



Wellingborough

Wellingborough School

## FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### Introduction

Wellingborough 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 in accordance with this procedure. Please note that the procedures set out under **Communication** in the Guide to the School for the relevant part of the School (Pre Prep, Prep or Senior) are complementary to this complaints procedure. The School values the relationship with parents and pupils which over the years has resulted in the resolution of problems and concerns. It is intended that this procedure should augment successful practice.

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally, respecting any need for confidentiality.

#### For matters relating to pupils of the Pre Preparatory School

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Form Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Assistant Heads/Headmistress.
- Complaints made directly to the Assistant Heads/Headmistress will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher unless the Assistant Heads/Headmistress deems it inappropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The School 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 10 school days ("school days" are Monday to Friday in term time), or in the event that the Form Teacher/Assistant Heads/Headmistress and the 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.
- This policy also covers the Early Years/Foundation Stage.
- In addition to the procedure set out in this document, parents are also entitled to make a complaint directly to the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI), or to OFSTED whose contact details are:-

ISI telephone no: 020 7600 0100 [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)

Ofsted telephone no: 08456 014772 [www.ofsted.gov.net](http://www.ofsted.gov.net)

### **For matters relating to Pupils in the Preparatory School**

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Club President. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Club President cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Deputy Head/Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head/Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Club President unless the Deputy Head/Headmaster deems it inappropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The School 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 10 school days, ("school days" are Monday to Friday in term time), or in the event that the Club President/Deputy Head/Headmaster and the 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.

### **For matters relating to Pupils in the Senior School**

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Housemaster/Housemistress. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Housemaster/Housemistress cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Deputy Headmaster/the Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Headmaster/the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Housemaster/Housemistress unless the Deputy Headmaster/ the Headmaster deems it inappropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Housemaster/Housemistress 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 10 school days ("school days" are Monday to Friday in term time), or in the event that the Housemaster/Housemistress and the 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.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis under stage 1 relating to the appropriate part of the School, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 2 school days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations. In such circumstances, the initial contact will be to acknowledge receipt and indicate an expected timescale for a full response.

- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as it 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 Headmaster will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they are able to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to Mr M P Skidmore, Clerk to the Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the complaints panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the complaints panel for consideration. The panel will consist of two Governors (who have had no previous involvement in the matter) and a lay member, who shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Governing Body. Mr Skidmore, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 school days.
- 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 not later than 7 school days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 school days of the hearing. The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. (The decision of the panel will be final.) The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person against whom the complaint has been made.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially and in return should maintain a matching confidentiality. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails. Records of complaints will be kept for at least three years.

