Complaints Policy

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Policy owned by	Head
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This Complaints Policy will be reviewed and updated annually or more frequently when there are changes in legislation and/or government guidance.

LONDON PARK SCHOOLS CLAPHAM MAYFAIR SIXTH HYBRID | Dukes EDUCATION

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Introduction

1.1. London Park Schools (LPS): Mayfair, Sixth and Hybrid - aims to ensure that any concern or complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently, quickly, at the appropriate level and resolved as soon as possible. We will try to resolve every complaint in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, we will review our systems and procedures considering the circumstances of the complaint.

1.2. We recognise that a complaint which is not resolved quickly and fairly can soon become a cause of resentment. We therefore need to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. Parents and pupils should never feel that making a complaint will adversely affect a pupil or his / her opportunities at the school.

1.3. **"Parent(s)" / "You"** includes a current or legal guardian or education guardian and may at our discretion include a parent whose child has recently left the school.

1.4. We aim to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. When we refer to **working days**, we mean Monday to Friday, when School is open, during term time. The dates of terms are published on the School's website.

1.5. This policy applies to complaints from parents of current pupils and to parents of former pupils if the complaint was initially raised whilst the pupil was on the School roll.

2. Management of complaints

2.1. The School's complaints procedure has three stages:

2.1.1. **Stage 1:** informal raising of a complaint or difficulty with a member of staff orally or in writing.

2.1.2. **Stage 2:** a formal complaint in writing to the Head.

2.1.3. **Stage 3:** a reference to the Complaints Panel.

2.2. A summary of the School's complaints procedure is set out in Appendix 1.

2.3. Separate procedures apply in the event of a child protection issue, or if the Head excludes or requires the removal of a pupil from the School and the parents seek a review of that decision.

3. Confidentiality

3.1. A written record will be kept of all stage 2 complaints, and

3.1.1. of whether they were resolved at stage 2 or proceeded to a panel hearing

3.1.2. of action taken by the school as a result of complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)

3.2. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of a school's inspection or under other legal authority.

3.3. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be kept for seven years.

4. Complaints to the Independent Schools Inspectorate

4.1. Parents have the right to contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) if they have a complaint that has not been concluded to their satisfaction through the School's complaints procedure. ISI can be contacted on 0207 600 0100, concerns@isi.net, or at the following address:

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

4.2. It is expected that complaints will go through the School's complaints procedure before ISI is contacted. Further information can be found at https://www.isi.net/parents-and-pupils/concerns-about-a-school

Stage 1: Informal resolution of a complaint

5. We expect that most complaints can be resolved informally. For example, dissatisfaction about some aspect of teaching or pastoral care or a billing error should be able to be resolved by the relevant member of staff.

6. Where appropriate, complaints should initially be raised as follows:

   6.1. **Educational issues:** if the complaint relates to the classroom, the curriculum or special educational needs, please speak or write initially to the relevant teacher. Your complaint may be passed to a more senior member of staff, such as the Deputy Head Academic, if appropriate.

   6.2. **Pastoral care:** for complaints relating to matters outside the classroom, please speak or write in the first instance the form tutor and Head of Section to the Deputy Head Pastoral.

   6.3. **Disciplinary matters:** a problem over any disciplinary action taken or a sanction imposed should be raised initially with the member of staff who imposed it. Your complaint may be passed on to a more senior member of staff if appropriate.

   6.4. **Financial matters:** a query relating to fees or extras should be stated in writing to the Financial Controller (Dukes Education (Schools)).

   6.5. **Complaints against the Head:** a complaint against the Head of the School should be put in writing to the Principal of London Park Schools Group.

   6.6. **Complaints against the Principal**: a complaint against the Principal should be put in writing to Dukes Education (mark.bailey@dukeseducation.com) who will follow the procedure set out in Stage 2.

7. A complaint provided in writing will be acknowledged by telephone, e-mail or letter within two working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays. A matter raised orally will not necessarily be acknowledged in writing.

8. A complaint which has not been resolved by informal means within 15 working days should be notified in writing as a formal Stage 2 complaint.

9. A complaint received in writing (e.g. via email) will not necessarily be treated as formal (stage 2) complaint unless it is clear that the complainant wishes for it to be treated as such. We will always seek to resolve complaints informally in the first instance and in a manner which is as supportive and as constructive as possible.

10. **Records –** informal complaints will not necessarily be recorded on the complaints log which is used to log formal/stage 2 or above complaints. However, records of informal complaints may also be kept in order to establish patterns and shared with the Senior Leadership Team or other relevant members of staff.

Stage 2: How to make a formal complaint

10.1. If a parent is dissatisfied with a response to a complaint under **Stage 1**, the complaint requires investigation or involves dissatisfaction with some aspect of the School's policies or management, the complaint should be made under **Stage 2**. Complaints received in writing will not necessarily be stage 2 complaints.

10.2. The full details of the complaint should be set out in writing and sent with all relevant documents and full contact details to the Head of the School.

