



Fettes College

Complaints Policy 2020-2021

Updated Sept 2020
Review Date Sept 2021
Responsibility – PJFW, Bursar

Complaints Policy

Fettes College is committed to providing the best teaching and pastoral care it can for its pupils. Formal complaints are very rare. Usually any worries or concerns can be resolved without the need for formal procedures, but, if not, the school has a Complaints Procedure. The procedure includes Informal Resolution, Formal Resolution and an Appeals Procedure. The good relationships between pupils, parents and the School mean most matters raised under the Complaints Procedure can be resolved at the first stage.

The School will always want to take the opportunity to identify and implement any lessons which can be learned from a complaint* and its outcome. This is why the School will record** the complaints, their outcomes and the implementation of any actions which are identified.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

If parents have a complaint or concern, they should usually contact their child's Housemaster/mistress, who may in turn consult other relevant members of staff, as appropriate, to assist with a prompt and speedy resolution. Where complaints are made directly to another member of staff, they will usually refer the parents to the Housemaster/mistress.

The Housemaster/mistress and, where relevant, other appropriate staff members, will speak to or meet the parents as soon as possible after the complaint has been received. The aim will be to resolve the complaint within seven working days*** of it being received.

If the complaint is against a named member of staff, the Head will be informed. Depending on the nature of that complaint, it may be necessary to invoke procedures from the School's other policies in order for a full investigation to be carried out.

If, after a meeting to discuss the complaint, there is no satisfactory resolution, parents can then proceed to 'Stage 2: Formal Resolution' of the Complaints Procedure.

If the complaint is about the Head, the complaint should be sent to The Clerk to the Governors, who will liaise with the Chair of Governors, the parents and, as appropriate, the Head. If the complaint cannot be resolved at this stage of the Complaints Procedure, the complaint will be considered under the Stage 3 Appeal Procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis under Stage 1, parents should put their complaint in writing to the Deputy Head or Head.

The Head or Deputy Head will hold a meeting with the parents concerned to discuss the matter. This meeting will usually take place within seven working days of the written complaint being received. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

If the complaint is against a named member of staff, the Head may decide that the member of staff should be in attendance at the meeting. The parents making the complaint will be consulted on this and their views taken into account in the Head's decision. If the member of staff is to be present at the meeting, the particulars of the complaint that has been made shall be supplied to that member of staff in advance of the meeting.

Depending on the nature of the complaint against the named member of staff, it may be necessary to invoke procedures from the School's other policies in order for a full investigation to be carried out. If this is the case, the named member of staff would not be in attendance at the meeting.

If the matter cannot be resolved at the meeting, the Deputy Head or Head will investigate the matter further. The aim will be to provide a written response to the complaint within a further seven working days from the date of the meeting. This timescale is subject to any additional time required or allowed by other relevant policies in the case of complaint against a named member of staff.

The response will explain the decision, the reasons for it and any action taken or proposed and will be sent to the interested parties. Where other relevant policies have been invoked, a decision will not contain sensitive or confidential employment details.

If parents are dissatisfied with the decision, they may proceed to 'Stage 3: Appeals Procedure'.

Stage 3: Appeals Procedure

At this stage of the procedure, parents will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors. The Clerk has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The Complaints Panel will hear the appeal. The Complaints Panel will consist of three Governors. No-one on the Complaints Panel will have had any prior involvement in the matters detailed in the complaint.

The Clerk to the Governors will acknowledge the complaint in writing within three working days of receipt and will schedule a hearing of the Complaints Panel.

The hearing of the Complaints Panel will take place no later than 14 working days from the complaint being received by the Clerk.

If the complaint is against a named member of staff, the particulars of the complaint will be made available to the member of staff and, provided it is consistent with any other policies which may require to be invoked, that member of staff will have the right to appear before the Complaints Panel.

The Complaints Panel may require that all details of the complaint should be supplied to the parties to the hearing in advance, in which case this will be done no later than seven working days prior to the hearing.

The parents and, where applicable, the member of staff may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate at such a hearing but may be permitted at the discretion of the Panel.

If possible, the Panel will make a decision on the complaint immediately following the hearing without the need for further investigation.

If the Panel decides that further investigation is required, this will be intimated to the parties. The steps to be taken and the proposed timescale for completion of the investigation will be outlined.

On completion of its further investigation, the Complaints Panel will meet again within seven working days. If the Panel decides a further hearing of the Panel, with the interested parties present, is necessary, the Clerk will arrange this and intimate the details to the relevant parties.

The Complaints Panel will issue its decision in writing. The decision of the Complaints Panel is final.

The Complaint Panel's decision, the reasons for it and any recommendations it makes, will be sent to the parents, the Head, the Chair of Governors and, where relevant, the person who was the subject of the complaint.

Notes

***Complaint:** for the purposes of this procedure is any matter relating to the School about which parents are unhappy and seek action by the School.

****Recording of complaints and outcomes:** a record of the complaint made, the outcome and the implementation of any recommendations will be kept by the Deputy Head and monitored by the Head. Any sensitive personal information and details relating to the complaint will be kept only for so long as is required by law and in accordance with the School's privacy policy.

*****Working days:** are defined as days that the School is in session for teaching.

Monitoring and Complaints

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis to evaluate its effectiveness and eliminate unlawful discrimination. Anyone who feels that the School has breached this policy should appeal in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy.

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