



Liverpool College

# Complaints Procedure

## Introduction

Under the Every Child Matters Framework Liverpool College strives to ensure that all children attending the school are (i) healthy; (ii) stay safe; (iii) enjoy and achieve; (iv) make a positive contribution; and (v) achieve economic well-being. Our primary duty is to safeguard and promote the welfare and well-being of all children.

Liverpool College 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 College in accordance with this procedure.

In accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, the Governing Body must establish and publicise a procedure for dealing with complaints. These procedures are available on the College website. The framework contained in this document has been designed to enable complaints to be dealt with through an open and transparent process.

This policy is available to the parents of current and prospective pupils on request.

This is a whole school policy and applies to EYFS, Pre Prep, Prep School, Upper School and Boarding Halls.

## 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 the Pre Prep or Prep School and the House Tutor or Head of House in the Upper School and/or Head of Boarding in the case of boarding students. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. In the Prep and Pre Prep, if the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for (him/her) to consult the Head of the Prep School or the Head of the Pre-Prep.

In the Upper School, if the House Tutor or Head of House cannot resolve the matter it may be necessary for him/her to contact the Head of Guidance (and the Head of Boarding in the case of boarding students). If a resolution is still not found then the matter will be referred to the Head of Upper School.

Complaints made directly to the Head of the Prep School, the Head of the Pre-prep, or the Head of Upper School will usually be referred to the relevant House Tutor or Head of House or Head of Boarding (Upper School) or Form Teacher (Pre Prep and Prep School) unless the Head of School concerned deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

The House Tutor, Head of House or Head of Boarding (in the Upper School) or Form Teacher (Pre Prep and Prep School) or appropriate Head 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 five working days or in the event that the Form Teacher, House Tutor, Head of House, Head of Guidance, Head of Boarding or appropriate Head fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.

There is a recommended pro-forma attached to the document that Liverpool College asks complainants to complete, when registering their complaint.

Complainants should be kept informed of how complaints are progressing under the procedure. The process for resolving complaints has been divided into three stages:-

- Stage 1            Informal
- Stage 2            Formal
- Stage 3            Appeal

## 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 Principal. This should be in the form of a complaint pro-forma which is attached to this document. The

Principal will, after considering the complaint, discuss the matter with the complainant. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

The complaint must be registered within three months of the date on which the substance of it first arose, or where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents.

A person registering a concern outside of these time scales will be informed that their complaint is out of time.

It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations.

At each stage in the procedure, the Principal will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part.

Complainants are encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as 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 within 15 working days of the receipt by the school of the proforma complaint. The Principal will also 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 will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors who has been appointed by the Governing Body to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. They must register that wish, in writing, to the Clerk to the Governors within five working days of receiving the Principal's decision.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration.

The Clerk to the Governors will convene a meeting of the appropriate committee. The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable. This will be within ten working days of receipt of the complaint by the Clerk to the Governors.

The Panel will consist of *at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint*, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governing Body.

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 three working 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. In the case of boarding students, the parents may request that the student's guardian attend in their place. 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 the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within five working 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 Principal, the Governors and, where relevant, the persons complained of within five working days of the Appeal hearing.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. 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 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

## **Records**

A written record will be kept of all complaints raised and the stage at which they were resolved.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

As an integral part of Liverpool College, the Early Years Foundation Stage is governed by the College Complaints procedure.

Any complaints about Early Years Foundation Stage should be referred initially to the class teacher, before seeking further discussion with Mrs Gannon- Head of Nursery and Pre Prep. All concerns raised by parents are recorded on Parent discussion form, shown to relevant staff and then filed in the child's records for at least three years. Parents may see these records at any time by making an appointment to do so, (except in exceptional cases where data protection laws stipulate it is against the best interests of the child to do so). Written complaints will be investigated and the complainant notified within 28 days of the complaint being received. Mr Buglass- Head of Preparatory School will then be referred to if the matter is still unresolved. The matter is referred to Mr Broekman, Principal, if a satisfactory conclusion has not been reached.

Any unresolved complaints can be referred to:

OFSTED 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA 08456 404040

or

Independent Schools Inspectorate  
CAP House  
9 - 12 Long Lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA

**Telephone 020 7600 0100**

Fax 020 7776 8849

## **Appendix: Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel**

The DCSF has supplied the following guidance in a letter to the ISC General Secretary:

Whilst we do not intend to be prescriptive our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members had some standing in the local community. In this connection serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background – perhaps retired members of the Police Force – might be considered suitable by schools. Schools will have their own views and may well have other suitable suggestions to make.

You asked if it would be acceptable to appoint former governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member. The regulations do not preclude this since the stipulation is that the person must be independent of the management and running of the school. Clearly former governors or staff would not have any such involvement. However, schools should bear in mind that they may be subject to criticism that such people would remain too close the school and would not be truly independent.

