

PANGBOURNE

Complaints Procedure

	SMT REVIEW	HEADMASTER REVIEW*
Last action	June 2019 by DHP	Approved June 2019
Next action	June 2020	Approval due June 2020

Introduction

Pangbourne has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents or guardians do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

1. Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved informally, quickly and constructively.

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact either their son/daughter's Housemaster/Housemistress or the relevant Head of Section (HOS: either the Head of Sixth Form, Key Stage 4 or Key Stage 3). In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the HOM/HOS cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult appropriate colleagues [the Deputy Heads (Academic, Pastoral or Co-curriculum), the Head of Department (HOD) or Academic Tutor]. Any complaint which has a Child Protection aspect will necessarily be referred to the Deputy Head Pastoral, as the College's Designated Senior Lead. Any complaint about a HOM will be referred to the Deputy Head Pastoral, about a HOS, to the Deputy Head Academic.
- Complaints made directly to another teacher/tutor will usually be referred to the relevant Manager/s [HOM, HOD, HOS] who will then agree who is best placed to deal with the complaint and notify the complaining parents of this.
- The manager will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 2 weeks or in the event that the responding manager and parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.

2. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within 3 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 Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster 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, normally within 2 weeks of his initial discussion with parents. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

2. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should write to the Chairman of Governors, detailing the matter(s) about which they are complaining, who will then convene a hearing of the Governors' Complaints Panel (GCP).

- The GCP will consider only the matter(s) raised in the parents' letter. The Panel will consist of:
 - At least two Governors (one of whom will chair the panel), who are not directly involved in the matter(s) about which the complaint has been made.
 - An independent outsider who is not involved in the running or management of the School.
- The Chair of the GCP (the Chair) will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable within 2 weeks, accepting that circumstances may see this delayed up to 21 days.
- The procedure to be followed by the GCP is at Appendix A to this procedure.
- 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 4 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. The precise role of this individual would be negotiated and agreed between the Chair and the parents prior to the meeting.
- 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 it shall complete within 5 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, the Chairman of Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher.

Written records will be kept; whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and any actions taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) will be placed on file.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under *section 109 of the 2008 Act* requests access to them.

Contact details:

Headmaster: Mr Thomas Garnier, headmaster@pangbourne.com, 0118 9 767 421

Chair of Governors: Rear Admiral Roger Lane-Nott, Chairman@pangbourne.com, 0118 976 7424

Summary of Formal complaints and resolutions

During the academic year September 2018 to August 2019, the College recorded one formal complaint, which was dealt with in accordance with Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure.

APPENDIX A to Complaints Procedure for Parents and Guardians

Governors' Complaints Panel (GCP)

Introduction

The aim of the hearing is to resolve the complaint and achieve a reconciliation between the College and the parent. The Chair of the GCP will ensure that the meeting is properly minuted. Although the meeting will follow the structured order below, given potential sensitivities and anxieties, the Chair will endeavour to ensure that the proceedings are as informal as possible and that all parties are put at their ease. The introduction of new information or of issues not raised in the letter of complaint or of witnesses, previously not notified to all parties, would be reason to adjourn the meeting so that everyone has time to consider and respond to the new information.

Order of Meeting

1. The Chair welcomes the parent(s) and his/her companion and introduces the GCP.
2. The Chair explains the purpose of the meeting and the procedure and outlines the issues raised in the letter of complaint.
3. The parent(s)/companion explains the complaint, calling in witnesses if appropriate.
4. The GCP may question the parent(s)/companion and witnesses.
5. The parent(s) and companion retire from the meeting.
6. The Chair welcomes the Headmaster and the Chair of Governors if present.
7. The Chair explains the purpose of the meeting and the procedure.
8. The Headmaster/Chair of Governors present a response to the complaint, including action taken to address the complaint at stage 1 and 2 of the procedure and calling witnesses, if appropriate.
9. The GCP may question the Headmaster/Chair of Governors.
10. The Headmaster and Chair of Governors if present retire from the meeting.
11. The parent(s), together with his/her companion, is invited back into the room to make a final statement, then retires.
12. The Headmaster, together with the Chair of Governors, where applicable, is invited back into the room to make a final statement, then retires.
13. The GCP considers the complaint and reaches a unanimous or majority decision. The GCP also decides what action (if any) to take to resolve the complaint and, if appropriate, recommends changes to ensure similar complaints are not made in future.
14. When a decision has been made, the Chair recalls the parent(s), then the Headmaster and each is informed of the outcome and any action to be taken.
15. All outcomes are confirmed in writing to both parties. This decision letter should outline the nature of the complaint, the factors taken into consideration and the decision of the GCP. In accordance with the Complaints Procedure the Panel's decision will be final.