



HULL COLLEGIATE SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Hull Collegiate School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunity Policy document. This policy applies to all members of our school community, including those in our Early Years setting.

Copies of this document are available to staff, pupils, parents and the parents of prospective pupils on the school's website and paper copies are available on request from the school office.

This document and the effectiveness of the complaints procedures at Hull Collegiate School are reviewed annually by the school's Local Governing Body in conjunction with the Headmistress, Mrs A Wilson, or as events or legislation change requires. The last review took place in September 2018 and the next scheduled date for review is September 2021.

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Policy Statement

Hull Collegiate prides itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. It does, however, recognise that parents will, from time to time, have normal and legitimate complaints about the progress, achievement, behaviour or welfare of their son or daughter. Parents are encouraged to make those complaints known to staff so that they can be addressed in partnership with the school.

Hull Collegiate recognises the difference between a 'complaint', which can be conveyed informally and a 'formal complaint' which takes the form of specific focused dissatisfaction. The school will take all complaints seriously and make every effort to deal with complaints informally, at an early stage, in the spirit of continued respect and partnership. This procedure does not apply in relation to appeals against admissions nor does it apply to safeguarding concerns (which are managed under the School's Safeguarding Policy) and is distinct from formal staff disciplinary proceedings. Appeals regarding a permanent exclusion, required removal and suspension are managed in accordance with Stage 3 of this procedure.

At Hull Collegiate we:

- Define 'complaint' as 'any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school'
- Make every effort to deal with complaints informally and at an early stage, in the spirit of partnership
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with in line with the procedures set out in this document
- Ensure that, where appropriate, a full and fair investigation of the issue is undertaken
- Resolve all complaints within **14 working days** of the complaint being lodged. However, although we make every effort to keep to this timescale in all instances, we may need up to an additional 14 working days where the 28 day period falls across school holidays.
- Ensure that complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils
- Ensure that no-one, including pupils, is penalised for making a complaint in good faith
- Keep a written record, for at least three years, of all written formal complaints, the action taken and at what stage they were resolved, regardless of whether they were upheld (*Note: This information is provided to ISI or Ofsted at their request*)

- Review regularly, at senior leadership level, the written record of complaints and their outcomes in order to identify whether a review or change in practice is needed or so that patterns can be identified and appropriate interventions made.
- Keep all records confidential relating to individual complaints except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them
- Deal with complaints made by parents of past pupils using this policy provided that the complaint was raised when the pupil was still registered
- Do not use this policy to cover complaints about exclusions.

A record of formal complaints and their outcomes is kept by the Headmistress's PA in a locked filing cabinet for 3 years and is reviewed regularly by the Headmistress. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the last school year (2019-2020) was 0.

Parents are also free to make a complaint to ISI (EYFS, to OFSTED) if they so wish. Relevant contact details are set out below:

OFSTED will be provided on request with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

ISI: CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA
Phone: 0207 7768849 or e-mail via the ISI website: www.isi.net

OFSTED: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M21 2WD
Phone: 0300 123 1231 or e-mail enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Procedures

STAGE ONE - Informal Resolution

At Hull Collegiate School we recognise that, almost invariably, the sooner complaints are raised the easier it is for an appropriate resolution to be found. In the first instance, you are encouraged to raise your complaint with any member of staff. This would normally be your child's Form Teacher or Tutor, Head of Year or Head of Department.

That person will try to identify areas of agreement and clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred. They will make a written record of your complaint, the date on which it was received, and then try to resolve the matter themselves or refer you to the appropriate person.

If the matter cannot be resolved within **14 working days**, or in the event that you are not satisfied, you may make a formal complaint to the Head of Senior School or Head of Prep School. If the complaint concerns the Head of the Senior School you would normally refer you to the Chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB).

There are three stages to the formal complaints procedure at Hull Collegiate School:

Stage 1 The complaint is dealt with **informally**

Stage 2 The complaint is dealt with by the Head of the School **formally**

Stage 3 A complaint is dealt with by the Local Governing Body Complaints **Panel**

STAGE TWO Complaint is dealt with by the Head of School - Formal

Formal complaints should be in writing and sent to the Head of Senior School or Head of Prep School. If you have difficulty in putting your complaint in writing, you are asked to make an appointment with the Head of Senior School or Head of Prep School who will help you do so.

The Head of Senior School or Head of Prep School decides the best person to deal with the complaint, so you are asked to indicate if there is someone with whom you might have difficulty discussing the complaint. The member of staff chosen to deal with the complaint will not necessarily be a senior member of staff.

