



POLICY: **COMPLAINTS BY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS**

Although the College is determined to provide a good service for pupils/students and their parents, there may be occasions where there is a cause for concern. In these circumstances, every effort will be made to resolve any difficulty as quickly as possible. However, it is far more likely that any difficulty will be resolved quickly and effectively if the structure of the complaints policy is followed. This policy applies to the whole of Scarborough College, including EYFS, and is available to all parents, staff and pupils, including boarders.

1 INFORMAL RESOLUTION (a satisfactory outcome should be reached within three working days)

If a parent, parents or a child's legal guardian have a complaint, they should contact their son/daughter's Tutor. This individual can assess whether the matter is an academic one, to be passed to the Head of Department or the Assistant Head (Academic Studies), or a pastoral one with which they can deal, maybe in consultation with the relevant Head of Tier. In most cases, we hope this would resolve the matter to the parent's satisfaction.

If there is a complaint which is linked to boarding, the relevant member of the housestaff should be contacted.

If the complaint is about the individual to whom complaints should first be directed, contact should then be made to that individual's 'line manager' (for example if the complaint was about the tutor, the relevant Head of Tier should be contacted, or if it is about the relevant member of the boarding housestaff, the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) should be contacted. A written record may be kept.

However, should the matter not be resolved within a reasonable time scale or in the event that the School and the parent(s)/guardian fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents may wish to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

2 FORMAL RESOLUTION (a satisfactory outcome should be reached within twelve working days)

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parent should put their complaint in writing to the Head. She will then decide, after considering the complaint and consulting with staff, the appropriate course of action to take.

The Head, or a delegated representative, will meet the parent concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigation. The Head, or representative, will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, which will also be made available for the complainant. Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parent(s)/guardian will be informed of this decision in writing, and reasons for the decision given.

If the parent(s)/guardian is still not satisfied with the decision, they may proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Where the complaint is directed specifically at the Head or the delegated representative, the procedure will, by necessity, move to Stage 3. A written record will be kept, the date on which it was done and the conclusion. These will be recorded on the Central Complaints Register.

3 PANEL HEARING (this should be organised within fourteen working days)

If the parent(s)/guardian seeks 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 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 at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and with at least one member of the Panel who is unconnected in any way with the College. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governors. The Clerk, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place.

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 two days before the hearing.

The parent(s)/guardian may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parent(s)/guardian's complaint 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 as soon as possible after the Hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel will write to all participants, including the complainants, informing them of the findings, any recommendations and the decision. These will also be sent in writing to the Board of Governors and, where appropriate, the person about whom the complaint has been made. A record of this will be kept by the Head and it will be available for inspection by the Chair of Governors.

The Senior Management Team in the school will monitor complaints and ensure that any trend is quickly identified and managed in the best interests of our pupils. All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential and subject to the Data Protection Act for three years. The exception to this confidentiality is where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to these records.

No pupil will be penalised for making a complaint in good faith. If they so wish, parents may contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate at www.isi.net, telephone 020 7600 0100, or the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) at www.ofsted.gov.uk, telephone 0300 123 4666.

Number of complaints in 2009-2010 - 3.