



Complaints Policy

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Contents

1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Scope	3
3.0 Accessibility	3
4.0 Safeguarding Concerns	3
5.0 Timescales	3
6.0 Records and Confidentiality	5
7.0 Persistent or Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour	5
8.0 External Resolution	5
9.0 Further Considerations	6
10.0 Complaints in the Previous Academic Year	6

1.0 Introduction

The College is committed to providing high-quality education, pastoral care and support for all students. We aim to foster positive relationships with students, parents and the wider College community and welcome feedback where improvements can be made.

Most concerns can be resolved informally through discussion with the relevant member of staff. Where this is not possible, this procedure provides a clear and fair framework for resolving complaints.

The College undertakes to treat complaints seriously and objectively, deal with complaints promptly and fairly, maintain appropriate confidentiality, learn from complaints and comply with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

The College makes this procedure available to parents and prospective parents through publication on the College website and will provide a copy on request.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies to parents of current students, parents of former students where the complaint relates to matters that occurred whilst the student was enrolled, prospective parents, students aged 16 and over where appropriate, although pastoral and safeguarding routes will normally be used in the first instance, and other individuals directly affected by the College's actions or decisions.

Complaints raised by employees are dealt with under the College's employment procedures.

3.0 Accessibility

The College is committed to ensuring that this procedure is accessible to all. Reasonable adjustments may include assistance with preparing written complaints, alternative formats, translation or interpretation support and adjustments for disabilities.

4.0 Safeguarding Concerns

Complaints relating to safeguarding or child protection will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed in accordance with the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

5.0 Timescales

The College aims to acknowledge complaints within 5 working days, complete Stages 1 and 2 within 28 working days and complete Stage 3 within a further 28 working days. Working days means weekdays during published term time.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and without recourse to formal proceedings.

Parents should normally raise concerns with the student's teacher, Head of House or appropriate pastoral lead. Students should normally raise concerns with their teacher, Head of House, a member of the pastoral team or a senior member of staff.

In most instances, complaints can be resolved swiftly and to the satisfaction of the complainant (informal resolution). When the College has received confirmation that the complaint has been satisfactorily resolved, this will be logged as an informal complaint - resolved.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

Written formal complaints should be submitted to complaints.cambridge@ccoex.com.

The Principal will acknowledge receipt within five working days, appoint an investigator and inform the complainant of the expected timescale. The investigator will have had no direct involvement in the matter complained about.

The investigator will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Once the investigator is satisfied that, as far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, the Principal will be informed and a decision will be made. The complainant will be informed of this decision in writing.

If a complainant chooses to bypass Stage 1 and raise a Formal (Stage 2) Complaint, the member of staff receiving the Formal Complaint will ask the complainant to confirm that this is a Formal (Stage 2) Complaint. The complainant, on considering this policy, may decide to proceed with Stage 2 or may decide to make their complaint informal (Stage 1).

Complaints About the Principal

Where a complaint concerns the Principal, the complaint should be submitted directly to the Managing Director. The Managing Director will investigate the matter personally or appoint an independent investigator who has had no prior involvement in the matter.

Stage 3 – Complaints Panel Hearing

If the complainant seeks to invoke Stage 3 they will be referred to the Managing Director who will instigate a complaints panel hearing. Requests for a Panel Hearing should be submitted within 10 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 outcome. The hearing will normally take place within 14 working days.

The Managing Director will convene a Complaints Panel comprising at least three individuals with no prior involvement in the matter, including at least one person independent of the management and running of the College.

The complainant may be accompanied by a relative, friend, teacher, translator or advocate. Legal representation would not normally be appropriate but may be considered in exceptional circumstances. Any request for legal representation should be made in writing to the Managing Director.

After due consideration of all the facts it considers relevant, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations which it shall complete within five working College days of the hearing. The panel will write to the complainant 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 by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant, the Principal, and, where relevant, the person complained of.

The complainant can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the College premises by the Managing Director, and the Principal. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests them.

6.0 Records and Confidentiality

The College maintains a Complaints Register recording formal complaints received, the stage reached, outcomes and actions taken. The register will record whether complaints were upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. Records will be retained in accordance with the College's Data Retention Policy.

All correspondence, statements, records and other information relating to a complaint will be treated confidentially and will only be disclosed where required by law, for safeguarding purposes, requested by the Secretary of State, or requested by a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

7.0 Persistent or Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour

Where behaviour becomes unreasonable, abusive, aggressive or places excessive demands on staff time, the College may restrict communication methods, require communication through a single point of contact or implement a communication plan.

8.0 External Resolution

Following completion of Stage 3, complainants may raise concerns regarding compliance with the Independent School Standards with the relevant regulatory authorities.

9.0 Further Considerations

Under certain circumstances, the College may need to make third parties outside the College aware of a complaint or of the identity of those involved. This would happen where, for example, there is a safeguarding concern or where matters need to be referred to the police. In such circumstances, parents or other interested parties would be kept fully informed unless the third-party agency advises against this.

In respect of the timescales outlined above, if a formal written complaint is sent during a College holiday period when the College office may be closed or relevant parties away from the college or on holiday, the timings would have to be extended accordingly.

With effect from 1st October 2015, it is considered good practice for Colleges in line with the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015 ('the ADR Regulations') to provide students / parents at conclusion of the final stage of the complaints procedure with the contact details of a certified alternative dispute resolution ('ADR') entity (such as a mediation or arbitration body) which would be competent to deal with any unresolved dispute, should both parties wish to engage in ADR. Colleges are not required to include information about ADR in the complaints procedure itself. Details of ADR providers will be supplied on request. On providing information about a certified ADR provider, Colleges are also required to notify the student / parents whether the College is obliged and/or prepared to enter into ADR.

10.0 Complaints in the Previous Academic Year

During the academic year 2025-26:

- Two complaints were resolved at Stage 2.
- No complaints proceeded to Stage 3.