

Introduction

Wycliffe has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this procedure. Wycliffe makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils on the School's website and in the School office during the School day. Wycliffe will ensure that all parents of pupils are made aware of its complaints procedure and advise them of its availability. Wycliffe will ensure that parents of pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published and the form in which it is published or available.

The School will attempt to resolve a complaint either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils and any other individuals concerned.

This policy applies to the Senior School. For concerns and complaints concerning the Preparatory School please refer to the Wycliffe's Preparatory School Complaints Policy.

What Constitutes a Concern or a Complaint?

A concern or complaint may be an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem or any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the School. For example, the concern or complaint 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 so something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

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 raise in good faith.

This policy is available to parents of pupils currently registered at the School. This policy does not apply to parents of prospective pupils. This policy does not apply to parents of former pupils unless the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered at the School.

Recording Complaints

The Head of College ('the Head') will ensure a written record of all formal complaints is held including whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing. A written record will also be kept of action taken by the School as a result of complaints, regardless as to whether or not they are upheld.

The School's written record may include the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Any complaint relating to boarding provision

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required by a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

1. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
2. If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Tutor, teacher or Housemaster/Housemistress. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff concerned cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult one of the Deputy Heads.
3. If the complaint is about the child's Tutor, teacher or Housemaster/Housemistress, the matter should be raised initially with one of the Deputy Heads.
4. Complaints made directly to one of the Deputy Heads will usually be referred to the relevant Tutor, teacher or Housemaster/Housemistress, unless they deem it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
5. The person receiving the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 working days, or in the event that the person receiving the complaint is unable to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.
6. If the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Clerk to the Council of Trustees who will refer it immediately to the Chair of the Trustees to manage in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure. If the complaint concerns the Chair of Trustees, the Clerk will refer it immediately to one of the Vice Chair of Trustees to manage in accordance with Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

1. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within 5 working days. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
2. In most cases, the Head will arrange to meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
3. It may be necessary for the Head (or a person appointed by the Head as set out below) to carry out further investigations.
4. A written record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept where possible.
5. The Head may at their discretion appoint a senior member of staff to carry out the investigation for all or part of the complaint as the Head feels fit. This may include seeking further information from the parent.
6. Once the Head 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 their decision. The Head will confirm the decision together with reasons, as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within 7 working days following acknowledgment of the formal complaint.

7. If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure within 14 working days of the decision.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

1. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Clerk to the Council of Trustees who has been appointed by the Trustees to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
2. The Clerk will refer the matter to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Clerk, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working days.
3. 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 5 working days prior to the hearing.
4. The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This must not be a pupil but may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
5. 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.
6. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.
7. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, the Head and the Chair of Trustees, and where relevant, the person complained about. A copy will also be made available for inspection on the School premises by the Trustees and Head.
8. The School aims to resolve all complaints as speedily as reasonably practicable wherever possible within the timeframes provided by this policy. Where for any reason that is not possible, parents will be kept informed of likely timeframe for resolution.

Handling of Complaints

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially by the School.

All references to 'working days' in this policy means Monday-Friday (excluding weekends) during normal school term time (as published in the School calendar and on the School's website).

In the event of a complaint being received during a school holiday period, it will be dealt with as soon as reasonably practicable. Where there are delays in collecting information, for example, caused by staff absence, parents will be informed of the reasons why and a likely timeframe for a response.

If parents remain dissatisfied with the School's response and/or feel that intervention at a higher level is appropriate, they may lodge a complaint to external agencies as follows:

WYCLIFFE COLLEGE SENIOR SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY



Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)
CAP House,
9-12 Long Lane,
London
EC1A 9HA
Tel: 020 7600 0100
Email: concerns@isi.net
A – Z Handbook

Alternative Dispute Resolution

In the event that the School is unable to resolve a complaint with a parent and the internal procedure has been exhausted, the School will write to parents to let them know that they cannot settle the complaint but that parents may, if they wish, contact the Ombudsman Service as a means of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Use of ADR by the School and parents is voluntary; the School is under no obligation to submit to alternative dispute resolution.

The Senior School received four formal complaints in the academic year 2020-21.