10.3. The complaint will be acknowledged by telephone, e-mail or letter within two working days during term time, and as soon as practicable during the holidays, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely time scale.

Investigation

10.4. The Head will ask a senior member of staff or director to act as Investigator. The Investigator[s] may request additional information from you and may wish to speak to you personally and to others who have knowledge of the circumstances. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. The Investigator[s] will prepare a report on the investigation which will be considered by the Head.

Decision

10.5. The Head will then notify the complainant by telephone, e-mail or letter of his / her Stage 2 decision and the reasons for it within 10 working days from the acknowledge of the formal complaint. Where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in a delay, the parents will be notified of this and informed of the new timescales as soon as possible.

10.6. Please note that any complaint received close to the end of a term or half term is likely to take longer to resolve owing to the school holidays and the unavailability of personnel required for the investigation to be undertaken properly. For a complaint received within a week of the end of a term or half term, complainants should expect it to take longer to resolve.

10.7. The Head will ensure that the complaint is recorded in the complaints log along with any actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint regardless of the outcome decision.

10.8. If a parent is dissatisfied with the Head's decision, the parent can request that the complaint be referred to the Complaints Panel under Stage 3 using the procedure set out set out.

Stage 3: How to make a Stage 3 Complaint

What is a Complaints Panel hearing?

A Complaints Panel hearing is a review of the decisions taken at Stage 2 by the Head (or in circumstances where the formal complaint concerns the Head, a director is appointed to act in his / her place). The panel will not consider any new areas of complaint which have not been previously raised as part of the complaints procedure.

10.9. The role of the Panel is to establish the facts surrounding the complaints that have been made by considering:

10.9.1. the documents provided by both parties and

10.9.2. any representations made by the parents and the Heads

10.9.2.1. and to reach a decision, on the balance of probabilities, as to whether each complaint is made out in whole or in part.

10.10. It is not within the powers of the panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, pupils or parents. The panel may make recommendations to the School on these matters or any other issues as appropriate.

How to request a Complaints Panel hearing

10.11. A request for a hearing before the Complaints Panel must be put in writing to the Board of Governors at the school address within five working days of the decision at stage 2. The request will usually only be considered if the procedures at Stages 1 and 2 have been completed.

10.12. The written request should include:

10.12.1. a copy of all relevant documents and full contact details

10.12.2. details of all the grounds of the complaint and the outcome desired

10.12.3. a list of the documents which the parents believe to be in the School's possession and wish the Panel to see and

10.12.4. whether you propose to be accompanied to the hearing by someone who is legally qualified (see paragraph 3.3 below).

10.13. If assistance with the request is required, for example because of a disability, please inform us of this and we will be happy to make appropriate arrangements.

10.14. We will acknowledge the request for a hearing in writing within two working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays.

10.15. Every effort will be made to enable the hearing to take place within 15 working days of receipt of the request. However, note that the Panel will not normally sit during half terms or school holidays.

11. Planning the hearing

11.1. As soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event at least ten working days before the hearing, we will send written notification to each party of the date, time and place of the hearing.

11.2. Copies of any additional documents you wish the Panel to consider should be sent to the Board of Governors at the school address to be received at least five working days prior to the hearing.

11.3. You may be accompanied to the hearing by another person, for example a relative, teacher or friend. Panel hearings are not legal proceedings and so legal representation is not necessary. If you do wish to be accompanied by someone who is legally qualified, you should have notified us of this in your initial request for a panel hearing. If you did not do so and you wish to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, you must inform us of this at least five working days prior to the hearing and the parents should note that the panel will wish to speak to the legally qualified person directly. This person will not be permitted to act as an advocate.

11.4. We will circulate a copy of the bundle of documents to be considered by the panel to all parties at least three working days prior to the hearing.

12. Composition of the Panel

12.1. The panel will comprise at least three individuals who have no detailed prior knowledge of the circumstances of the complaint, including at least one panel member who is independent of the management and running of London Park School Mayfair.

12.2. The parents may ask who has been appointed to sit on the panel ahead of the hearing.

12.3. The panel members will choose one of themselves to be the Chair of the panel throughout the proceedings.

13. The Panel hearing

13.1. The hearing will be conducted in an informal manner.

13.2. All those present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments in an appropriate manner. The hearing is not a legal proceeding and the Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and / or may take written statements into account.

13.3. All statements made at the hearing will be unsworn. All present will be entitled, should they wish, to write their own notes for reference purposes. A clerk appointed by the panel will take handwritten minutes of the proceedings.

13.4. All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chair. If terminated, the original decision will stand. Any person who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and his / her comment will be minute

13.5. The Chair may, at his / her discretion, adjourn the hearing for further investigation of any relevant issue. This may include an adjournment to take legal advice.

13.6. A hearing before the Complaints Panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly or indirectly to the press, or other media and will not be published or discussed on social media platforms such as *What's App, Instagram* and *Twitter*.

