



LOCHINVER HOUSE

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Lochinver House School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. If parents of current registered pupils do have a complaint however, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure.

Lochinver House School believes that complaints treated as constructive suggestions can be used to improve standards and may prevent cause for further complaint. Even an unjustified complaint may indicate an area which can be improved. Any matter about which a parent of a registered pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the School will be handled as a complaint as we feel it is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem.

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS

Aims

- To promote a culture that is open and welcoming
- To involve parents and value their opinions
- To encourage parents to raise any concerns that they might have
- To enable parents to feel comfortable in communicating with the School
- To enable staff to feel comfortable when dealing with complaints

A complaint may be made if a parent thinks that the School has, for example:

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something it should have done
- Acted unfairly or impolitely

A complaint may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department in the School, about the Headmaster or Bursar or an individual member of staff.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The School is here for your son and you can be assured that your son will not be penalised for a complaint that you (or your son) raises in good faith.

Timeframe for dealing with complaints

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

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five School working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint speedily as possible: the School's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 days if the complaint is lodged during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing (outlined below), will be completed within a further 28 days, if the appeal is lodged during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.



Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a formal complaint, the School will keep a written record of all such complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. In addition the School will record actions taken as a result of all formal complaints (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld). At the School's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of people
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including e-mails and the records of phone conversations)

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 section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should contact their child's Form Teacher (or Tutor from Year 5). In many cases the matter will be resolved immediately by this means, to the parent's satisfaction. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult another more senior member of staff.
- Certain parents may wish to go straight to the Headmaster with their concerns, and this is respected. Complaints made directly to the Headmaster will be referred to the relevant Form Teacher, or another appropriate colleague, unless the Headmaster deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The Form Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they are received. Should the matter not be resolved within 10 School working days, or if the School and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, parents should make their complaint directly to Headmaster in the first instance.
- When a concern to the School is expressed via email this will not automatically trigger Stage 2 of the process which needs to be submitted in writing. Complaints will usually only progress to the formal stage after first being considered at this informal resolution stage and only then if the complainant intends to escalate the matter.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint formally to the Headmaster in writing within five School working days.
- After considering the formal complaint, the Headmaster will decide what further action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will speak to the parents, within seven School working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant factors have been established, the parents will be informed of his decision, with reasons and in writing.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to **Stage 3** of this procedure.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the School Bursar, who is Clerk to the Governors, to convene a hearing by the Complaints Panel.



- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons, appointed by the Governors. These will be people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments. No member of the Panel can have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and one member must be independent of the management and the running of the School.
- A meeting of the School's Complaints Panel will be arranged as soon as possible and normally within 15 School working days, following receipt of the parent's request.
- The parents may attend the meeting and may be accompanied by a friend – legal representation will not generally be appropriate.
- The Panel may require further written particulars of the complaint before the meeting. If so, these will be supplied to all parties not later than five School days before the hearing.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- After due consideration of all facts that they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within seven School working days of the hearing. The decision of the panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Head.
- Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection or where other legal obligation prevails.
- A panel hearing will still proceed even if the parent indicates they are satisfied and does not wish to proceed further. The panel should consider the parent's complaint in their absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion.

Written complaints relating to the requirements under the statutory framework for the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage, that is our Reception Year and younger):

Lochinver House School will provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during a specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of such complaint. Record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.

Complaints to OFSTED regarding EYFS service providers:

If the complaint relates to the fulfilment of EYFS requirements, parents may also complain directly to Ofsted and ISI if they wish.

- Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 123 4234 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.
- ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net.

Lochinver House School will make available to parents of pupils, and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the ISI for the purposes of section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the number of complaints registered and conducted under the formal (Stage 2) procedure during the preceding school year.

Written records of all complaints will be made and be kept confidential. The records will indicate at what stage the complaint was resolved.

Record of complaints taken to Stage 3 in the last academic year 2017/18 is zero.

Policy Reviewed: 13.08.2018
 Policy Review Date: 12.08.2019
 Policy linked to: Data Protection Policy, Privacy Notice, Safeguarding and Staff Behaviour and Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures

Any data held in relation to the content of this policy will be managed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.

