



SOLIHULL

Parental Complaints Procedure

Owner: Headmaster
Reviewer: Bursar
Last Reviewed: September 2018

Version 8

Introduction

Solihull School is committed to providing the best teaching and pastoral care it can for all pupils. We recognise the right of a parent to raise their concerns and the value to all concerned of dealing fairly, speedily and effectively with any such concerns. Solihull School will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and 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) (England) Regulations 2014, Solihull School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an inspectorate body, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Solihull School is conscious that where complaints are lodged at or near the end of a school term, it can often be difficult to progress investigations quickly when the relevant parties are unavailable. Consequently, the timescales for responses set out below will be adhered to wherever possible, but are not to be taken as absolute.

1. Confidentiality

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you raise in good faith.

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.

2. What Constitutes a Complaint?

Many issues and concerns can arise on a day to day basis that can usually be resolved quickly and informally through discussion and liaison with a child's Form Tutor.

A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint may arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

If parents do have a complaint, the following procedure will be followed.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- As with day to day issues and concerns, it is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their child's Form Tutor. The Form Tutor will aim to resolve the issue with the parents and is likely to consult the Head of Year and/or the Head of Section and/or Head of relevant Department.
- If the matter cannot be resolved straightaway, the Form Tutor and, where appropriate, the Head of Year, Head of Section or Head of Department will meet the parents as soon as is reasonably practicable (and, where possible, within ten working days of the complaint) to attempt to provide a satisfactory resolution.
- If parents believe that the complaint is of a more serious nature, they may make their complaint directly to the Head of Section or one of the Deputy Headmasters.

The Head of Section or Deputy Headmaster will meet the parents as soon as is reasonably practicable (and, where possible, within ten working days of the complaint) to attempt to provide a satisfactory resolution.

- Complaints made directly to another member of staff will normally, in the first instance, be promptly referred to the Form Tutor unless the member of staff believes that the complaint is of a more serious nature such that the complaint should be referred directly to the Head of Section or one of the Deputy Headmasters. As above, the Head of Section or Deputy Headmaster will meet the parents as soon as is reasonably practicable (and, where possible, within ten working days of the complaint) to attempt to provide a satisfactory resolution.
- A written record of all complaints will be maintained. A record of all complaints dealt with by a member of the Senior Management Team/Senior Leadership Team will be kept by the Senior Deputy Headmaster for periodic review.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, parents should make their complaint to the Chair of the Governors, via the Clerk to the Governors.
- Each of the resolution processes noted above is intended to conclude the informal resolution stage. However, if, after Stage 1, there is no satisfactory resolution, parents are advised to proceed to Stage 2 of the procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster within five working days of their meeting with the Form Tutor (or where appropriate, the Head of Year, Head of Section or Head of Department). It may also be the case that parents may believe a matter to be of such seriousness that they want to deal directly with the Headmaster in the first instance, rather than proceed through Stage 1.
- On receipt of the complaint, the Headmaster will meet the parents concerned, as soon as is reasonably practicable (and, where possible, within five working days of receiving the complaint), to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. If the complaint is made against a specific member of staff, that member of staff may be present at this meeting. The Headmaster will have the right to decide whether the member of staff's presence is appropriate at this stage.
- The Headmaster will thereafter investigate the matter and will provide a response to that complaint in writing as soon as possible. Where possible, this will be provided within ten working days of the Headmaster's meeting with the parents, although this will depend on a number of factors including the extent of any further investigations which the Headmaster considers appropriate before providing a response. That response will give the decision, the reasons for the decision and any action taken or proposed, and will go to all interested parties.
- A written record of all complaints that are raised under Stage 2 will be kept by the Headmaster. A record will also be kept of whether the matter was resolved at this stage, the resolution (or not) and any action taken or proposed, or proceeded to a panel hearing.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, the Chair of Governors, or another governor designated by the Chair, will call for a full report from the Headmaster and for all relevant documents within ten working days of the complaint being received. The Chair (or his/her designate as outlined above) may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and may in some cases speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair (or his/her designate) is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing as soon as is reasonably practicable (and, where possible, within fifteen working days of the

complaint). The response will give the decision, the reasons for the decision and any action taken or proposed, and will go to all interested parties. A written record will be kept by the Clerk to the Governors.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure.

Stage 3: Appeals Procedure

- If the parents wish to proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure, they will be referred to the 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 and one panel member who will be independent of the management and running of the School. None of the panel will have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The independent panel member will have held a position of responsibility and be used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments.
- Complaints should be submitted in writing by parents to the Clerk to the Governors within fifteen working days after the completion of Stage 2. The Clerk to the Governors will acknowledge the complaint promptly (and usually within three working days) and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as possible (and, where possible, within fifteen working days of the stage 3 complaint if the complaint is lodged during term time).
- The Panel may require that all details of the complaint should be supplied in advance. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five working days prior to the hearing.
- If the complaint is made against a member or members of staff, the particulars of the complaint will be made available to the member or members of staff.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person who is not directly connected to the complaint. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. This right of accompaniment will also be extended to any member of staff against whom a stage 3 complaint has been made if they are invited to attend the hearing to give evidence
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- Unless further investigation is required, the complainant, the Chair of Governors, the Clerk to the Governors, the Headmaster and, where relevant, the person complained about, will be notified of the findings and recommendations in writing as soon as possible (and, where possible, within fifteen working days of the hearing). The decision of the panel will be final.
- A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Headmaster and the Governors.

Numbers of Complaints at Stage 3:

2016/17: 1

2017/18: 1