In most instances, there will need to be an investigation in order to understand the circumstances surrounding the complaint. That investigation will normally be overseen by the Head of Senior School or Head of Prep School. The investigation will be completed **within 14 working days**

If an investigation is needed, the investigating member of staff will:

- establish what has happened so far and who has been involved
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or if further information is necessary)
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- interview those involved in the matter and/or against whom the complaint has been made, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
- keep notes of any interviews
- present relevant information and recommendation for resolution to the Head of the Senior School or Head of the Prep School.

The Head of Senior School or Head of Prep School will make a written record of the complaint, the date on which it was received, the date on which the matter was dealt with and the outcome of the procedure. You will receive a copy of this written record within **14 working days**.

Where a parent is not satisfied with the school's response to their complaint at stage two and wish to continue to stage three, a panel of hearing should take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. The panel should

- proceed notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend
- consider the parent's complaint in his or her absence
- issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion.

The requirement of the panel to proceed does not prevent the school from accommodating parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning panel composition.

STAGE THREE: Complaint is dealt with by the Local Governing Body (LGB) Complaints Panel

The third stage of the formal complaints procedure is the LGB Complaints Panel. If you wish to take your complaint to this stage you are required to put your complaint in writing to the Chair of the LGB or to the Head of Senior School or Head of Prep School marked for the Chair. It is important that you set the matter out in sufficient detail.

On receiving a written complaint, a hearing by an the LGB Complaints Panel will be arranged within **10 working days**. You may attend the hearing in person and may be accompanied if you so wish; in which case you are required to notify the clerk of the name and occupation of such a person.

The composition of the LGB Complaints Panel

The LGB Complaints Panel would normally consist of no less than three people, at least one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel choose their own Chair.

The LGB Complaints Panel hearing is as independent and impartial as possible and no member of the LGB sits on the panel if they were directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, or in the circumstances surrounding it. In deciding the composition of the panel, LGB members try to ensure that there is a cross-section of the members, taking into account the issues of race, gender, religious affiliation and other equality issues. Care is taken not to involve the whole LGB as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

The process of the LGB Complaints Panel Hearing

A clerk is appointed by the school to be the contact point for the complainant and the LGB members of the Complaints Panel.

The appointed clerk's responsibility is to:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient or acceptable to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- invite both the complainant and the Head to put their position in writing for the panel to consider
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing
- record the proceedings
- notify all parties of the panel's decision.

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the LGB Complaints Panel to ensure:

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity to put their case without undue interruption
- written material is seen by all parties
- key findings of fact are made and each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions
- the hearing is conducted in as an informal manner as possible with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- the panel is open minded and acting independently
- the findings and recommendations are communicated appropriately to those involved (see below).

The hearing is held in private and, acknowledging that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting, the proceedings are made as welcoming as possible. Care is taken to ensure the setting is not adversarial and is as informal as possible. Extra care in this respect is taken where the complainant is a child.

The role of the LGB Complaints Panel Hearing

The aim of the hearing is always to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it is recognised that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. Therefore, it may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations that will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.

Communication of the LGB Complaints Panel Findings

After due consideration the panel will decide to do one or more of the following:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the school's/systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The Chair of the panel ensures that the LGB, the Head, the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, are notified in writing of the panel's findings and recommendations within **three working days** of the hearing taking place.

A copy of the panel's findings are also made available for inspection at the school by the UCST Board and Head.

The decision of the LGB Complaints Panel is final.

Appendix 1: Complaint Form

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS and return to the Head of Senior School or Head of Prep School who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.			
Your name:			
Pupil's name			
Your relationship to the pupil			
Address			
Postcode			
Contact telephone number (1)			
Contact telephone number (2)			
Please give details of your complaint below			
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (To whom 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.		YES / NO	
Signature:		Date:	
For Official use only			
Date acknowledgement sent		Complaint resolved at which stage	
Acknowledgement sent by		Complaint recorded in school records	
Complaint referred to			
Complaint referred on (date)			

Complaints Policy Changes Sept 2018	
Reviewed by:	Alex Wilson
Date of last review:	September 2018
Approved by:	Mr Paul Grimwood Chair of LGB
Date of approval:	September 2018
Reason for changes:	Review due to changes in the ISI Regulatory Commentary as of January 2017. Amendments made after DSL Update and Development Training led by the ERSCB in June 2017.
Next scheduled date for review:	September 2021 or as events or legislation change requires.