



## **Complaints Procedure**

Trinity School (hereafter referred to as 'the School') takes great care with the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents of pupils at the School do wish to make a complaint it is our intention that the complaint will be dealt with promptly, impartially, sensitively and in confidence. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

A written record will be kept of all complaints that are made and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a formal hearing. A record will also be kept of the action taken by the School as a result of a complaint, regardless of whether the complaint is upheld. The Headmaster is made aware of every complaint made to the School, and reviews the record of complaints on a termly basis to identify whether any discernible trends or patterns can be identified.

Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Parents making a complaint can expect the following procedure to apply. Working days for the purposes of this procedure shall mean working days during a school term.

### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/ daughter's Tutor in the first instance. If the complaint is about the Tutor, then the relevant Head of Year should be contacted. They may do so in person, by email or in writing. The Tutor will be expected to consult appropriately and keep written records of the action taken. In many cases the matter will be resolved at this level to the parents' satisfaction.
- If a Tutor is unable to resolve the complaint, they will refer the matter to the appropriate Head of Year. Heads of Year may consult with respective Heads of Upper or Lower School.
- Parents may also make complaints to other member of staff, for example to Heads of Department, Heads of Year or the Head of Upper or Lower School, who will follow the appropriate pathways of consultation and will hopefully resolve the complaint quickly and to the parents' satisfaction.
- A written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received will be kept.

- All complaints will be treated in a timely and confidential manner. Knowledge of the complaint will be limited to those directly involved.
- Should the matter not be resolved in this informal way within 10 working days of the complaint being made, parents are advised to proceed with the complaint in accordance with Stage 2.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be, or is not being, resolved on an informal basis, then the parents may at any time put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will respond to the parent concerned within 5 working days, indicating how the School proposes to proceed.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster or, acting on his behalf, the Deputy Headmaster or another member of the Senior Management Team to carry out further investigations and these will begin as soon as possible. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made within 5 working days and the parents will be informed of this decision, and the reasoning behind it, in writing.
- The period of time between the Headmaster receiving the complaint and informing parents of the final decision will be no longer than 20 working days. Please note that any complaint received within 20 working days of the end of term or half term is likely to take longer to resolve owing to school holidays and the unavailability of staff.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

It is hoped that parents will feel satisfied with the outcome, or that, at least, all concerns they have raised have been fully and fairly considered. If parents are not satisfied they may if they wish proceed to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- Where parents are not satisfied with the response to their complaint under Stage 2, or where the parent's complaint relates to the Headmaster's own actions, they should contact the Chief Executive of the Foundation to request a panel hearing. The Chief Executive has been appointed by Governors of the Court of the Whitgift Foundation to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

Name of the Chief Executive: Mr Martin Corney  
Telephone number: 0208 256 1594  
Email: martinorney@whitgiftfoundation.co.uk

- The letter to the Chief Executive should set out the parent's grounds of appeal/ complaint and include a list of those documents they believe to be in the School's possession and wish the Panel to see. The letter should be delivered to the Chief Executive within 5 working days of the receipt of the Headmaster's decision at Stage 2.
- The Chief Executive, on behalf of the Complaints Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and certainly within 20 working days.
- The request will usually only be considered if the procedures at Stages 1 and 2 have been completed and the Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint which have not been previously raised as part of the complaints procedure.
- The complaints panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Governors of the Court of the Whitgift Foundation.
- If the Complaint Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further details of the complaint, or any matter related to it, be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be provided by the Chief Executive to all concerned parties not later than seven working days prior to the hearing.
- Parents may be accompanied to the hearing. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- The Headmaster's decision may be stayed pending the decision of the Complaints Panel, upon application for a stay by the parents, in the first instance to the Headmaster and if necessary to the Chairman of the Governors of the Court of the Whitgift Foundation. Where such a stay is granted, the Headmaster or the Chairman may, where he considers it appropriate, direct the pupil to remain absent from the School pending the Hearing and the Complaint Panel's decision.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately, without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will inform concerned parties how it should be carried out and the time within which it should be completed.
- A full minute of proceedings will be taken.
- After consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will decide on its findings and recommendation within 10 days of the Hearing. The Chair of the Panel will write to the parents informing them of its findings and recommendations, and the reasons for them. The findings and recommendations of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations will also be sent in writing to the Headmaster, the Governor of the Court of the Whitgift Foundation and, where appropriate, the person about whom the complaint was made.

There were two complaints which needed formal resolution during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Author / Reviewer:	Eugene du Toit (Deputy Headmaster)
Date of last review:	September 2017
Policy approved by:	Senior Management Team
Date of Approval:	September 2017
Date of next Review:	June 2018
Governor committee responsible for oversight:	Welfare Committee
Chairperson of Governor committee:	Aruna Mehta
Date of review by committee:	October 2017