



# COMPLAINTS AND MEDIATION PROCEDURE

Related Documents:

- Behaviour Policy and Discipline Procedure
- Data Protection Policy

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011

Date for Review: November 2013

## COMPLAINTS AND MEDIATION PROCEDURE

The maintenance of a good working relationship between children, parents and teachers is a vital ingredient of a successful education. Occasionally a parent may wish to complain about a member of staff, and a procedure has been drawn up to ensure that difficulties are dealt with quickly and effectively.

### A. TEACHING STAFF

#### INFORMAL STEPS

1. A parent with a complaint should, in the first instance, attempt to resolve difficulties informally with the teacher concerned. The mentor (if applicable) may take part in these discussions. Parents should contact the Office to make an appointment to see the teacher concerned.
2. If the parent feels the matter has not been satisfactorily dealt with through an appointment, they can go to the **COLLEGE MEDIATOR** to discuss it further. The College Mediator after meeting the teacher complained of, with their mentor if they have one, should attempt to find a solution acceptable to both sides within a further week. The College Chair and Administrator are notified of the substance of the complaint and informed of progress made towards its resolution.

#### FORMAL STEPS

3. If informal measures prove unsatisfactory, the parent should write a letter to the **COLLEGE CHAIR**, outlining the problem and explaining why they feel it has not been satisfactorily resolved. The Chair will bring the matter to the next scheduled College meeting or call an extraordinary College meeting to discuss the matter if the next scheduled meeting is more than 7 days from the date of receipt of the letter (eg. end of term). The Chair should make a written response within 14 days of the matter being brought to the College. Written records should be kept by the College Chair of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Such records will be viewed by all parties and seen to be accurate.

Once the College Chair 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 College Chair will also give reasons for the decision.

If the teacher complained of is the College Chair, s/he will delegate their role under 2 and 3 to another College member appointed by the College.

The parent has the right to request an official panel hearing and bypass stage 3 moving straight to stage 4 (see below).

4. If the parent feels the matter is still unresolved then they can appeal to **THE BOARD** for a **PANEL HEARING**. The Board will nominate a mediatory panel group of not more than 3 people, one of whom will be independent of management or running the school, for a review of the whole process. The complaint hearing will be scheduled within 21 days of stage 4 being invoked.

If the panel group 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 3 days before the hearing.

The parent(s) 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.

The panel group's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the complainant(s), the College Chair, the Board Chair and, where relevant, the person at whom the complaint was directed within 7 days of the decision.

The Board will seek to ensure that the complaint has received a fair hearing and that the appropriate procedures have been followed. The decision of the Board is final.

## **B. NON-TEACHING STAFF**

1. Parents who feel they have a complaint against any non-teaching staff should contact the Administrator directly, if the matter cannot be resolved informally with the staff member concerned. The Administrator will make a response within 14 days of the complaint.
2. If this fails, the Administrator will call on the College Mediator, who will try to resolve the issue within one week.
3. If the matter cannot be resolved the parent may refer it to the Board who will review the process within 21 days. The parent has the right to request a panel hearing of their complaint, invoking the same procedure as in A.4 (see above).
4. If the person complained of is the Administrator, s/he will delegate their role in this procedure to another Board member appointed by the Board Chair.

## **C. DISPUTES OVER FINANCES**

1. Contact the ADMINISTRATOR.

2. If the matter cannot be resolved at this stage, the Administrator will refer it to the Finance Group.
3. If it is not possible to resolve the issue within the Finance Group, the College is informed where broader issues may be involved, and the Board is asked to find a final solution within 21 days.

#### **D. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Board's appeal panel may make findings and recommendations which will be communicated to the parent bringing the complaint, the member of staff complained about, the College and the full Board.
2. Written records are kept of all stages of the complaints procedure and will indicate at what stage the complaint is resolved.
3. All correspondence, statements and records connected with a Complaint are kept strictly confidential, except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6 (2) (j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standard) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

#### **E. EARLY YEARS COMPLAINTS TO OFSTED**

If after having followed the complaints procedure an Early Years parent or carer feels dissatisfied with the school response they may contact Ofsted with the details of their complaint:

Ofsted  
0300 1234 234  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)