14. The Decision

14.1. The Panel will reach a decision on a balance of probabilities.

14.2. The decision, findings and any recommendations will be confirmed in writing to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; by electronic mail normally within five working days of the hearing. If the parents do not wish to receive the decision by electronic mail, they should inform us of this so that a copy may be given or posted to them. Time frames may be longer if the panel hearing falls in or close to a school holiday.

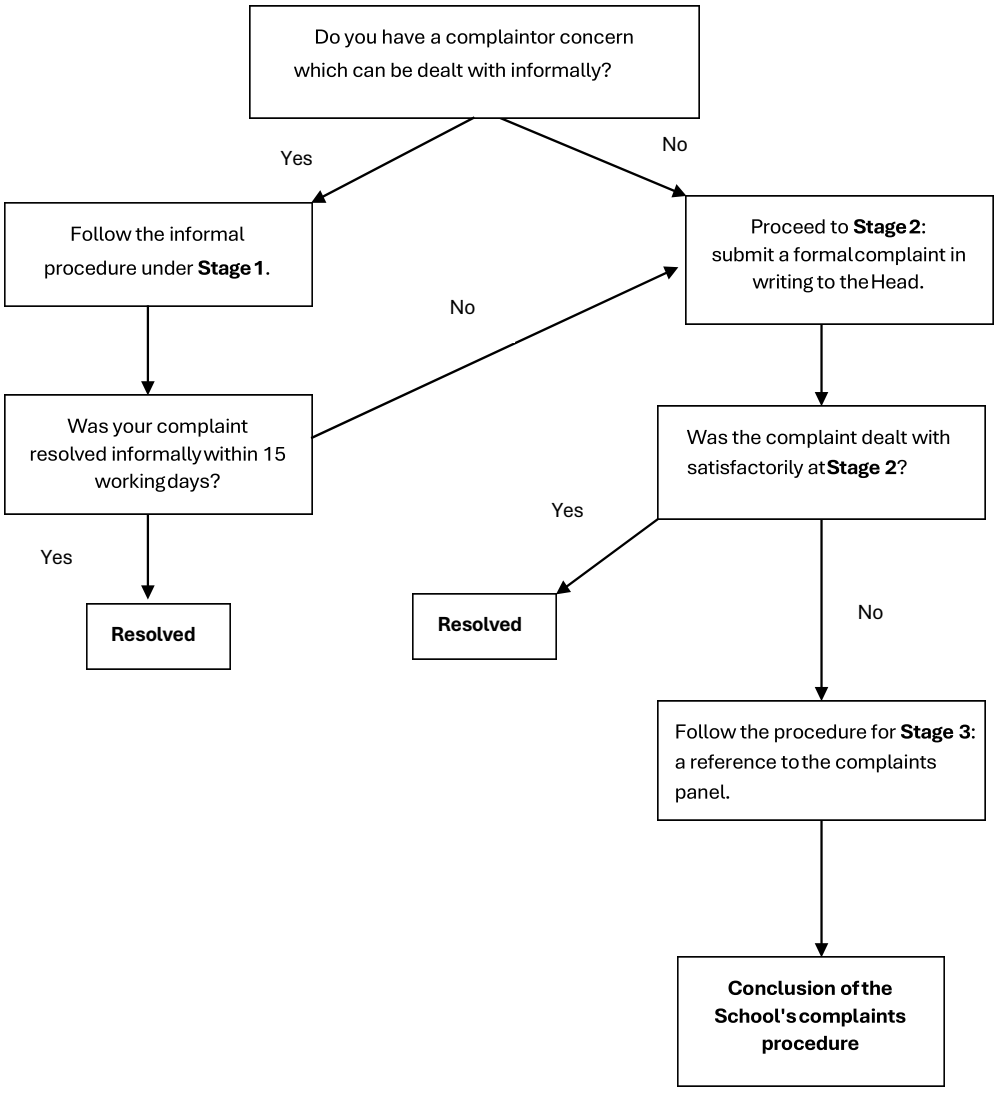
14.3. The decisions, findings and any recommendations will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Proprietor and the Head.

14.4. Actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint regardless of the findings will also be recorded in the complaints log.

14.5. The completion of Stage 3 represents the conclusion of the School's complaints procedure.

Appendix 1

Procedural flowchart



Current post-holders/contact details referred to in this policy

- **Financial controller (Dukes Education (Schools)) –** Catherine Robertson (catherine.robertson@dukeseducation.com)
- **Head** – Heidi Armstrong (h.armstrong@londonparkschools.com)
- **Complaints (to make a complaint about the Head or to request a panel hearing)** racheal.friend@dukeseducation.com
- **Members of staff at London Park School Mayfair, London Park School Sixth and Hybrid @ London Park Schools** – all members of staff can be contacted using the email format: firstinitial.surname@londonparkschools.com

London Park School Mayfair had one formal Stage 2 complaint in the academic year 2024-2025.

London Park School Mayfair had no formal Stage 2 complaints in the academic year 2025-2026.