

LVS ASCOT

PARENTS' COMPLAINTS & APPEALS POLICY/PROCEDURE

Introduction:

LVS Ascot has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint or wish to appeal against a decision, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution:

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally**.

For pupils in Years 7 - 13:

- If parents have a complaint or concern they should normally contact their son/daughter's Tutor initially. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Housemaster/Housemistress (HM) as is appropriate.
- Complaints made directly to the HM will usually be referred to the relevant Tutor unless the HM deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Tutor will make a **written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received**. It is hoped that the matter will be resolved at this stage. However, should the matter not be resolved within 7 working days (or as soon as reasonably practicable but normally within 14 working days during school holidays), or in the event that the Tutor/HM and the parent **fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint or appeal in accordance with Stage 2** of this Procedure.

For EYFS pupils and pupils in Years 1 - 6:

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's class teacher initially. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Deputy Head.
- The class teacher will make a **written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received**. It is hoped that the matter will be resolved at this stage. However, should the matter not be resolved within 7 days (or as soon as reasonably practicable but normally within 14 working days during school holidays), or in the event that the Class teacher/Deputy Head and the parent **fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2** of this procedure.

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Stage 2 – Formal Resolution - Preliminary stage:

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should **put their complaint in writing** to the Head. Parents should give details of their complaint, such as dates and times of events and any relevant documents so that the complaint can be properly investigated. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. Where the complaint concerns the Head, the complaint will be directed to the Chair of the Education Committee.
- In most cases, the Head will meet the parents concerned, normally **within 2 weeks** of receiving the complaint in the Senior School, and within **7 working days** for EYFS and Junior School pupils, to discuss the matter (or as soon as reasonably practicable but normally within 14 working days during school holidays). If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will **keep written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, as far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision (together with reasons) in writing as soon as reasonably practicable but normally within 20 working days of receipt of the written complaint. Only in exceptional circumstances or with complex cases will this take longer and parents will be informed of the likely timeframe for a response.
- **If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3** of this Procedure within 30 working days of the Head's decision.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing:

- If the parent seeks to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they must write to the Director of Education, who will invoke a meeting of the Education Committee's Complaints Panel. Parents should give full details of the complaint and enclose all relevant supporting documents.
- **The matter will then be referred to the Complaints and Appeals Panel for consideration.**

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- Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Director of Education, and will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, **one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School.**
- The Director of Education, on behalf of the panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place, normally within 14 working days (or as soon as reasonably practicable but normally within 14 working days during school holidays) of receipt of the parent's request for a panel hearing .
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than **2 working days** prior to the hearing.
- **The parents may be accompanied to the hearing if they wish.** This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint or appeal without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out and by whom.
- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision on the balance of probabilities as to whether or not the complaint is substantiated (in whole or in part). If the complaint is not substantiated, the Panel will dismiss the complaint. If the complaint is substantiated (in whole or in part), the Panel will uphold the complaint (in whole or in part) and may make recommendations if they deem it appropriate. **The decision of the Panel will be final.**
- The Panel will, within 5 working days of the hearing, write and/or send electronic mail to all participants informing them of the decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the Education Committee and where relevant, the person complained of. The Panel's findings and recommendations will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Head and the Trustees of the Licensed Trade Charity.

The School keeps a written record of all complaints or appeals for three years, and of whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing. Parents can be assured that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential and subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 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.

A written record of complaints brought by an EYFS parent will also be kept for three years.

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The Education Committee endeavours to solve a complaint or hear an appeal within a reasonable amount of time depending on the complexity of the complaint and any further investigations warranted. In the case of a complaint brought about by an EYFS parent, the School shall complete its investigations and notify parents of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of the initial written complaint.

In the event of a complaint being received during a school holiday period, it will be dealt with as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within the timescales set out throughout this policy. Where there are delays in collecting information (for example, caused by staff absence), parents will be informed of the reasons why and a likely timeframe for a response.

If parents are dissatisfied with the procedure at any point of the investigation or feel that intervention at a higher level is appropriate, parents may lodge a complaint with Ofsted regarding EYFS (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-us> - enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk, Telephone: 0300 1234 234) or ISI regarding the Junior or Senior School provision (www.isi.net - ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA, or to concerns@isi.net).

***Reviewed* 12.10.18**

***Reviewed by* C Cunniffe**

***Review due no later than:* 12.10.19**