



## OXFORD INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE BRIGHTON

### COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

POLICY INTENDED FOR:	Parents
CATEGORY:	Complaints
POLICY IMPLEMENTED BY:	Principal
REVIEWED BY:	Board of Governors
REVIEWED DATE:	August 2023
NEXT REVIEW:	June 2024

#### OVERVIEW

This policy provides guidelines for handling concerns and complaints from parents. Separate procedures apply in the event of a child protection and safeguarding issue or if the Principal excludes a student or asks a student to leave and the parents of the student concerned seek a review of that decision. A concern about the safety of a student should be notified immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Concerns and complaints directly from students are dealt with under a separate procedure 'Complaints Policy and Procedure', a copy of which can be supplied upon request.

The term 'parents' refers to the parents of a current or prospective student, the legal or educational guardian of a current or prospective student, and at the College's discretion may also include the parent or legal or educational guardian of a student who has recently left the College.

This Complaints Procedure takes into account the regulatory requirements currently in force and is underpinned by a genuine desire to maintain within the school a flexible and responsive culture that recognises the need for a fair, objective and open-minded approach to dealing with complaints and concerns. The College is happy to make this policy available in larger print or in a more accessible format if required and will seek to offer translation services to parents wishing to complain for whom English is not their first language.

A copy of this policy will be available on the College website from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.



## POLICY AIM

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a concern or complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level; and that the concern or complaint is resolved as soon as possible. We will try to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, reviewing our systems considering the circumstances.

This document sets out the procedure to follow if you wish to make a complaint and what you can expect from the College by way of a response. The procedure is staged. Obviously, our hope is that most issues can be resolved quickly and informally; but the policy sets out a clear procedure to follow in situations where a parent may feel that an informal resolution has not been possible.

## STAGE 1: AN INFORMAL COMPLAINT

If there is anything, in any aspect of your son or daughter's life at the College that is troubling you, then we would urge you to let us know immediately, no matter how minor you may feel the matter to be. We will do our best to listen, to try to understand your concern, and to arrive at a resolution that meets with the satisfaction of all concerned. It is best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue; for example, if it is a boarding issue the Head of Boarding may be the best person to contact.

We expect most concerns can be resolved informally. Examples might include dissatisfaction about some aspect of teaching or pastoral care; dissatisfaction about allocation of privileges or responsibilities; timetable clashes; an invoicing concern; or concerns about the performance of some other aspect of the college's systems or equipment.

In the great majority of cases, it is likely that the appropriate member of staff will be able to address your concern effectively and straightforwardly. If they cannot resolve the matter alone, then it may be necessary for them to consult a more senior colleague. Equally, you may yourself wish to address your concern directly to a more senior member of staff – either in the first place or if you feel that the person to whom you first addressed your complaint has not dealt with it to your satisfaction. In this case, please contact the Principal directly.

In all cases, members of staff who receive a complaint will make a written record of the issue(s) involved and of the date on which the complaint was received.

We will acknowledge a written notification of your concerns within two working days of its receipt. Should the matter not be resolved within 15 working school days, then you may wish to proceed with your complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.



## STAGE 2: A FORMAL COMPLAINT

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then we would ask you to put your complaint in writing to the Principal. Upon receipt of a written formal complaint, the Principal will contact you within 7 working school days to gather more detailed information where necessary, and to set out how he/she proposes to proceed, including letting you know when he/she expects to be able to send a response.

Following this initial communication, the Principal will need to discuss the matter with the relevant colleagues and / or students, to carry out any necessary investigations and, with the help of senior colleagues, to give the matter full and detailed consideration.

As part of this process, the Principal may wish to have more communication with you, by telephone, email or face to face, to clarify issues or to seek more information.

During any investigation process, the College will declare any potential conflict of interest to any parental parties involved as the complainant. Once a conclusion has been reached, the Principal will communicate the outcome to you in writing, setting out the reasons for it as well as any action taken or proposed.

You should receive a response within 21 working school days of the Principal receiving the written complaint. The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews relating to the complaint.

In the event of a formal complaint about the Principal, this should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Governors, Mr Patrick Horne, care of Jo Smith, d'Overbroeck's, 333 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7PL, UK.

T: +44 1865 688600

In this case the investigation of the issue will be led by the Chair of the Board of Governors.

## STAGE 3 FURTHER STEPS: PANEL HEARING

If following the completion of the procedures set out in Stage 2, you are still unhappy with the outcome and wish to take your complaint further, you may invoke Stage 3, which means that the matter will be referred to a Complaints Panel for consideration.

To initiate this process, you will need to contact the Chair of the Board of Governors within 14 working days of the Principal's decision under Stage 2. Please write to the Chair, Mr Patrick Horne, c/o Jo Smith, d'Overbroeck's, 333 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7PL, UK. T: +44 1865 688600



The Chair will acknowledge the complaint as soon as possible, within 7 working school working days and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable, within 28 normal school working days, or as soon as practically possible in the holiday period.

The Panel will consist of three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. As stipulated by the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 the Panel members will be appointed by the school.

One of the Panel members will be independent of the management and running of the school. The independent member of the Panel, who will be chosen and appointed by the college, will be someone who has held a position of responsibility and who, by dint of their professional experience, has had experience of analysing situations and evaluating complex information and putting forward balanced arguments. Parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matters be supplied in advance of the hearing.

Copies of such particulars will need to be supplied to all parties not later than 4 working days prior to the hearing. 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 and keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation.

After due consideration of all facts it considers relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 15 normal school working days or as soon as practically possible in the holiday periods. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the complainant(s), to the Principal and, where relevant, to the person(s) complained about. They will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Principal.

## TIMESCALES

We will do our very best to keep to the timescales set out in this policy. These are expressed as a number of school working days, which means Monday to Friday (excluding weekends) during term time. We aim to deal with complaints received during school holidays as soon as reasonably practicable, and normally within the timescales set out in this policy. Where there are delays, caused for example by staff absence, parents will be informed and given an indication of the next steps and likely timescale for a response.

The aim will always be to deal with all complaints as promptly as possible; and, as a backstop deadline, a complaint received outside of term time will always be dealt with, at the latest, within the timescales set out above for term-time once term has started again.

## RECORD KEEPING



Detailed written records will be made of all complaints made under Stages 2 and 3 above. The records will indicate whether the complaint was resolved following a formal procedure or whether it proceeded to a panel hearing. They will also contain an account of the action taken by the College as a result of these complaints regardless of whether or not they were upheld. These records will be stored securely and confidentially by the school for 7 years. The written records of complaints will identify those complaints relating to boarding provision and actions taken by the school as a result of those complaints.

### PERSISTENT CORRESPONDENCE

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

You may be assured that your complaint or concern will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Education and Skills Act requests access to them, where disclosure is required in the course of the College's inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails. It is important to stress that it is College policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about the complaints procedure at OIC Brighton, please contact [enquiries@oicbrighton.com](mailto:enquiries@oicbrighton.com) or contact the principal:

Tess St Clair-Ford  
Ovingdean Hall, Greenways, Ovingdean, East Sussex, BN2 7BA

OR if you need to contact the Chair of Governors, please use the following contact details:  
Mr Patrick Horne, care of Jo Smith, d'Overbroeck's, 333 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7PL, UK.

T: +44 1865 688600

[Patrick.horne@doverbroecks.com](mailto:Patrick.horne@doverbroecks.com)