



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy	Complaints
Applies to	All students/parents and guardians in college and boarding premises
Author(s)	Martin Meenagh/Marwan Mikdadi
Approved by	I certify I have reviewed this policy and verify that to the best of my knowledge it reflects current legislation and is in accordance with the wishes of the Governors Martin Meenagh, Principal
Annual Review	August 2019 Martin Meenagh

CHELSEA INDEPENDENT COLLEGE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Chelsea Independent College has always been proud of the quality of its teaching and the pastoral care provided to its pupils. Should parents have cause for complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the College in accordance with the procedure.

The College is a busy place and during the academic year a tremendous number of both educational and extra-curricular activities take place and many pupils are involved. A great deal is achieved with cheerful cooperation from all sides but we do recognise that conflicts of interest, misunderstandings and disagreements will occasionally occur between pupils, parents and teachers – although such occasions are rare. Under these circumstances we undertake to deal with issues promptly and fairly. They can generally be resolved informally in the first instance, however if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the College in accordance with this Procedure. Parents can expect for the complaint to be considered sensitively and with no adverse effect on their child.

Separate procedures apply in the event that a Child Protection issue arises (see Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy). Any concern about the safety of a child should be notified

immediately to the person believed to be best placed to take urgent action and should be confirmed in writing to the Principal.

All complaints, whether stage one or above are logged by the recipient member of staff or monitored by the Principal and Vice Principal.

FOR PUPILS

Pupils should speak to their tutor should they have a complaint, or arrange to speak to the Principal if they feel that the matter has not been resolved by their tutor.

If the matter concerns boarding, then pupils should speak to the Head of Boarding or independent listener, whose details can be found in the Boarding House or if the matter remains unresolved the Principal at CIC.

If the concern is not resolved, then a pupil should ask his or her parents to follow the procedure below.

STAGE 1 - INFORMAL RESOLUTION

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. These are not the subject of 'complaint' in any meaningful sense but are part of the everyday dialogue of college life.

If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's personal tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for parents to consult the Head of Year, the Vice Principal and then the Principal. Again the aim will be to resolve the issue amicably and informally.

Complaints made directly to the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant personal tutor or the Head of Year unless the Principal deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally.

The tutor will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. These will be kept by the respective tutor. Should the matter not be resolved within 14 working days or in the event that the tutor and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

STAGE 2 - FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis with the relevant member of staff, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Principal. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases the Principal, or a senior member of staff designated by the Principal to investigate the complaint (the investigating officer), will meet or speak to the parents concerned, within 7 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

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

The investigating officer 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. The Principal will also give reasons for the decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 (the panel hearing) 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 Chairman of Governors (or in his absence, a member of the governing body acting as his nominated representative), who will convene a Complaints Panel within 7 working days.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of 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 College; he or she will also not be an employee of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors.

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 2 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. 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 facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, a copy of this will be made available also to the person complained about. 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 person complained of. A copy of the Panel's

findings will be held at the school and made available for inspection by the Governing body and Principal.

For compliance purposes the Stage 3 panel hearing should go ahead unless the parent later indicates, in writing, he or she is now satisfied and does not wish to proceed further. A panel hearing should, therefore, proceed notwithstanding that a parent may subsequently decide not to attend. If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in absentia and issue findings on the substance of the complaint, thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion.

A written record of all complaints, whether stage one or above are recorded, whether they have been resolved following an informal, formal or panel hearing. This will record the action taken by the College as a result of the complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the College by Part 7 paragraph 25(k) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2010; where disclosure is required in the course of the College's inspection, under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Education & Skills Act or where any other legal obligation prevails.

There have been no stage 3 complaints in the past 12 months.