



# ALDRO

## Complaints Procedure

<b>Author:</b>	Headmaster (CSC)
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<b>Governor lead:</b>	Sarah Hunt
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## Introduction

Aldro has long prided itself on the excellence of the education provided to its pupils and believes that many questions a parent may have, if raised early on, can usually be resolved quickly and informally. From time to time, however, it may be that informal resolution to a concern proves inadequate, and the policy below is designed to outline a more formal process to support the pursuit of such a concern.

Aldro does not distinguish between a 'concern' or a 'complaint' and treats any matter about which a parent is *unhappy* and *seeks action* by the school as a complaint. This can be raised either verbally or in writing. All complaints are logged with the Headmaster via the Headmaster's secretary.

It is expected that many complaints will be quickly and satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, but the school operates a three-stage complaints process to deal with complaints that may not be so quickly resolved. A complaint that cannot be resolved in a satisfactory manner via Stages 1 and 2 can reach a panel hearing at Stage 3. If parents have cause to bring a complaint to the school, the procedure that the school will follow is set out below. Aldro will make the 'complaints procedure' available to all parents of pupils on the school's website and will ensure that parents of pupils who request it are made aware where this document is available. All references to timings relate specifically to term-time.

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their child's Form Tutor or, for a boarding issue, the Housemaster. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Tutor or Housemaster cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the relevant Head of Years (Junior, Middle, Senior), Assistant Head (Academic), Assistant Head (Pastoral) or the Deputy Head. If this still fails to resolve the matter, then the matter can be passed up to the Head.
- Complaints made directly to the Head (in person or in writing) will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff unless the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally.
- The member of staff will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received, and all initial complaints should be acknowledged within 48 hours. Should the matter not be resolved within one working week or in the event that the member of staff 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 this Procedure.

### 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. He will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

- In most cases, the Head will meet with/speak to the parents concerned within five working days of receiving the complaint (in term time, otherwise as soon as reasonable outside of term time), to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage and if not, the complaint should be escalated to Stage 3.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head 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. The Head 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.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), this should be done through a written report directed to the Chair of Governors. This does not include complaints written to members of staff and copied in to the Chair of Governors (in such cases, the Headmaster will follow up the complaint to resolution and report back to the Chair and Vice-chair of governors).
- Written reports from parents invoking Stage 3 of the complaints process will normally be referred to the Vice-chair of Governors who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- Complaints (as defined above) will be recorded by collating:
  - i. correspondence from parents to the chair of governors
  - ii. records provided by the Head of meetings and correspondence with parents in Stages 1 and 2
  - iii. details of actions taken as a result of a complaint at Stages 1 & 2

Such records will remain confidential to the panel and Chair / Vice-chair of Governors.

- The matter will be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration within 15 days of receipt. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governors. The Vice Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within three weeks.
- 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 sent by electronic mail / otherwise supplied to all parties (complainant and, where relevant, person complained about) not later than 7 days prior to the hearing.

- Such particulars will always be available for inspection by the Headmaster / Chair of Governors.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- 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 10 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.
- When the Panel's findings and recommendations are concluded, a copy of those findings and recommendations is in writing — (i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor (governors) and the Head.

A written log will be kept of all complaints, together with the action taken as a result of the complaint, and of whether they are resolved at Stages 1 or 2, or whether they proceed to a Panel hearing at Stage 3. This will be done regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.

### **Confidentiality**

Parents can be assured that all 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 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

### **Retention**

Complaints will be retained by the school for a minimum of 7 years, unless the complaints include safeguarding implications, in which case they will be retained in line with current guidelines.

### **Persistent correspondence**

Where repeated attempts are made to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy.

**This policy applies to all in the Aldro community – staff, boarders, day pupils and parents.**

**Number of Formal Complaints received in the Academic Year 2020-21: 0**

**Number of Formal Complaints received in the Academic Year 2021-22: 0**

**Number of Formal Complaints received in the Academic Year 2022-23: 0**