

Fettes College

Complaints Policy 2022/23

Updated July 2022
Review Date July 2023
Responsibility – PJFW, Bursar

Complaints Policy

Fettes College (“the School”) is committed to providing the best teaching and pastoral care it can for its students. 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 Policy (“the Policy”). The Policy includes Informal Resolution, Formal Resolution and an Appeals Procedure. The good relationships between students, parents and the School means most matters raised under the Policy 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. The Policy distinguishes between different categories of complaint.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

If parents have a complaint they should in the first instance contact their child’s Houseparent (“the Houseparent”), 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 refer the parents to the Houseparent.

The Houseparent 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 then, depending on the nature of that complaint, the matter will be referred by the Houseparent to the appropriate Deputy Head. If the complaint is about the Houseparent, the complaint should be addressed to the Senior Deputy Head. It may be necessary, in all cases of a complaint, to invoke procedures from the School’s other policies in order for a full investigation to be carried out.

If, after a meeting or discussion to resolve the complaint, there is no satisfactory resolution, parents can then proceed to “*Stage 2: Formal Resolution*” of the Complaints Policy.

If the complaint is about the Head of the School (“the Head”), the complaint should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors (“the Clerk”), who will liaise with the Chair of Governors (“the Chair”), 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 4: Appeals Procedure*”, which will only apply to complaints in respect of a decision by the Head to expel or permanently remove a child.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

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

The relevant 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 relevant Deputy 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 Deputy 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 relevant Deputy 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: Resolution by the Head'.

Stage 3: Resolution by the Head

At this stage of the procedure the complaint will be referred to the Head whose decision, except in the case of expulsion or permanent removal, shall be final. The Head shall not, except in exceptional circumstances, expel or permanently remove a pupil without first obtaining the agreement of the Chair or, in circumstances of non-availability of the Chair, of a Governor nominated by the Chair to act in place of the Chair. If parents are dissatisfied with the decision to expel or permanently remove their child they may proceed to "Stage 4: Appeals Procedure".

Stage 4: Appeals Procedure

At this stage of the procedure, which shall only apply in respect of expulsion or permanent removal, parents will be referred to the Clerk, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The Complaints Panel, typically comprising three Governors, none of whom will have had any prior involvement in the matters detailed in the complaint ("the Complaints Panel"), will hear the appeal.

Parents who wish to appeal a decision of the Head to expel or permanently remove a pupil may do so within 14 days, or such longer period as the Governors, at their discretion, may permit, following the decision of the Head to expel or permanently remove a pupil.

The Clerk will acknowledge the complaint in writing within 5 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 28 working days from the complaint being received by the Clerk.

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 7 days prior to the hearing.

The parents and the Head 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 Complaints Panel.

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

If the Complaints 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 Complaints Panel decides a further hearing of the Complaints 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 and, where relevant, the person who was the subject of the complaint.

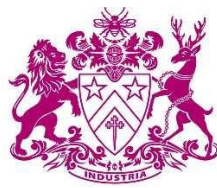
Notes

***Complaint** - for the purposes of this policy is any matter relating to the School about which parents are unhappy and seek action by the School. Any references to the relevant Deputy Head in the foregoing Complaints Policy shall be as undernoted dependent on the nature of the complaint;

- (A) Academic matters or conduct of a teacher-Deputy Head (Academic) or Senior Deputy Head;
- (B) Pastoral matters or conduct of non -teaching staff-Deputy Head (Pastoral)or Senior Deputy Head;
- (C) Houseparent conduct or anything other than is covered in paragraphs (A) or (B)-Senior Deputy Head;

****Recording of complaints and outcomes:** a record of the complaint made, the outcome and the implementation of any recommendations will be kept by the Senior Deputy 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.

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