Complaints Procedure

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V.4	Bursar	July 2022	Minor changes
V5	CGB	Nov 2024	Adjustment to time, updated no. of complaints
V.6	CGB	Nov 2025	Updated no. of complaints.
V.7	CGB	Nov 2026	Slight adjustments to roles in school

Contents

Section	Page
1. Policy Statement	3
2. What Constitutes a Complaint?	3
3. The Three-Stage Procedure	3
Stage 1 - Informal Resolution	3
Stage 2 - Formal Resolution	4
Stage 3 - Panel Hearing	4
4. Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints	5
5. Recording Complaints and Use of Personal Data	6

1. Policy Statement

Luckley House 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 with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. This procedure applies to the whole school including day and boarding communities.

The School makes its Complaints Procedure is available on the School website and in the School Office during the School day and will ensure that parents of both current and prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the School will also make available, on request, to Ofsted, the Department of Education (DfE) or the Independent School Inspectorate (ISI) details of the procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding School year.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupils to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the school. The only exception to this is if the complaint is a review of a decision taken by the Head to exclude or require the removal of a pupil under the suspension and exclusion policy in which case such a review must be requested by no later than five working days from the date of the decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil.

The School will be mindful of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in the application of this policy.

2. What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, a specific department or an individual member of staff. Any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure.

A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

The School is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.

Parents can be assured that any concerns or complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

3. The Three-Stage Procedure

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- 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 parents' satisfaction. If the

Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department/Assistant Head/Deputy Head Pastoral/Senior Deputy Head Academic.

- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department/Assistant Head/the Deputy Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher unless the Head of Department/Assistant Head/Deputy Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Form Teacher 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 5 working days or in the event that the Form teacher 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
- If the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors who may be contacted *via* the Bursar.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- 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 decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases the Head will speak to the parents concerned within 7 working 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 Head, or their nominee, to carry out further investigations
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. These records are held by the Senior Deputy Head Academic.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents informed in writing. The Head will also give reasons for her decision and provide the parents with reasons within 20 working days of the compliant being put in writing. Where this is not possible, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and advised of the expected response date.
- If the complaint is against the Head, the complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors, or their nominee will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Chair of Governors or their nominee may also call for a briefing from members of staff and will, where appropriate, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair of Governors is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of his decision in writing. The Chairman will give reasons for his decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they should write to the Clerk to the Governors within 10 days of receiving the decision at Stage 2 setting out their grounds of appeal. Any supporting evidence that the parents wish to rely on should be included with their grounds of appeal. To the extent the parents are unable to provide their complaint within the time period stipulated due to extenuating circumstances which have impeded the parents from taking action, the parents should request an extension in writing. Such a request should be made to the Clerk to the Governors in advance of the original deadline, setting out the further time period requested and the reason for this. This will be considered.

- The matter will then be referred to a 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 Complaints Panel will appoint one of the Panel members to act as Chair. The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days and schedule a hearing to take place within 20 working days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied or further investigations be carried in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend
- The remit of the Panel shall be at the discretion of the Chair of Governors and the manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.
- After due consideration of the merits of the complaint and all the relevant facts, the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and accordingly decide whether to dismiss the complaint in whole or in part or uphold the complaint and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within 7 working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations). 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 to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Head. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection by the Chairman of Governors and the Head.

4. Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

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

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible. The aim is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 25 working days. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, 'working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time excluding bank holidays and half term. This means that during School holidays it may take longer to resolve a complaint although the School will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid delay.

It may also take longer to resolve a complaint during periods of significant disruption to School life or as a consequence of unavoidable staff absence. However, deviation from the normal timescale for resolving a complaint during term time will only occur on an exceptional basis, and the School will take all reasonable steps to limit any such delay.

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this may be regarded by the School as vexatious and outside the scope of this procedure.

5. Recording Complaints and Use of Personal Data

The School will keep a written record of all formal complaints whether they are resolved at the formal stage (Stage 2) or proceed to a Panel hearing, and of any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

The School processes data according to its Privacy Notice When dealing with complaints the School (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3) may process a range of information that is likely to include the following:

- date when the issue was raised
- name of parent
- name of pupil
- description of the complaint
- records of all the investigations (if relevant)
- witness statements (if applicable)
- name and contact details of member(s) of staff handling the complaint at each stage
- copies of all correspondence on the complaint (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- notes/minutes of the hearing
- written decisions.

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice and/or Data Protection Policy, but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Panel hearings as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice, and Retention of Records Policy. All records relating to complaints shall be treated as confidential. In addition to where requested by the secretary of state or inspector, there may be other circumstances where disclosure of the substance of a complaint or particualr confidential records to it is required, for example, where there is a legal, regulatory, safeguarding or data protection obligation e.g. in response to a subject access request which prevail over the requirement to maintain records as confidential.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Formal complaints received in the previous academic year (2025-26): five