



Complaints Policy and Procedure

The Corporation of Oundle School includes both Oundle School, a boarding and day School for pupils aged 11 – 18 and Laxton Junior School, a day School for pupils aged 4 - 11. This policy applies solely to Laxton Junior School.

Introduction

This document sets out the School's official Complaints Policy and constitutes the School's Complaints Procedure as referred to in clauses 17 and 74 of (and elsewhere in) the School's Terms and Conditions. Words and phrases that are defined in those Terms and Conditions shall have the meanings given to them in those Terms and Conditions when they are used in this document.

The School undertakes to make this document (Complaints Policy/Procedure) available on request made to the Head's PA and on the School website to current Parents.

A Complaints File is held in the Head's office, containing a written record of all Stage 2 and Stage 3 (see below) complaints, and whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or proceed to a panel hearing. Complaints relating to EYFS provision are recorded as such, together with actions taken regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under statutory powers requests access to them or as otherwise required by law.

Three stages of complaint are recognised. In each case the School will aim to respond to and deal with the complaint within the timescale given but under certain circumstances (e.g. holidays, staff absence, the need for further investigation, the availability of panel members) it may take longer.

Stage 1: Informal

In the first instance, the complaint should be made on an informal basis to the Form Teacher or the relevant member of staff. The School will endeavour to reach resolution within seven days of the complaint being made.

If the complaint is against the Head, it should be made directly to the Chairman of the Governing Body (the "Chairman").

Stage 2: Formal

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, or if the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with Stage 1, the complaint should be lodged in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Head will meet or speak with the complainant, normally within seven days, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be made at this stage.

It may be necessary to carry out further investigations. These will be undertaken as quickly as possible and the parents will be informed of the likely timescale. The Head will keep records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Once the relevant facts are established, a decision will be made and the complainant informed in writing. The Head will give reasons for their decision.

If the complaint is against the Head, the Chairman will establish all relevant facts and will in most cases meet or speak with the complainant to discuss the matter. The Chairman will consider the evidence and inform the complainant of their decision and the reasons behind it.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

Where complainants are not satisfied with the response to the complaint in accordance with Stage 2, the complaint should be lodged in writing with the Bursar as Secretary to the Governing Body. The Bursar will convey the complaint to the Chairman, who will appoint a Panel of at least three persons to hear the complaint. The panel will include one member who is independent of the management and running of the School. None of the Panel will have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Stage 3 will involve a full-merits hearing of the complaint and will not simply involve a check the due process has been followed in previous stages.

The Bursar, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 days.

If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require further particulars of the complaint or related matters to be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars should be supplied to all parties normally no less than 5 days prior to the hearing.

The complainant may attend the hearing if they wish, and they may be accompanied.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Panel will retire to consider its decision. Unless it believes it necessary to consider further evidence, it will give its decision on the day of the hearing. If the Panel is unable to come to decision pending further evidence, it will set a date for a further hearing, or for the delivery of the decision and the reasons for it by post and/or email.

The Panel will deliver its findings, recommendations and stipulations, and within seven days will record those findings, recommendations and stipulations in writing, with copies to the complainant, the Chairman, the Head and where relevant the person complained about.

Resolving Complaints

The School aims to resolve complaints to the complainant's satisfaction. Where this is not possible the outcome will balance the rights and needs of all pupils.

Pupils and Parents will not be penalised for making a complaint in good faith.

Anonymous Complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Head or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Complaints Received Outside of Term Time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period, unless they concern a serious incident or allegation, in which case the School will instigate a more immediate response in keeping with the timeframes stated in this Policy.

Complaints about the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS, written complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements at Laxton Junior School will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of the school having received the complaint.

The School will provide the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and/or Ofsted, on request, with a record of all EYFS complaints made during any specified period and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint.

EYFS parents can make a complaint to Ofsted or ISI directly if they believe Laxton Junior School is not meeting the EYFS requirements; their contact details are:

Independent Schools Inspectorate

Ground Floor
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA
Telephone: 020 7600 0100.

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
General Helpline: 0300 123 1231

Number of Complaints

Schools are required to publish the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

The number of complaints, including in the EYFS, dealt with under the formal procedure during 2020-2021 was 0.

Reviewer	Sam Robertson
Post of Reviewer	Head of LJS
Review Date	September 2021
Reviewed and filed with both Schools	September 2021
Next Review (max 3 years)	September 2022