**HvMB**

*Updated September 2011*

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**LIVERPOOL COLLEGE**

**PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH GENERAL COMPLAINTS  
FORM TO REGISTER A FORMAL COMPLAINT**

Name of School Department: .....

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**Personal Details:**

Name: .....

Address: .....

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Tel Number: .....(work) .....(home)

**Pupil Details  
(if applicable):**

Name of Pupil: .....

Class/Form: .....

Date incident took place: .....

Name of any witness(es): .....

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**Details of Complaint (Please state clearly the nature of complaint)**

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If necessary, additional information may be included on a separate sheet, which should be signed and attached to this form)

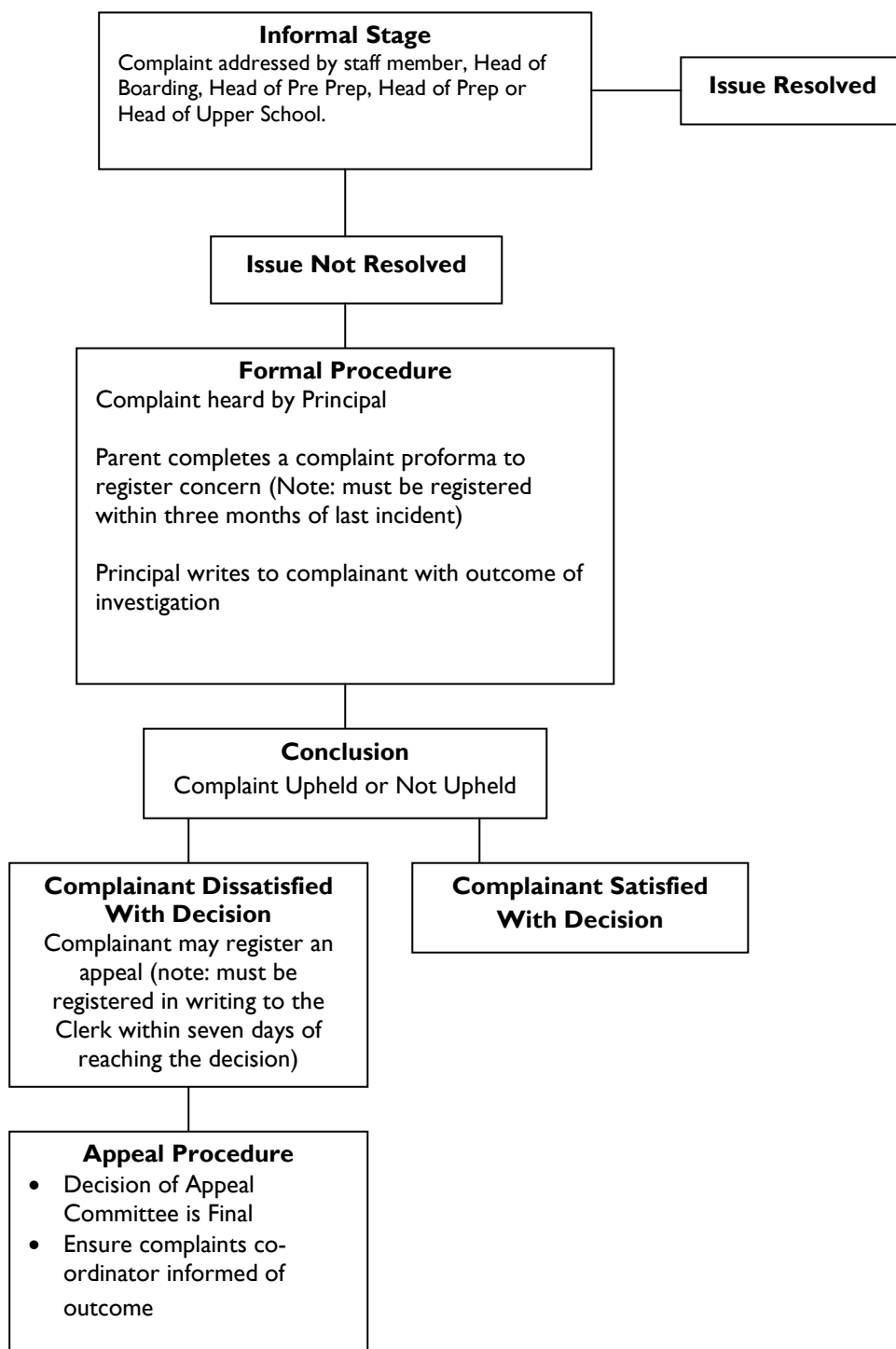
**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....

\*Persons making a complaint must register the complaint within 3 months of the incident.

**Note:** This form should be returned to the Principal, unless the complaint is against the Principal, in which case it should be forwarded to the Chair of Governors.

## FLOWCHART OF PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH GENERAL COMPLAINTS



## **Complaints Registered 2010-11**

We received 1 formal complaint in the 2010-11 academic year.

0 were resolved at Stage 3 (Appeal Panel).