



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This Procedure, (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) applies to the whole school, is publicly available on the School website <http://www.olab.org.uk/> and upon request a copy may be obtained from the School Office.

A copy is also provided in the information for prospective parents and guardians, on enquiry for admission. The purpose of this complaints procedure is to deal with complaints from the parents of pupils. This complaints procedure does not apply to parents of prospective pupils and it does not cover exclusions. This complaints procedure does apply to past pupils but only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still a registered child at Our Lady's Abingdon.

Legal Status: This procedure incorporates the manner in which complaints are to be managed in accordance with The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force.

Timescale: The process of dealing with a complaint in writing from the moment that it is received by the school to resolution will take no more than twenty-eight (28) working days except in circumstances in which the normal timescales are affected by issues that delay resolution; namely school holidays and other factors.

Monitoring and Review: The Principal and the Chair of Governors monitor the complaints procedure to ensure that all complaints are handled properly and also undertake a formal annual review of this procedure, for the purpose of monitoring the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

Date reviewed: 09 September 2020

Next review: no later than 09 September 2021

Mr F El Turk

Chair of Governors

A complaint is likely to arise when there are issues of physical or emotional well-being and security at stake, or when the school's stated aims or values are being ignored. A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint. We handle each complaint fairly, confidentially, using the agreed time frame. Throughout the process we listen, learn, admit mistakes, address issues raised, apologise and change practices and procedures, if appropriate. At all stages in the complaints process a written record is to be kept of the date a resolution was reached and the

agreed nature of this. The parents will then be informed in writing.

Aim: To provide clear and logical guidance to parents/guardians who wish to complain about any aspect of their son's or daughter's education.

Introduction: Parents'/guardians' complaints relating to their sons and daughters or to any wider aspect of school life will always be treated seriously. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 7(k) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2015 as subsequently amended, where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails. Any complaints should be raised and resolved in the manner outlined below.

"How should I complain?"

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution (References to the number of working days refer to term-time only)

- Most complaints should, in the first instance, be raised with the pupil's Form Tutor, who is normally the member of staff who knows him/her best, and it is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally. The Form Tutor will consult with the Head of Section in the Senior School and/or other staff as necessary and may, at his/her discretion, inform the Principal or Deputy Head. In the Lower School the Form Tutor may consult with the Head of Lower School.
- Complaints raised directly with another member of staff will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor or Head of Section, unless the person involved in the initial contact deems it appropriate for them to deal with it personally.
- If the complaint is of a nature that parents/guardians prefer, for whatever reason, not to discuss with the key worker, Form Tutor or Head of Section, they should contact the Principal or Head of Lower School.
- Should the complaint not reach a satisfactory resolution then the parents/guardians should proceed to the next part of the process, the Formal Resolution stage.
- This informal stage should take no longer than 5 working days. However, owing to the availability of staff in holiday periods, the process may take longer.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution: (References to the number of working days refer to term-time only)

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents/guardians should put the matter in writing to the Principal or Head of Lower School, who will contact the parents/guardians concerned within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter and if possible to reach a resolution (longer during holiday periods).
- If no resolution is reached, the Principal/Head of Lower School will carry out further investigations, keeping written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Principal/Head of Lower School is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made, and parents/guardians informed of this decision in writing within a further 5 working days (longer during holiday periods).
- If parents/guardians are still not satisfied with the decision, they may proceed to the third stage of this process – the Panel Hearing.

Stage 3 – Complaints Panel Hearing:

- If parents/guardians are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal resolution, they may refer the matter in writing to the Chair of Governors who will then refer it to the Complaints Panel for consideration within 15 working days (longer during holiday periods).

- The Panel will be appointed by the Governing Body and will consist of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School.
- Before the hearing the Panel may request any further details relevant to the complaint.
- The parents/guardians may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they so wish.
- 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 within 10 working days of the Hearing (longer during holiday periods) and will write immediately to the parents/guardians informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the Principal, the Chair of Governors and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint was raised.

Child Protection Issues: Complaints over child protection issues may be communicated to the Designated Staff Lead (DSLs) as explained in the procedures in our Safeguarding and Child protection Policy.

Record keeping for the Whole School: A written record of all complaints and of whether they are resolved at the informal stage, or proceed to a panel hearing, is kept by the Principal for a minimum of three years. The record includes, at least: the person making the complaint, the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, any action taken and the outcome of the complaint. A written record will also be kept of when a final outcome was reached. The Chair of Governors will examine this written record on an annual basis. The school will provide, on request to ISI, a written record of all complaints made during a specified period and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint. The number of formal complaints registered in the academic year September 2019 to August 2020, which is made available to parents, is three.