




ETON COLLEGE
SCHOOL POLICY

COMPLAINTS

REVIEW DATE: SUMMER 2017



INTRODUCTION

Eton College takes great care with the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do wish to make a complaint they can expect the following procedure to apply. Working days for the purposes of this procedure shall mean working days during school term time.

STAGE 1 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son's House Master in the first instance. In many cases the matter will be resolved at this level to the parents' satisfaction. The House Master will be expected to consult appropriately and keep written records of the action taken.
- Complaints made at other levels, for example to the Head of Department or Division Master, will follow the appropriate pathways of consultation and will hopefully be resolved quickly and to the parents' satisfaction. A written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received will be kept.
- All complaints will be treated in a timely and confidential manner. Knowledge of the complaint will be limited to those directly involved.
- Should the matter not be resolved in this informal way then parents are advised to proceed with the complaint in accordance with stage 2.

STAGE 2 – FORMAL RESOLUTION

- If the complaint cannot be or is not being resolved on an informal basis, then the parents may at any time put their complaint in writing to the Head Master.
- The Head Master will respond to the parent concerned within five working days indicating how the School proposes to proceed.
- It may be necessary for the Head Master to carry out further investigations. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head Master is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made within 5 working days thereafter and the parents will be informed of this decision, and the reasoning behind it, in writing.
- It is hoped that parents will feel satisfied with the outcome, or that, at least, all of the concerns raised by the parents have been fully and fairly considered. If, in extreme circumstances, parents are not satisfied they may if they wish proceed with an appeal to the Provost (as chairman of the Governors).

STAGE 3 – APPEAL TO THE PROVOST


- Parents must write (within ten days of the Head Master's decision) to the Provost directly if they wish to appeal against the Head Master's decision setting out, in detail, the grounds for the appeal.

- The Provost will within 5 working days refer the matter to an Appeal Panel for consideration. The Appeal Panel will usually comprise three members appointed by the Provost and shall be independent of the management of the School¹. The members of the Appeal Panel will have no connection to the boy, the family concerned or to any witness. The Chairman of the Appeal Panel will then acknowledge the appeal and schedule a hearing to take place within 20 working days.
- The Head Master's decision may in exceptional circumstances be stayed pending the decision of the Appeal Panel, upon application for a stay by the Parents, in the first instance to the Head Master and if necessary to the Chairman of the Appeal Panel. Where such a stay is granted, the Head Master or the Chairman may, where he considers it appropriate, direct the boy to remain absent from the School pending the appeal hearing and the Appeal Panel's decision.
- At this stage, the Chairman will issue written directions for the conduct of the appeal proceedings. If the Chairman deems it necessary, he may require that further particulars of the complaint/appeal and any relevant documents or records be supplied in advance of the panel meeting. Copies of such particulars will be supplied to all parties wherever practicable not later than 3 working days prior to this hearing.
- If there is a hearing, the parents concerned as well as representatives of the School will be invited to attend and speak. One other person may accompany the parents to the hearing. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation of either party will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible the Appeal Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- A full minute of the proceedings will be taken.
- Where further investigation is required, the Appeal Panel will decide how it should be carried out. This process shall be completed within 10 working days of the hearing.
- After completion of any further investigation and due consideration of all facts the Appeal Panel's findings and recommendations will be sent in writing to the Provost. The Provost will review the findings and recommendations and, provided he is satisfied with them, he will then communicate the decision to the Parents and the Head Master. A copy of the Appeal Panel's final findings and recommendations and the Provost's decision will be sent to the Parents and the Head Master (and where relevant to the person complained about) within 5 working days of receipt by the Provost. A copy will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Fellows.
- In the event the Provost reasonably considers the Appeal Panel's findings and recommendations demonstrate a serious irregularity resulting in unfairness to either

¹ For these purposes the Fellows are independent of the management of the School and up to two Fellows may be appointed to sit on an Appeal Panel.

the Parents or the Head Master, he may remit the findings and recommendations to the Appeal Panel for further consideration or to a newly convened Appeal Panel for fresh consideration. In either case, the Provost must inform the Parents and Head Master of his actions and indicate the timetable for the resolution of the appeal.

PROVISIONS RELATING TO STAGES I TO III

- Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.
 - For the avoidance of doubt, no complaint may be made under this Procedure in respect of matters which have already been dealt with in an appeal under the School's Behaviour Policy.
 - Nothing in this Policy shall prejudice the right of parents of a boy with SEN or a disability to seek redress from the First Tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) if they believe their son has received unfavourable treatment.
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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR BOYS

- If a boy needs advice or wants to talk over a problem he has ready access to three adults: his House Master, his Dame and his Tutor.
- He may also consult in confidence one of the two School Doctors, any of the School Chaplains or the School Counsellor (a trained psychiatrist and an expert on adolescent problems).
- Any boy needing to make a formal complaint should, in the first instance, always make the complaint to the House Master or, at least, make the nature of the complaint known to him. If the matter needs to be taken further by the complainant, because it cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the level of the House Master or because the complaint involves the House Master the complaint should be brought before the Head Master for boys in B, C and D and the Lower Master for boys in E and F. A boy making a complaint in good faith can always expect his complaint to be taken seriously and for it to be dealt with thoroughly.
- All complaints will be recorded with details of the date, nature of the complaint, the action taken and the outcome with any supporting documentation.
- Procedures concerning matters of Child Protection are detailed elsewhere in the Child Protection Policy.