



## Complaints Procedure

Aldwickbury continues to be committed to high quality teaching, pastoral care and management. However, if a situation arises where parents do have a concern or complaint they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. Most concerns are addressed informally and they are dealt with entirely satisfactorily on that basis. Nothing in this document is intended to inhibit the informal free flow of information and comment between parents and the various responsibility holders within the school.

This procedure applies to the whole school including EYFS. If the complaint is about compliance with EYFS requirements, it will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential unless disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or under other legal authority.

At any stage of a complaint or concern regarding boarding, the Hertfordshire Children Schools and Families, Client Services (03001234043 or 01438 737511) can be contacted. If at any stage a parent or pupil wishes to contact either ISI or OFSTED should they feel it necessary the contact details are given below.

Independent Schools Inspectorate  
CAP House  
9 - 12 Long Lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA

**Tel: 020 7600 0100**

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns whether received verbally or in writing (including email) will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son's form teacher, tutor or subject teacher as appropriate. In many cases, the matter will be resolved quickly by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher or tutor cannot resolve the matter

alone, it may be necessary for the teacher/tutor to consult with a senior member of staff, as appropriate, who will then deal with the matter.

- The teacher concerned or the senior member of staff will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received.
- Should the matter not be resolved and both parties fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure. This would normally be after 15 working days.

## **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis as described in Stage 1, then the parents should put their complaint or concern in writing to the Headmaster, Deputy Head or Head of Pre-Prep. After considering the complaint the Headmaster will make recommendations regarding the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet with or speak to the parents concerned, in order to discuss the matter normally within 5 working days. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. These records will be held for a period of three years.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a recommendation will be made and parents will be informed of the findings in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his recommendations. This would normally be complete within 28 working days from the receipt of the written complaint from the parents.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the Headmaster's findings, 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 named governor (the "convenor") who has been appointed by the governors to call a hearing of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three governors and one person not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaints and who the school has identified as a person of standing within the local community, one of whom will sit on the Complaints Panel for any given complaint.

- Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the convenor who, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within ten working 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 three working days prior to the hearing.
- 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 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 facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which shall normally be completed within 21 working days of the Hearing. The panel will write to the parents, the Governors, Headmaster and any relevant member of staff involved informing them of its decision and the reasons for it.
- 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 of whom a complaint has been made. These will also be available at the school for any of the parties involved.
- Following the Panel's decision the parents may feel that their complaint has not been dealt with appropriately and to their satisfaction, in such rare circumstances they may contact any of the authorities listed on the first page of this policy.

### **Complaint against the Headmaster**

If the complaint is about the Headmaster, then the allegation should be passed to the Chairman of Governors (Contact details can be supplied by the Clerk to the Governors at Aldwickbury School). The procedure set out in Stage 3 above would then be followed. The Headmaster should not be informed of the complaint until such time as is appropriate.

**Headmaster**  
**September 2013**  
**Reviewed October 2015**