



Parents' Complaint Procedure (as found in the Parent Handbook)

The School prides itself on clear and open communication, with parents, teachers and management being able to have meaningful two-way dialogue for the benefit of its pupils. Occasionally issues may need to be sorted out in a more formal way. This procedure aims to structure this process so that parents understand our handling of complaints.

- **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 contact their son/daughter's form teacher in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parent's satisfaction. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the appropriate Divisional Coordinator.
 - Complaints made directly to the Divisional Coordinator, Deputy Head or Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless the 'line manager' concerned deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally. In this event the 'line manager' will attempt to resolve the matter in five days or as soon as is practicable.
 - The relevant teacher will make a written record of all complaints and concerns and the date on which they were received. Should a matter not be resolved within five days, or in the event that the relevant teacher and the parents 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 will be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster, who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate action to take.
 - In most cases, the Headmaster will speak to the parents concerned within forty-eight hours of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.



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- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations. These will be completed in seven days or as soon as is practicable.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will give reasons for the decision.
- The written decision will be issued within fourteen days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the Head will write to the parents within the fourteen day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why he/she is unable to issue his/her decision and informing the parents when he/she will do so, which will be within twenty eight days of receipt of the complaint in any event.
- If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they may take the opportunity to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.
- Stage 3: Panel Hearing:
 - Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents seek to involve Stage 3 of this procedure, they are to write to the Head informing him/her of their decision to do so within 28 days, whereupon the matter will be referred to a named director. The named director will then take responsibility for the organisation of a complaints panel hearing.
 - The panel will consist of three persons who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and will include one person, who shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Details are available in the Headmaster's Office.
 - The Board of Governors shall appoint the panel members.
 - The named directors, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.
 - If the named directors and/or the panel deem it necessary, they may require (in writing) that further particulars of the complaint or any other related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such



particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five days before the hearing. Any such further particulars received within five days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it will not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.

- The parents 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 parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However should the panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required, the panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded. The panel will, after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, reach a decision and may make recommendations. This procedure will be completed within fourteen days of the first hearing wherever possible but within twenty-eight days in any event unless otherwise agreed with the parents. The panel will write to the parents informing them of their decision together with their reasons. The decision of the panel will be final.
- The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the Head, directors and, where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual.
- Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Footnotes to Complaints Procedure:

1. In the event that a complaint involves or relates to a teacher, then the teacher will be kept fully informed in writing of the procedure being adopted in relation to the management of the complaint and supplied with copies of all relevant documentation.
2. In the event of a panel hearing, the teacher will have the right to make representations to the panel.

A parental complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Head and those directly involved. The



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Chairman of the Board of Governors may also need to be informed. It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

Written records will be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (including a hearing before the board of governors).