



DAUNTSEY'S SCHOOL

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. Dauntsey's prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, parents can expect any complaint to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this procedure. Dauntsey's makes this complaints procedure available on the School's website and in the School office during the school day. Dauntsey's will ensure that parents who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available. This procedure is not, however, available for use by prospective parents and may only be used by parents of current pupils.
2. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated under this procedure.
3. Complaints from parents of former pupils will be considered under this procedure only if the complaint was initially raised while the pupil to whom it relates was still registered at the School.
4. In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, Dauntsey's will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding School year.

What constitutes a complaint?

5. A concern is an expression of worry or difficulty for which informal resolution is sought. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem where the parent seeks a formal response or outcome. 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 something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

6. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The School is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.
7. Parents should be aware that, even where a complaint is upheld, the School may be unable to share full details of investigations, evidence considered or any sanctions applied, where this information relates to third parties or is restricted by data protection, safeguarding or other legal obligations.
8. Complaints or concerns involving safeguarding matters may be managed in accordance with the School's safeguarding procedures and statutory obligations, which may take precedence over this complaints procedure where appropriate.

Timeframe for dealing with complaints

9. All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods¹. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the School's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time, and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 days, if the appeal is lodged during termtime and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.
10. Where exceptional circumstances arise which prevent these timescales being met, parents will be informed of the reasons for any delay and the revised expected timescale.

Stage 1 - Informal resolution

11. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
12. In the first instance, parents should normally contact their son or daughter's Housemaster/Housemistress. In many cases, the matter will be resolved quickly by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Housemaster/Housemistress cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary to consult a Head of Department, a member of the Senior Management Team or the Head Master.
13. Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, Senior Management Team or the Head Master will usually be referred to the relevant Housemaster/Housemistress unless it is deemed appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
14. The Deputy Head (Academic) or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will keep a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received and how they were resolved. The Head Master will be informed of all such complaints and concerns. The Head Master will be informed of all such concerns and complaints. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 days, or where the Housemaster/Housemistress and the

¹ For the purposes of this procedure, "working days" refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time. Term time means periods when the School is in session and pupils are attending.

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

15. If the complaint is against the Head Master, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors.
16. Complaints concerning a Governor or the Chair of Governors should be directed to the Clerk to the Governors.

Stage 2 – Formal resolution

17. If a complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head Master. The Head Master will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
18. The Head Master will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
19. It may be necessary for the Head Master to carry out further investigations.
20. The Head Master will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
21. All such correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will remain confidential, except where disclosure is required in the course of inspection, legal proceedings or other lawful process.
22. Once the Head Master 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 Master will also give reasons for his decision.
23. In most cases, the written decision will be provided within 20 working days of receipt of the formal complaint, subject to any necessary investigation.
24. If the complaint is against the Head Master, the Chair of Governors will appoint either one of the Governors (including the Chair) or someone else independent of the management and running of the School to investigate the complaint. This person, “the Investigator”, will call for a full report from the Head Master and for all the relevant documents. They 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 Investigator is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Investigator will give reasons for the decision.

25. If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel hearing

26. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to a Convenor who will be appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The Convenor would normally be the Clerk to the Governors.
27. Parents wishing to invoke Stage 3 must do so within 14 days of the date of the written decision issued under Stage 2.
28. Parents invoking a Stage 3 Hearing must set out in writing the nature of their complaint, any reasons why they are dissatisfied with the manner in which it has been dealt with and the resolution that they seek. This should be sent by email to both the Head Master (if appropriate) (headmaster@dauntseys.wilts.sch.uk) and the Convenor.
29. The matter will then be referred to a Complaints Panel by the Chair of Governors for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons (a) two of whom may be Governors, who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and (b) one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. The selection of the complaints panel will be made by the Convenor.
30. The purpose of the Panel Hearing is to review the fairness and reasonableness of the Stage 2 decision. The Panel Hearing will not consider any new complaints that have not previously been raised and considered under Stage 2 of this procedure.
31. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 28 days of receipt of the email sent to the Head Master and Convenor under Paragraph 25. The time taken to schedule the hearing may take longer than 28 days during school holiday periods.
32. 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 normally not later than 7 days prior to the hearing.
33. The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
34. A note-taker will attend the hearing to provide an accurate written summary of the discussion. A summary of the hearing will be shared with attendees as soon as practicable following the hearing.
35. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

36. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations. The Panel will write to the parents and, where relevant, the person complained about informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 days of the hearing.
37. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations is available for inspection on the School premises by the Governors and the Head Master.
38. The School will make available to inspectors, on request, a written record of all complaints made under this procedure during the preceding academic year.
39. The School is committed to considering complaints fully and fairly. However, once a complaint has been concluded through all three stages of this procedure, the process will be regarded as complete, and the matter will not be reopened.
40. The School may consider implementing appropriate communication arrangements where complaints are pursued in a manner that is unreasonable, excessive or disproportionate. Any such decision will be made fairly and proportionately.
41. This procedure should be read alongside the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Behaviour Policy, Exclusions Policy, Data Protection Policy and Record Retention procedures.

Recording Complaints

42. Following resolution, the School will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. Records will be kept containing the following information:
 - Date when the issue was raised
 - Name of parent
 - Name of pupil
 - Description of the issue
 - Records of the investigations (if appropriate)
 - Witness statements (if appropriate)
 - Name of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
 - Copies of relevant correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

- Action taken by the School as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether the complaint was upheld.
43. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints 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.
 44. Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications will be retained for 7 years. Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications will be retained for 7 years. Records concerning safeguarding matters or allegations of abuse will be retained in accordance with the School's safeguarding, data retention and legal obligations in force at the relevant time..
 45. The number of complaints in the preceding academic year are available upon request.

Bursar

Reviewed: May 2026

Next Review: May 2027



PARENTAL COMPLAINTS FORM

Complaint relating to:

(name of member of staff)

Member of staff receiving the complaint: _____

From (Name of parent): _____

Name of pupil and class: _____

Date/time of complaint: _____

Complaint: _____

Action taken: _____

Outcome: _____

Actions taken arising from the complaint (regardless of whether or not upheld)

Issue Passed to: _____ Date/Time: _____

Seen:

Senior member of staff (Name): _____ Date: _____

Complaints Co-ordinator (Deputy Head): _____ Date: _____

Head: _____ Date: _____