



CHURCHER'S COLLEGE

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

SENIOR SCHOOL, JUNIOR SCHOOL AND NURSERY (INCLUDING EYFS)

September 2024

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

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Authorised by	Headmaster
Date	September 2024

Date of next review	September 2025
Circulation	Published on the School's website and available from the Junior School and Senior School Offices on request
Status	Complies with <i>The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/3283)</i>

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy relates to all sections of Churcher's College including the Nursery, the Junior School and the Senior School and has due regard for the specific requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Throughout this policy document, the terms 'the School' and 'Churcher's College' refer to all sections of Churcher's College, unless otherwise specified.
- 1.2 This policy is available on request from the Junior and Senior School offices and is published on the School's website.

2 Aim

An open organisation, climate and culture.

3 Policy

- 3.1 As a School we wish to have a community that listens and is able to respond in a positive, appropriate and sympathetic way to any concerns. It is important that all stakeholders feel valued and involved with the School and are able to voice their concerns. This is helped where the culture of the School is open and where all complaints are received in a positive manner.
- 3.2 All complaints need to be handled seriously. A gentle expression of concern, or a simple query, may grow into a painful matter if people feel that they have been brushed aside. Equally, issues with the potential to become acutely difficult may dwindle and fade if they're handled well at the initial stage. A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.
- 3.3 This policy covers all sections of Churcher's College. It would normally be expected that complaints relating to the Junior School and Nursery (including the EYFS setting) be directed to the Head of the Junior School in accordance with the procedure set out below. However, complaints requiring a more formal resolution or which are against the Head of the Junior School will be passed to the Headmaster.
- 3.4 Complaints against the Headmaster should be directed to the Chair of Governors, (c/o The Clerk to the Governors at bursar@churcherscollege.com) and should then follow the procedure outlined at paragraph 4.13 onwards or paragraph 3.5 below, if the complaint relates to safeguarding concerns.
- 3.5 If the complaint relates to safeguarding concerns then procedures and protocols within the published Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures should be followed in addition to those below. The School has a separate procedure for cases where parents are seeking a Governors' Review of a decision made by the Headmaster to exclude a pupil from the School. These procedures can be found in the **Pupil Exclusion Policy**, which is published on the School website and hard copies are available from the Junior and Senior School offices on request.

- 3.6 Complaints should normally be made as soon as possible after an incident arises (although three months is generally considered to be an acceptable time frame in which to lodge a complaint). The School aims to resolve complaints in a timely manner and specific timeframes are outlined below. References to working days means Monday to Friday when the School is open during term time. The School's term dates are published in the School Calendar and on the School website. During School holiday periods complaints will be acknowledged as soon as practicable albeit resolution may require extensions in time to accommodate staff absences.
- 3.7 This policy is drafted in accordance with Part 7 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The School also takes due regard of the Department for Education's "Best Practice Guidance for School Complaints Procedures 2020".

4 Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- 4.1 It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- 4.2 If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's Class Teacher or Form Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction.
- 4.3 If the Class Teacher or Form Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department, a Head of House, Deputy Head (in the Senior School) and Head of Section, Deputy Head (in the Junior School) or the Head of the Junior School / Headmaster, as appropriate.
- 4.4 Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, Head of House, Deputy Head (in the Senior School) and Head of Section, Deputy Head (in the Junior School) or the Head of the Junior School / Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher or Form Tutor for further action unless the Head of Department, Head of House, Deputy Head (in the Senior School) and Head of Section, Deputy Head (in the Junior School) or the Head of the Junior School / Headmaster deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally, in which case the Class Teacher or Form Tutor will merely be kept informed of the complaint and the outcome.
- 4.5 The person dealing with the complaint will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received.
- 4.6 Normally all such complaints that cannot be dealt with immediately should be acknowledged within one working day during term time or as soon as practicable during holidays with an indication that further investigations are taking place.
- 4.7 Should the matter not be resolved within one working week, or to an otherwise agreed timescale, or in the event that the person dealing with the complaint and the

parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution or strategy, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- 4.8 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- 4.9 In most cases, the Headmaster will discuss the matter with the parents concerned, normally within three working days of receiving the complaint and as soon as practicable during the school holidays. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 4.10 It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- 4.11 The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 4.12 Once the Headmaster 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, normally within 14 working days or a mutually agreed timescale. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- 4.13 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should write to the Chair of Governors (c/o The Clerk to the Governors at bursar@churcherscollege.com) stating the basis of their complaint and concerns they may have regarding the manner in which their complaint is being addressed.
- 4.14 The Chair of Governors may seek to address the concerns with the parents directly, and will instruct the Clerk to the Governors to convene a hearing of the Complaints Panel.
- 4.15 The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. 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. The Chair of Governors shall appoint each of the Panel members. 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 and normally within 14 working days or within a mutually agreed timescale during holiday periods.
- 4.16 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 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- 4.17 The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

- 4.18 If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- 4.19 Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 5 working days of the hearing.
- 4.20 The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. The decision of the Panel will be final.
- 4.21 The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations will be made available for inspection on the School premises by the Governors and the Headmaster.

