

PRINCIPLES

We aim to:

- operate an effective and efficient process which is fair to students and their parents and which ensures that formal complaints are dealt with in accordance with the key guidelines set out in the DFE's School Complaints Procedure;
- comply with the Education Regulations 2010, part 7;
- resolve complaints with alacrity having considered all available evidence;
- ensure that the agreed resolution is in the best interest of the student;
- ensure that any resolution in no way compromises the efficiency of the school or the efficient education of the school community;
- handle all complaints with sensitivity and ensure confidentially where and when appropriate;
- liaise effectively and transparently with the EFA as required.

PUBLISHED	Website	✓	Pre-admission documentation		Student/Parent Planners	✓	On Request	✓
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This policy is overseen by | **DAVID CHAPPELL** | ACADEMY HEAD

PRACTICE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The school's Complaint Coordinator is the PA to the Head & Academy Head.
- 1.2. The complaints procedure will be outlined in the Parent Planner (a document we can guarantee all parents have) and is accessible via our school website.
- 1.3. The school has separate guidelines for managing concerns. Those guidelines are readily and easily accessible for all parents in the Parent Planner.
- 1.4. All complaints received by the school will be recorded on a central register by the Complaints Coordinator.
- 1.5. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidentially by the school. These records may be requested by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act.
- 1.6. The following represents the most likely recommended stages.
 - 1.6.1. Complaint heard by a relevant member of staff or member of the Leadership Team designated to the task, or the Associate Head.
 - 1.6.2. Complaint heard by the Academy Head.
 - 1.6.3. Complaint heard by a panel of Governors.
- 1.7. It is not appropriate for a school's complaint's policy to be used to deal with exclusion decisions. This right is provided under the legal framework for exclusions.

2. STAGE ONE: COMPLAINT HEARD BY STAFF / LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBER

- 2.1. It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage.
- 2.2. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate.
- 2.3. In cases where the complainant indicates that he/she has a difficulty discussing the complaint with a particular member of staff, the Complaints Coordinator will refer the complaint to an alternative member of staff. Where the complaint concerns the Head, the Complaints Coordinator will refer the complainant to the Chair of Governors.
- 2.4. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, the Complaints Coordinator may consider referring the complainant to another staff member.
- 2.5. Where the first approach is made to a governor, the next step is to refer the complainant to the appropriate person and advise them about the procedure. For consistency, governors

should not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure.

3. STAGE 2: COMPLAINT HEARD BY THE ACADEMY HEAD

- 3.1. The Academy Head's influence will already have shaped the way complaints are handled in the school. At this point, the complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at stage one as well as pursuing their initial complaint.
- 3.2. Where the complaint is heard by the Academy Head, or by a senior colleague delegated the task by the Academy Head, the outcome/resolution of the meeting should be confirmed within 5 working days of the meeting. This communication should make clear to the complainant that they have 5 working days to decide that they are satisfied or write to the Chair of Governors to initiate Stage 3.

4. STAGE 3: COMPLAINT HEARD BY THE GOVERNORS' PANEL

- 4.1. The complainant needs to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. The Chair, or a nominated governor, will convene a Governors' Panel.
- 4.2. The governors' hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process and is not convened to merely rubber-stamp previous decisions.
- 4.3. Individual complaints are not heard by the whole governing body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.
- 4.4. The governing body may nominate a number of members with delegated powers to hear complaints at that stage, and set out its terms of reference. These can include:
 - 4.4.1. drawing up its procedures;
 - 4.4.2. hearing individual appeals;
 - 4.4.3. making recommendations on policy as a result of complaints.
- 4.5. The procedure adopted by the panel for hearing appeals is part of the school's complaints procedure. The panel can be drawn from the nominated members and may consist of three or five people. One panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel may choose their own chair.

5. THE REMIT OF THE COMPLAINTS PANEL

- 5.1. The panel can:
 - 5.1.1. dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
 - 5.1.2. uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
 - 5.1.3. decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;

- 5.1.4. recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
- 5.2. There are several points which any governor sitting on a complaints panel needs to remember:
 - 5.2.1. It is important that the appeal hearing is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it. In deciding the make-up of the panel, governors need to try and ensure that it is a cross-section of the categories of governor and sensitive to the issues of race, gender and religious affiliation.
 - 5.2.2. The aim of the hearing, which will to be held in private, is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognized the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.
 - 5.2.3. An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.
 - 5.2.4. Extra care will be taken when the complainant is a child. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings will ensure that the child does not feel intimidated. The panel needs to be aware of the views of the child and give them equal consideration to those of adults. Where the child's parent is the complainant, it would be helpful to give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, if any, the child needs to attend.
 - 5.2.5. The governors sitting on the panel must be aware of the complaints procedure.
- 5.3. The findings and recommendations of the panel will be provided in writing to the complainant, and where relevant, the person/s the complaint is about.
- 5.4. It will be assumed that an individual complaint is out of time, three months after a response at either stage 2 or stage 3.

HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL 2018 to 2019

COMPLAINT FORM

YOUR NAME	
STUDENT'S NAME	
YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE STUDENT	
ADDRESS	
POSTCODE	
TELEPHONE	
MOBILE	
EMAIL	

Please give details of your complaint

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?**

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

SCHOOL USE

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Please complete and return to the Complaints Coordinator who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken to support your concern.

BY POST:

The PA to the Head and Academy Head

Holland Park School

Campden Hill Road

London W8

