



# Clifton High School

co-educational nursery pre-school to sixth form

<b>Policy applies from EYFS to Sixth Form</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
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Date policy to be reviewed	25.01.2021
Author	Mr G Cowper
A shaded area denotes a regulation to which all Schools must comply	

*Clifton High School is committed to child protection and safeguarding children and young people and expects all staff, visitors and volunteers to share this commitment.*

## Introduction

Clifton High School children benefit from the excellent working relationships and partnerships that are established with our parents. This common understanding of working together is central in the successful education of our children and young people.

Parents are encouraged to work closely with the School and communication is important. It is natural that parents will have, at times; concerns that they will want to express and share with the School. From our experience face to face meetings are in the main the most successful in resolving matters of concern or informal complaints quickly.

Occasionally parents might feel the need to go further and complain formally. This policy describes a staged process for resolving matters of concern, informal complaints, formal complaints and a review by a panel.

Clifton High School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school with care and in accordance with this procedure. The Complaint's Policy is available to all parents of current pupils on the School's website and a hard copy is available from the School Office.

## What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly. The complaints procedure does apply to past pupils if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered at school. The procedure does not apply to prospective pupils.

## Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. The complaint will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and within twenty working days during the School Holiday.

	Meeting Type	Resolution, Term Time	Resolution, School Holiday
Stage 1	Informal	7 Days	38 Days
Stage 2	Formal	28 Days	38 Days
Stage 3	Panel hearing	28 Days	38 Days

## Recording Complaints

Following the resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, what action, if any was taken by the School, which stage they were resolved at or if they proceeded to a Panel Hearing. These records will provide the Chair of Governors with management information so that patterns of concern can be monitored and the quality of leadership and management assessed.

At the School's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of all staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

All information will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally, to the parent's satisfaction
- If a parent has a complaint about a financial or operational matter it should be brought to the attention of the Director of Operations
- If a parent has a complaint about an academic or pastoral matter it should be brought to the attention of the pupil's Class Teacher or Tutor. In many cases, it will be possible to resolve the matter straightaway at this stage. However, if the Class Teacher or Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone or if there are further concerns it may be necessary for them to consult with a member of The Senior Leadership Team or the Deputy Heads of School
- Complaints made directly to Senior Leadership, the Director of Operations, the Deputy Heads of School or the Head of School will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher or Tutor unless the senior member of staff or the Head of School deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally
- The Class Teacher or Tutor 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 seven days or if the Class Teacher or Tutor and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure. If, however, the complaint is against the Head of School, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors, in writing. The letter should be sent c/o Clifton High School, College Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3JD

### 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 Head of School. The Head of School will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take
- In most cases, the Head of School will meet with or speak to the parents concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage, within twenty-eight days in term time and thirty-eight days if in the School Holiday of receiving the written letter of complaint although it may be necessary for the Head of School to carry out further investigations
- The Head of School will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, the resolution and any actions taken by the School

- Once the Head of School is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head of School will also give reasons for her decision
- If the complaint is against the Head of School, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Head of School and for all the relevant documents. The Chair of Government may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair of Governor is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair of Governors will give reasons for his decision
- If the parents are still not satisfied with any decision made in Stage 2 they will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 3 of the Complaints Policy
- This will continue unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further

### Stage 3 –Panel Hearing

- If the parents wish to proceed to Stage 3, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution the Chair of Governors will convene a Panel Hearing to investigate and consider the complaint. Parents should invoke Stage 3 by putting their complaint in writing, c/o Clifton High School, College Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3JD
- The matter will then be referred to the Panel Hearing for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Panel will then acknowledge the complaint within five working days if received during term time and within twenty working days during the School Holiday and schedule a hearing to take place, so a resolution can be given to the parents within twenty eight days in term time and thirty eight days in the School Holiday
- In appointing an independent member of the panel, the School will give due regard to guidance from the DfE, who advise that a suitable person will have held a position of responsibility, preferably within the local community, and will have experience of analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments. The School may consider serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools or professionals with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force
- If the Panel deem 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 normally not later than seven days prior to the hearing
- The Panel hearing should proceed even if the parent decides not to attend. If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in their absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion
- The parents may attend and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation at this stage will not be permitted.
- If the parent decides not to attend the hearing, the panel will hear the complaint in their absence, bringing the matter to conclusion
- 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 come to a decision and may also make recommendations
- The Panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head of School, the Chair of Governors and where relevant the person(s) complained of
- The findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the School premises by the Head of School

## **Notes for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

When a complaint is received from a parent of a child within the EYFS, the School will notify the parent of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. Clifton High School will provide Ofsted and ISI on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. If a parent does not feel the school is meeting the EYFS requirements they can contact Ofsted via <https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-form> or on 0300 123 1231.

## **Record of Formal Complaints**

During the academic year 2018-2019 0 formal complaints were made to the School.