's Complaints Policy is on the School's website and is also available to parents on request.

Parent's Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 - Informal resolution

If a parent has a concern about the School he or she should, in the first instance, contact his or her child's tutor. The Tutor will conduct an initial investigation and, if necessary, contact more senior staff if this is felt to be necessary.

If the initial response within 3 working days is not felt to be satisfactory, the parent should contact to the relevant Head of Department, Head of Section or Head of Faculty. He or she will undertake a further investigation and will contact the parent within one week. A parent may request that the issue be re-examined by another senior member of staff if he or she feels that a second opinion is required.

Stage 2 - Formal resolution

If this does not prove to be satisfactory to the parent concerned, the complaint should be communicated to the Head. Any complaint about the Head should normally be referred to the Chair of Governors. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head will meet 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 Head to carry out further investigations and this would normally be within 7 days. 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 parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his/her decision although some details may need to be withheld if they relate to individuals such as a staff member or child in the community.

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Stage 3 - Complaints Panel

If there is no satisfactory outcome after the Head has made a full investigation, the parent should write directly to the Chair of Governors and he/she will convene the Governing Body's Complaints Review Panel as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within twenty-days of receipt. This communication must be lodged within 10 working days of the Head's decision at Stage 2. However, the Head will normally have discussed complaints with the Chair of Governors before making a decision. The Governing Body may nominate a number of members with delegated powers to hear complaints at this stage. The panel will consist of at least three people, two governors who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, together with a representative from Global Mediation or similar body, acting as an independent assessor and facilitator. The Panel will aim to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the parent and the School. However, it has to be recognised that the parent may not be satisfied with the outcome of the review panel and it may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations that will satisfy the parent that his or her complaint has been given a fair hearing.

The Clerk to the Governors will set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that these are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible. Relevant information will be sent to all parties at least five days before the hearing.

The hearing will be held in private and it is recognised that many may feel nervous about the procedure. Every effort will be made to put individuals at their ease and to ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. Particular care will be taken if any of the pupils in the School are involved at this stage. The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. The meeting is not a legal proceeding and so legal representation is not necessary. The Clerk to the Governors must be given seven days' notice if the friend or relation is legally qualified and the parents should note that the Review Panel will wish to speak to them directly and this person will not be permitted to act as an advocate. The companion does not have the right to answer questions on the parents' behalf. The Head may question both the parent and other witnesses after each has spoken. The Head will then state the School's case and the parent may question the Head and any other witnesses. The panel may ask questions at any point. The parent and the Head will be invited to sum up the nature of the complaint at the end of the proceedings and then both parties will leave the panel to confer and to take its decision. The Clerk to the Governors will take minutes of the hearing and notify all parties of the panel's decision and any recommendations in writing, within a given period of time, normally no longer than a week. A copy will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Head.

On receipt of the panel's decision, the Head will, if appropriate, notify all parties of his response to these in writing, within 5 working days. In the absence of procedural irregularity, the Head's decision will then be final.

A written record is kept by the Head's PA of all complaints where Senior members of staff have been involved. This details whether they were resolved at the formal stage

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or proceeded to a panel hearing including action taken by the School as a result, regardless of whether the complaint was upheld. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Education & Skills Act requests access to them.

Academic Year	Revisions	Amendment	Endorsed by Governors
2013-2014	1		
2014-2015	1		
2015-2016	2	Due to legal advice and time scales added	March 2016
2016-2017	1	Due to compliance review	June 2017
2017-2018	0		
2018-2019	2	Due to compliance review for parental clarity	
2019-2020	1	Due to ISI updates	