



IPSWICH SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

The procedures outlined below comply with the provisions of The Children Act 1989 and the Education Act 2002. The Complaints Procedure for Pupils is available on request and is displayed at Westwood. The Complaints Procedure for Parents is available on the website for prospective parents, is sent to all parents when their child joins the School, and is also available on request.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR SENIOR SCHOOL PUPILS

Any complaint or grievance will be dealt with openly, speedily and honestly. If you consider that you have been dealt with unfairly you should approach staff in the order detailed below and you may be accompanied by parent(s), a member of staff, or a fellow pupil. In the majority of cases the discussion which ensues will be sufficient; most worries can be dealt with through informal advice, information, discussion and explanation. If not, you may make a formal complaint in writing to one of those more senior people named in the paragraphs below. If a written complaint is lodged, a copy will be given to any member of staff named. The resolution of a written complaint will be followed up in writing, with copies of complaint and resolution given to you and lodged in your file. However, if you reach this stage we would normally expect your parents to become involved.

Lower School (Years 7 and 8)

If you feel you have been unfairly treated by a teacher, you should discuss this with the teacher involved, then with your Form Teacher or the Head of Lower School. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, or if the complaint is against the Head of Lower School, you should complain to the Headmaster. If the matter is still unresolved you should ask your parents to follow up your complaint, using the Complaints Procedure which they can request from the School.

Middle School and Sixth Form (Years 9 - 13)

The complaints procedure is similar to that in the Lower School, except that the hierarchy of appeal is Tutor, Head of House, Head of Middle School or Head of Sixth Form, Deputy Head, Headmaster.

A complaint about the Head of Lower School, a Head of House, the Head of Middle School, the Head of Sixth Form, the Bursar or either Deputy Heads should be directed to the Headmaster. A complaint about a member of the Support Staff should be made to the Bursar. A complaint about the Headmaster should be directed to the Chairman of Governors.

In addition to the procedure detailed above, any boarding pupil may approach the School's Independent Listener with a complaint. She is Dr Dipi Thakerar, who can be contacted at her surgery at the Barrack Lane Medical Practice, 1 Barrack Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 3NQ Tel: 01473 252827. A boarder could also seek advice from Suffolk County Council Social Care Services. You can do this by contacting Customer First. This is a call centre that will ensure that the right social worker gets your referral. You can do this by phone, email or letter.

By phone: Customer First can be contacted on 0808 800 4005 during normal working hours.

Outside these hours this number will divert to the Emergency Duty Service who can deal with any matters that cannot wait until the next working day.

Please note that this is an emergency service only.

By email: customer.first@suffolk.gov.uk

In writing: Customer First
Customer Service Department
Social Care Services
PO Box 771
Needham Market
IPSWICH
IP6 8WB

DFE Regulations require the School to state the number of complaints registered under the formal Complaints Procedure in the preceding year: one complaint was registered under the formal procedure in the year 2015-16. Parents may request (from the Headmaster) the number of complaints during 2014-15 if they wish to do so.

COMPLAINTS FROM PARENTS

The following is the text of a letter that is sent from the Headmaster of the Senior School (and with appropriate adjustments) the Head of the Preparatory School to all new parents, and which is available to any parent on request:

Complaints Procedure for Parents

If you have a concern about any aspect of your child's life at school, please contact an appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. We promise that we shall take all such expressions of concern seriously and follow them up promptly. We know that things can go wrong and we want to be able to sort things out.

Two matters tend to make parents and pupils reluctant to express concerns:

- A fear that the school will not see the issue to be important: if it is important to you, it is important to us
- A fear that there may be repercussions for the pupil: this should not be a factor. Under no circumstances will the school discriminate against a pupil because of expressions of concern or complaints.

If the complaint arises after a pupil has left the School any complaint should be raised within 3 months of the pupil leaving.

Informal Resolution

For us to deal with problems, we need to know about them – earlier please rather than later. In dealing with such matters we recognise the importance of confidentiality, fairness and ensuring that no one suffers unjustly.

Who should you contact? This depends on the nature and seriousness of the concern but the following is a guide:

- for a minor day-to-day matter, the right person is likely to be the relevant teacher or the tutor;
- for a more serious academic concern, the appropriate person will be the relevant Head of Department or, for a pastoral concern, the Head of Lower School, Housemaster or Housemistress;
- major issues should come straight to either Deputy Heads or to the Headmaster;
- matters regarding finance, fees and non-academic services should go to the Bursar.

The person you contact 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 two weeks, or in the event that the School and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then you will be advised to proceed with your complaint at a formal level.

Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then you should put your complaint in writing to the Headmaster, who will decide the appropriate course of action to take. The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; which provide that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them.

In most cases the Headmaster will arrange a meeting with you, normally within 7 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.

If not it may then be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations. Once he is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and you will be informed of this in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision. If you are still not satisfied with the decision you should request a hearing of the Complaints Panel. Your request should be submitted in writing, within one month of the Headmaster's decision, detailing the particulars of the complaint, the evidence you wish to present to the Panel and the remedy that you seek.

Complaints Panel

The Panel will be appointed by the Management Committee of the Governors and will normally consist of two Governors who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one person who is independent of the management and running of the School. The Chairman of the Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.

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 days prior to the hearing.

You may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person who may be a relative, teacher or friend. Please do inform the Panel in advance who will be attending. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible the Panel will resolve your complaint immediately 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 they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 days of the Hearing.

The Panel will inform you of its decision, the reasons for it and any recommendations by electronic mail (if appropriate) in the first instance, with copies to the Headmaster, Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about. Original documents will also be sent to you by first class post, and copies of those documents will be available for inspection on the School premises by Governors and the Headmaster. The decision of the Panel will be final.

The above timings are for guidance. It is expected that all complaints will reach resolution within 28 days.

Written Records

A written record will be kept of all complaints that are made under this policy and –

- I. whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
- II. action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether or not they are upheld).

Revised April 2018