



## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### Introduction

Langley School has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated with care and fairness by the School, and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. Langley School's Complaints Procedure is available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website and in the School office during the school day. Langley School will ensure that those who request it are made aware that this document is published and of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014, Langley School will also make available, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Although this Procedure is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them; it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the School

"Parent(s)" means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a current pupil about whom the complaint relates.

### What constitutes a complaint?

A complaint is a written expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

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

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, working days refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays.

For the purposes of this policy, a ‘parent’ shall include a guardian, carer or any other person with parental responsibility for a child at the school. This policy applies to complaints from parents of current pupils and to parents of former pupils if the complaint was initially raised whilst the pupil was on the school roll.

Where timescales are given in ‘working days’, this is defined as Monday - Friday during term time (the dates of which are available on our website). Complaints received during holiday periods will be dealt with as soon as is practicable but are likely to take longer to resolve due to the unavailability of relevant staff. Under such circumstances the complainant will be notified of any extension to the time scales and the reason(s) why an extension is necessary when the complaint is acknowledged.

## **The three-stage Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage 1 - Informal Resolution**

- 1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- 2 If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child’s Form tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents’ satisfaction. If the Form tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult a head of department, a Deputy Head or the Head.
- 3 Complaints made directly to a head of department, Deputy Head or the Head will usually be referred to the relevant tutor unless the head of department, Deputy Head or the Head deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
- 4 The tutor will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved **within 5 working days** or in the event that the tutor 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 Complaints Procedure.
- 5 If, however, the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors.

### **Stage 2 - Formal Resolution**

- 6 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- 7 In most cases, the Head will *meet with or speak to* the parents concerned, **within 5** working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

- 8 It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations. This may be deputed to other senior members of staff who will present to the Head.
- 9 The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 10 Once the Head is satisfied that, so 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 in writing. The Head will also give reasons for their decision.
- 11 If the complaint is against the Head, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Chair may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair will give reasons for the decision. Contact details for the Chair of Governors is provided at the end of this document.
- 12 If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 - Panel Hearing**

- 13 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Chair of Governors who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- 14 The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. The Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within 15 working days.
- 15 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 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- 16 The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. If parents do not attend the Panel Hearing, the hearing will still go ahead.
- 17 The manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.
- 18 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.

- 19 After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and accordingly decide whether to:
  - Dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part;
  - Uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and
  - May make recommendations
  
- 20 The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 5 working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following 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. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Chair of Governors and the Head.
  
- 21 Any complaint of a decision taken by the Head to exclude or require the removal of the pupil under clause 7 of the School's Terms and Conditions (Parent Contract) will be governed by this Stage 3 of the School's Complaints Procedure. In such circumstances, the Panel may only uphold the complaint and ask the Head to reconsider his decision if they consider, having regard to the process followed by the Head, that the Head's decision to exclude the pupil was not a reasonable decision for the Head to have taken.

### **Complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS**

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Additional requirements apply for the EYFS setting beyond those which apply to the rest of the school. Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements are investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints will be made available to ISI on request. Details of how to contact ISI will be made available if the parent believes that the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

### **Timeframe for dealing with complaints**

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. Other than the timeframe stipulated for EYFS complaints, they will be acknowledged within 5 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 as speedily as possible: the School's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 20 working days. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days.

## Recording Complaints and use of personal data

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at Stage 1 (informal stage), the formal stage (Stage 2) or proceed to a Panel hearing (Stage 3) and any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice [Privacy Policy - Langley School](#). When dealing with complaints the School (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name and contact details of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Notes/minutes of the hearing, and
- The Panel's written decision

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's *Privacy Notice* and *Data Protection Policy*, but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's *Data Protection Policy*.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its *Privacy Notice*, *Data Protection Policy* and *Retention of Records Policy*.

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

In the academic year 2019/20 Langley School received 2 complaints. Langley Prep School received 0 complaints.

Langley School will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept in accordance with its Privacy Notice and Retention of Records Policy.

### **Contacts**

Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 1234 234 or by email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Alexandra House. 33 Kingsway. London. WC2B 6SE

ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

The Chair of Governors (Lieutenant Colonel Mark Nicholas MBE DL MA) may be contacted on:

01508 520210 % Mrs B Barnshaw (Clerk to Governors) [headmasterspa@langleschool.co.uk](mailto:headmasterspa@langleschool.co.uk)

Langley School, Langley Park, Norwich NR14 6BJ

Appendix 1  
Complaints Log

| Date of Complaint | Name of Pupil | Name of Complainant | Nature of Complaint | Complaint Handler | Actions Taken | Date resolved | Stage Reached | Are there any witness statements? | Is there a record of this complaint filed in the confidential complaints files |
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