



PARENTAL CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS - GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

The High School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns which you may raise. These guidelines will show you how to use our complaints system.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response. We wish to ensure that:

- * Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so.
- * Parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously.
- * We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way.
- * We take action where appropriate.

How to complain

You can talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter or telephone. Please be as clear as possible about what is troubling you. Any member of staff will be happy to help, but it may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue, as he/she may be able to sort things out quickly and with the minimum of fuss.

It may be that you do not wish to complain as such but that there is something troubling you. Please remember that the School is here for you and your child and that we want to hear your views and your ideas. If you have concerns you are entitled to complain and, if in doubt, you should contact the School as we would wish to help. We would welcome the opportunity to deal with a relatively minor issue in order to prevent it becoming a more serious concern.

How a complaint will be handled

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction. If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, your complaint will be acknowledged as soon as practicable. You will be kept advised of the progress of the handling of the concern or complaint and, where possible, will be given an indication of when a decision is expected to be reached. The issue will be dealt with as quickly as possible but, in many circumstances, the person whom you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. Our letter or report will tell you of the outcome of your complaint, the conclusion, the reasons for it and any action taken or proposed.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated with respect and as confidentially as the nature of the complaint allows. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents will not rebound adversely on their children and that, similarly, complaints raised by pupils will not rebound on them. While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the School aware of the complaint and possibly also of the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the Police. You would be kept fully informed.

Action which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints would be handled confidentially within the School.

Referral to the Chair of Governors

We hope that you will be satisfied with the outcome of your complaint or at least feel that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered. If you are not satisfied, the Rector will offer to refer the matter to the Chair of Governors. Alternatively you may wish to write directly to the Chair. The Chair will be given a full written report from the Rector and all relevant documents and these will all be copied to you. The Chair will write to you, asking you if you wish to add to what you have said already and giving a date by which you may expect a full response from him.

If you remain troubled after receiving the Chair's response he will invite you to a meeting, at which he will normally be accompanied by the Rector and at most one other member of staff. You will be invited to bring to the meeting a supportive friend who is not involved with the complaint. It is hoped that, after questioning and listening to you and the Rector, the Chair will be able to find a solution.

Referral to the School's Conciliation Committee

If the solution suggested is not acceptable to you and you wish to take the matter further, the Chair may, if he considers it appropriate so to do, refer the matter to the School's Conciliation Committee or suggest some other course of action with a view to achieving a resolution. The Committee consists of a Convenor, who is a Governor but not the Chair of Governors, and three other Governor members appointed by the Board of Governors. You will be invited to attend and to bring a supportive friend as for the meeting with the Chair of Governors. You will be asked if there are any papers which you would like to have circulated beforehand. The Rector and another senior member of staff will also be in attendance.

If a resolution is still not achieved the Chair will take the matter to an early meeting of the Board of Governors whose decision shall be final. Members of the Conciliation Committee will not take part in the deliberations and decision of the Board of Governors.

At the High School we recognise and acknowledge your right to complain and we will always aim to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care. We hope that we will be able to satisfy your concerns.

