

PARENTS' COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Complaints made to the College will be listened to, acted upon, taken seriously and handled consistently.
2. Complaints will be investigated thoroughly, fairly and promptly.
3. The Principal or Director of Studies, or if appropriate, a senior member of staff, will respond to complaints made by parents/guardians/agents, with an acknowledgement as soon as possible. Should a complaint be received during the College holidays, this will be acknowledged no later than the first day of the following term and a target date for providing a response will be no later than 14 days after the start of term.
4. Complaints made by students will normally be dealt with by the Director of Studies in the first instance.
5. When the complaint is directed at a senior member of staff, the Principal will deal with the matter.
6. When there is a formal complaint against the Principal, the Proprietors will be informed and will deal with it.
7. A complaint by a parent/guardian/agent will not adversely affect their son or daughter.
8. Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages of the Complaints Procedure, this will be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy.
9. The College shall not discriminate in the handling of any complaint on the basis of age, sex, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy and maternity.
10. Confidentiality will be observed so far as is consistent with proper investigation and effective handling of a complaint.
11. The College will retain records of complaints for a minimum of 7 years (in relation to complaints which do not have safeguarding implications). Where there is a safeguarding angle, records concerning allegations of abuse must be preserved for the term of the independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation, if it is longer.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 - Informal

Most complaints are easily resolved informally by discussion with the appropriate member of staff at the College. The complainant will receive an acknowledgement as soon as possible and within 24 hours. More

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difficult or complex concerns may involve more than one discussion. A response will be received by the complainant within 3 days.

Procedure for Initial Contact by Members of Staff:

1. Listen to, and record, in writing, basic details of the complaint.
2. Decide upon appropriate person to pass information.
3. The appropriate member of staff interviews complainant or makes telephone or email contact.
4. Complaint listened to and details recorded.
5. Member of staff dealing with the complaint decides upon action to be taken and who needs to be seen, what information is required, possible further interviews. Decision is made on urgency of action and timescale to work to.

Action to be Taken:

1. Speak to those involved in complaint.
2. Speak to witnesses if required.
3. Take written statements if required.

If possible, collect sufficient evidence to make an objective decision about the complaint.

- Is the matter concluded?
- If yes, agree action, communicate with complainant.
- If no, refer to higher authority or repeat procedure.

Should parents/guardians/agents not be satisfied with the College's handling of the issue, they should make a formal complaint in writing to the Principal in the first instance.

Stage 2 - Formal

Where a parent/guardian/agent has made a formal complaint in writing, the Principal will carry out an investigation and respond to the complainant.

The complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt during term time, and a target date for providing a response will be given. This will be within 10 days during term time. Should a complaint be received during the College holidays, this will be acknowledged no later than the first day of the following term and a target date for providing a response will be no later than 10 days after the start of term.

The Principal may request to meet the complainant to gain further information relevant to the complaint. Statements from witnesses will be collected where necessary. When all the relevant facts have been established, the Principal will produce a written response to the complainant.

If this formal complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parents, it should be referred in writing to the Proprietors who will call a meeting of the Appeal Committee.

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Stage 3 – Appeal Panel Hearing

The complaint will be raised with the Proprietors who will call a meeting of the Appeal Committee. The Appeal Committee will be comprised of at least three individuals not directly involved in the matters that are the subject of the complaint. Furthermore, one of the individuals will be independent of the running and management of the College.

The complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt during term time, and a target date for providing a response will be given. This will be within 14 days during term time. Should a complaint be received during the College holidays, this will be acknowledged no later than the first day of the following term and a date for calling a meeting of the Appeal Committee will be no later than 14 days after the start of term.

The complainant will be informed that they may attend this meeting and can be accompanied at the Panel Hearing if they so wish.

The findings, recommendations and decision of the Appeal Committee will be made in writing, and copied to all relevant parties including the complainant, the person being complained about (if relevant), the Principal and a representative of the Proprietors. This report will also be available for inspection on the premises by the Principal and the proprietors. The decision of the Appeal Committee will be final.

Written records will be kept of all complaints and the manner of their resolution. Such records, including any related correspondence or statements 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, or as otherwise required by law.

The overall process from the formal stage to completion will not take more than 28 working days during term time.

(Names of independent members: Fiona Craig, Andrew More and a Proprietor of Padworth College).

For serious complaints that are unresolved, parents are at liberty to contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate, Ground Floor, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA. Tel: 0207 600 0100.

Number of formal complaints 2019/20: 0

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