

## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<b>DOCUMENT CONTROL</b>	
OWNER	HEAD
Current version no:	1
Reviewed:	September 2023
Next review:	September 2024

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## **Introduction**

LPS Clapham prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. If parents have a complaint, they can expect it to be taken seriously and handled in accordance with this Procedure.

## **Documentation and Record-keeping**

A copy of this procedure can be found on the school website and is available to parents, students and staff. The school will ensure that parents of students are made aware that this document is published on the website or available on request.

Correspondence, statements, and records relating to individual complaints are held confidentially except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act (2008) requires access to them.

The school maintains a written record of formal parent complaints for at least three years for regular review by the Board of Governors and for inspection by inspectors. The record states whether the complaint was resolved at the formal stage or proceeded to a panel hearing. The school will provide ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate), on request, with a written record of all formal complaints made during any specified period and the action taken as a result of each complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).

The school will fulfil the information requirements of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive

## **Timescales**

The following procedure contains references to 'working days'. Within the context of the school this means a weekday (i.e. not Saturday or Sunday) that is not a bank holiday. School holidays are regarded as working days; however, as many of the Academic staff are away during this period, complaints may not be resolved as speedily as they are during normal term time, depending upon the availability of the staff involved. If there is likely to be a delay in the processing of a complaint, the school will notify the parent making the complaint with a full explanation as to why the school is not able to resolve the matter within the usual time frame

## THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### Stage 1- Informal Resolution

LPS Clapham hopes that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly, informally and to everyone's satisfaction. If a parent of any student has a complaint, they should contact the tutor who will try to resolve the issue, if they can deal with it or, if not, may then pass it on to a senior member of staff.

The senior member of staff will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. If the matter is not resolved to the parent making the complaint's satisfaction within 3 working days, the parent making the complaint will be advised that they may escalate the matter to the Second Stage (Formal Resolution) of this procedure.

### Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- (a) The parent making the complaint should write to the Head giving details of their complaint and the outcome they are seeking.
- (b) The Head will then either take the case forward or appoint a senior colleague who has had no prior involvement in the matter to do so.
- (c) The Head or (where applicable) the senior colleague appointed by the Head will offer to meet with the parent making the complaint to discuss the matter, normally, within three working days.
- (d) The parent making the complaint will be given an estimate of the time that is likely to be required to complete any necessary investigation.
- (e) Written notes will be kept of all material meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- (f) The parent making the complaint will be notified in writing within three days of the decision reached.

The complaint should be dealt with within 5 working days, in some circumstances this may take longer, but the parent would be informed of the delay and the reasons for the delay. If the parent making the complaint is not satisfied with their decision at this point, the parent making the complaint should then go to Stage 3 (Panel Hearing) of this procedure.

### Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

If the parent making the complaint was unsatisfied with the 'Formal Resolution', within three working days of receiving written notice of the outcome, they should escalate their complaint, in writing, to the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors can be contacted via the school.

When doing so, the parent making the complaint should give reasonable particulars of their complaint; and specify the outcome they are seeking. The matter will then be referred to a Panel Hearing for consideration. The hearing will take place as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within 15 working days of receiving the complaint.

Where a complaint relating to a student reaches this stage, LPS Clapham will (save in exceptional

circumstances) keep other parents and guardians involved. All parents and guardians will be invited to attend the Panel hearing as well as any other adult who entered into the contract with the schools for the education of the student and any other adult who (in the opinion of the schools) acts in a parental capacity for the relevant student. The Panel will consist of at least three persons who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one member of the Panel shall be independent of the management and running of LPS Clapham. The Panel members will be appointed by Dukes Education.

In the case of a complaint regarding a student's fixed term or permanent exclusion, the Board of Governors shall have complete discretion as to whether to implement the exclusion of the student pending the Panel's decision.

Within three working days of notifying their complaint, the parent making the complaint should send to the panel copies of all documentation on which they intend to rely at the hearing. The panel may request further information from a parent. The school will provide a copy of their child's school file if requested.

The parent making the complaint may be accompanied at the hearing by one other person who is over the age of 18. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. We hope that matters can be resolved without the need for legal representation. If, however, a parent wishes to involve a lawyer they should discuss the lawyer's inclusion in the meeting with the Chair of the Panel.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. The Chair of the Panel may decide to record the Hearing.

If the Chair of the Panel reasonably believes that the Panel should hear evidence from an individual in private (i.e. in the absence of the person bringing the complaint or any third party), he/she may do so. If that happens, the parent making the complaint will be told the reasons for that decision. The parent making the complaint will be given a summary of the individual's relevant evidence after the event if the Chair believes it to be relevant to the complaint. The Panel will, however, maintain the anonymity of any student who gives evidence, in private, to the Panel.

The Panel's findings and recommendations will be presented as a report. A copy of the Panel's report will be given to the parent making the complaint and, where relevant, the person complained about. This will usually be sent by e-mail. The report will be made available confidentially for inspection on school premises by the Board of Governors and the Head.

Number of complaints: As London Park School Clapham was a new school opening in September 2023, there were no formal complaints in the preceding academic year.