

Introduction

Wycliffe College Senior School ('the School') 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. The School makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils on its website and in the School office during the School day. The School will ensure that all parents of current pupils are made aware of its complaints procedure and advise them of its availability. The School will ensure that parents of current 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 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.

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

What Constitutes a Concern or a Complaint?

A concern or complaint is 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. 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, for example, 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.

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 (Stage 2) or proceeded to a panel hearing (Stage 3). 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 and contact details 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);
- notes/minutes meetings and of the hearing (if appropriate);
- any complaint relating to boarding provision; and
- the panel's written decision.

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. For further information on how we handle and protect pupil and parent data, including data relating to complaints, please see the Privacy Notice available on the School's website.

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 or another member of staff as appropriate.
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 who may need to consult with other members of staff as appropriate.
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 ('the Clerk') who will refer it immediately to the Chair of the Trustees to manage in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure as set out below. 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. The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. This may include a note taker attending the meeting with the parents.
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 parents.
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 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.
8. If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they are able to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure if they appeal in writing within 10 working days of the Stage 2 decision. Further information on invoking Stage 3 is provided below.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

1. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they should do so in writing to the Clerk who has been appointed by the Trustees to call hearings of the Complaints Panel ('the Panel'). The parents should provide to the Clerk their grounds of appeal and any supporting evidence which they wish to rely on. To contact the Clerk:

Clerk to Council of Trustee
Wycliffe College
Regent Street
Stonehouse
GL10 2AD
chair@wycliffe.co.uk

2. The Clerk will refer the matter to the 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 will then, on behalf of the Panel, acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint.
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 or further investigation be carried out. 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 be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. If the complaint is against the Head of College, they shall also be entitled to 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. As the hearing is part of an internal procedure, legal representation is not permitted. Parents should inform the Clerk in writing at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting of the identity of any person accompanying them. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.
5. Parents are not normally entitled to record the hearing or require the School to record the hearing. Minutes will be taken by the note taker during the hearing as an official record of what was discussed and this will be circulated to all parties following the hearing.
6. 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.
7. After due consideration of the merits of the complaint and all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and decide whether to:
 - a. dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part;

- b. uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part;
 - c. make recommendations.
8. 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 (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following 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.
9. 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

All complaints will be handled seriously, sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales as detailed above.

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 20 working days and Stage 3, which involves the Panel Hearing, within a further 25 working days.

For the purposes of this procedure, working days refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding holidays, bank holidays and half term (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 may take longer to resolve a complaint and the school will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid undue delay. 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:

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

The Senior School received no formal complaints in the academic year 2022-23.