5 EYFS

- 5.1 Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints will be available to Ofsted and ISI on request.
- 5.2 Parents can make a complaint directly to Ofsted or ISI if they believe that the School is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Contact details for Ofsted and ISI can be found in Appendix 2.

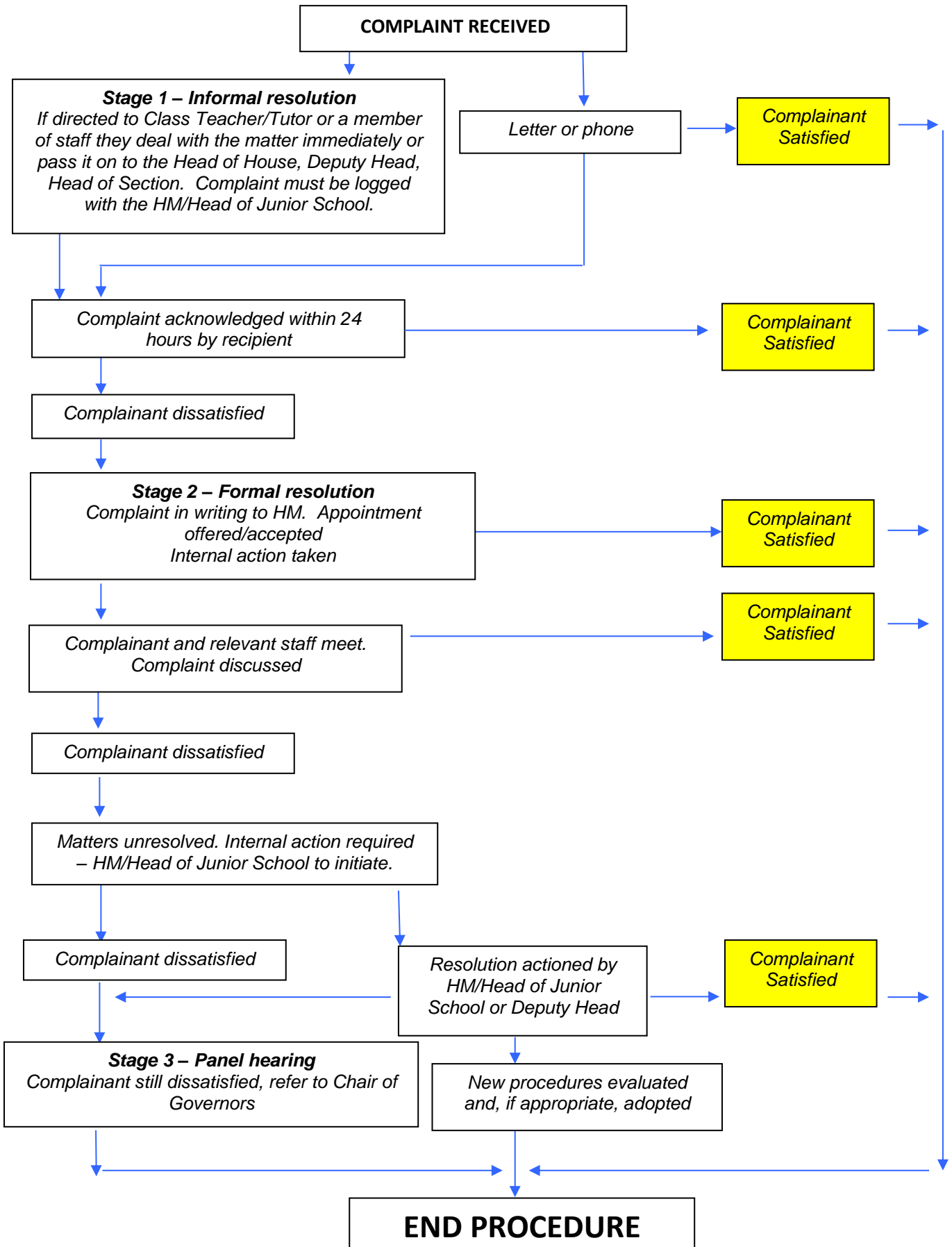
6 Confidentiality and Records

- 6.1 Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.
- 6.2 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.
- 6.3 The School will keep a written log of stage 2 and above complaints, the dates on which they were made, the details of any action taken by the School as a result of the complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a Panel Hearing (stage 3). A copy of these records will be made available for inspection on the School premises by the Headmaster and the Governors.
- 6.4 Churcher's College received 2 stage 2 formal complaints and 0 stage 3 formal complaints during the academic year 2023-2024.

7 Review

- 7.1 The policy is reviewed annually and following any stage 3 complaint.
- 7.2 The Governing Body is required to endorse any modifications to this policy resulting from reviews.

APPENDIX 1 - CHURCHER'S COLLEGE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS



APPENDIX 2

CONTACT DETAILS FOR ISI AND OFSTED

Contact details as follows:

Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)

CAP House

9-12 Long Lane

London

EC1A 9HA

Telephone: 020 7600 0100

Email (for general enquiries): info@isi.net

OFSTED

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Telephone (general enquiries): 0300 123 1231

Telephone (about concerns): 0300 123 4666

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk