



## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Aldwickbury is committed to a continuous programme of rigorous self-evaluation in order to make the best possible provision for the pupils entrusted to our care. Parental feedback therefore is much to be welcomed. Where the school's policies, or the implementation of them, are open to criticism parents must be able to express criticism without fear or favour, provided only that complaints are addressed in a constructive tone and spirit.

At any stage of a complaint or concern regarding boarding, the Hertfordshire Children Schools and Families, Client Services (03001234043 or 01438 737511) can be contacted.

Many concerns are addressed informally and they are dealt with entirely satisfactorily on that basis. Nothing in this document is intended to inhibit the informal free flow of information and comment between parents and the various responsibility holders within the school.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003, by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, or where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or under other legal authority.

This procedure also applies to our Reception classes, including those who are part of our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). If at any stage a parent wishes to contact either ISI or OFSTED should they feel it necessary the contact details are given below:

OFSTED  
Enquiries  
National Business Unit  
Ofsted  
Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA.

Phone 08456 404045  
email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Independent Schools Inspectorate  
CAP House  
9 - 12 Long Lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA

**Telephone 020 7600 0100**

### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son's subject teacher, tutor or form tutor as appropriate. In many cases, the matter will be resolved quickly by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher or tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for the teacher/tutor to consult the Head of Department, Deputy Head or Headmaster, as appropriate, who will then deal with the matter.
- The teacher concerned and the Headmaster will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received.
- Should the matter not be resolved and both parties 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 as described in Stage 1, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. After considering the complaint the Headmaster will make recommendations regarding the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet with or speak to the parents concerned, in order to discuss the matter within 5 working days. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. These records will be held for a period of three years.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a recommendation will be made and parents will be informed of the findings in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his recommendations.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the Headmaster's findings, they should proceed to Stage 3 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 named governor (the "convenor") who has been appointed by the governors to call hearing of the Complaints Panel.

- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three governors and one person not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaints and who the school has identified as a person of standing within the local community, one of whom will sit on the Complaints Panel for any given complaint.
- Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the convenor who, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within ten working days.
- 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 three working 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 shall complete within three working days of the Hearing. 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 of whom a complaint has been made. These will also be available at the school for any of the parties involved.

**Headmaster  
Aldwickbury School  
September 2003  
Revised September 2004  
Reviewed September 2006  
Reviewed September 2009  
Reviewed January 2010**

## Appendix

### **Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel**

The following guidance comes from a letter sent by the DfES to the ISC General Secretary in 2002. Although dated, the advice is extant.

Whilst we do not intend to be prescriptive our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members had some standing in the local community. In this connection serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background – perhaps retired members of the Police Force – might be considered suitable by schools. Schools will have their own views and may well have other suitable suggestions to make.

You asked if it would be acceptable to appoint former governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member. The regulations do not preclude this since the stipulation is that the person must be independent of the management and running of the school. Clearly former governors or staff would not have any such involvement. However, schools should bear in mind that they may be subject to criticism that such people would remain too close to the school and would not be truly independent.