Parental Complaints Policy and Procedures

Lancing College & Lancing College Preparatory Schools

Lancing College

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1 Aims

1.1 This is the complaints policy of the Lancing College Senior School and Sixth Form and its Preparatory Schools [hereafter the College'].

1.2 The aims of this policy and related procedures are to provide a framework for the resolution of complaints which:

1.2.1 allows for their resolution informally and sets out the College's formal procedures where this is not achievable;

1.2.2 is easily accessible and publicised, simple to understand and use and impartial and non-adversarial;

1.2.3 enables a full and fair investigation where appropriate;

1.2.4 respects people's desire for confidentiality;

1.2.5 addresses all the points at issue and provides an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;

1.2.6 provides information to the College's senior management team so that services can be improved and any systemic issues can be identified and addressed; and

1.2.7 helps to create a culture of safety, equality and protection.

2 Scope and Application

2.1 This policy applies to the Lancing College Senior School and Sixth Form and its Preparatory Schools.

2.2 This policy applies only to complaints by parents. The College has separate grievance and whistleblowing policies to cover concerns that a member of staff may have and to cover concerns raised by pupils.

2.3 This policy applies to any expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken, or a lack of action.

2.4 This policy does not apply to exclusions, to which the College's *expulsion and removal: review procedure* applies.

2.5 This policy applies to complaints from each of the following:

2.5.1 a parent or parents of current pupils;

2.5.2 a parent or parents of former pupils if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was registered at the school;

2.5.3 References to a parent, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of a pupil.

2.6 The College will not normally investigate anonymous complaints.

2.7 If appropriate, the College will acknowledge that a complaint is upheld, wholly or in part. In addition, it may offer:

2.7.1 an explanation;

2.7.2 an admission that it could have been handled differently or better;

2.7.3 an assurance that the College will try to ensure that the event complained of will not happen again and an explanation of the steps taken in this respect;

2.7.4 an undertaking to review policies and / or procedures;

2.7.5 an apology.

2.8 Requests for financial awards, such as claims for compensation, damages or fee refunds, are beyond the scope of the College's complaints procedures.

2.9 All parents should be aware that regardless of the nature of a complaint and whether or not it is upheld, parents are not entitled to details of any related sanctions imposed on staff, pupils or parents for reasons of data protection and confidentiality.

2.10 There may be occasions when it is necessary or reasonable to deviate from this complaints procedure if this is reasonable and justified. Complainants will be notified of the changes.

2.11 The College encourages anyone else with any concerns about the College's operation to raise them with the College. They are asked to do so by writing to the Head or Chair of Governors, setting out their concerns and the action sought.

2.12 Any complaint raising safeguarding concerns will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed in accordance with the College's safeguarding and child protection procedures in the first instance.

3 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nursery, Pre-School, Reception children

3.1 The complaints procedure for parents with children in this part of the school is similar to the whole school procedure but has some distinctive aspects for this age range.

3.2 For the EYFS

- A record of complaints and their outcome is kept for at least three years.
- Parents may contact Ofsted (and/or ISI – the Independent Schools Inspectorate) at any stage of the complaints' procedure if their complaint is about fulfilment of EYFS requirements. The Ofsted phone number is 0300 123 4666 and the ISI phone number is 020 7600 0100.
- All written complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements are investigated and complainants will receive notification of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of receiving the complaint.

3.3 We will provide Ofsted, and ISI, on request with a written record of all complaints made within a specified period and the action taken as a result of each complaint.

4 Timescales

4.1 The College aims to resolve all complaints efficiently and promptly and Parents are encouraged to bring any matter causing concern to the College's attention as soon as possible. Whenever possible, a complaint should be raised within three months of the incident, or where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. The College will however consider complaints made within up to 12 months if exceptional circumstances apply. A complaint raised after three months should therefore include details of the issues which led to the delay.

4.2 Timescales for each stage of the College's complaints procedure are set out below. It is expected that the management of every complaint will progress in a timely manner. Where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in a delay to the timescales for a stage of the complaints procedure (such as other bodies investigating aspects of the complaint), the College will notify the parent and inform them of the new timescales as soon as possible.

4.3 Complaints which are raised in the school holidays will usually be deemed to have been received on the first working day after receipt.

4.4 If a Parent commences legal action against the College in relation to their complaint, the Head or Chair of Governors will consider whether or not to suspend the complaints procedure until those proceedings have been concluded.

5 Regulatory Framework

5.1 This policy has been prepared to meet the College's responsibilities under:

5.1.1 Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSR);

5.1.2 Boarding schools: national minimum standards (Department for Education (DfE), May 2026);

5.1.3 Education and Skills Act 2008;

5.1.4 Children Act 1989;

5.1.5 Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);

5.1.6 Equality Act 2010;

5.1.7 EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers

and has been informed by the Independent School Standards Guidance for Independent (Department for Education, April 2026).

5.2 The following School policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:

5.2.1 The Terms and Conditions.

6 Responsibility Statement and Allocation of Tasks

6.1 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy.

6.2 To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the Governing Body has allocated the following tasks:

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	The Senior Deputy Head and Heads of the Preparatory Schools	As required, and at least annually
Monitoring the implementation of the policy	The Head Master, the Senior Deputy Head and Heads of the Preparatory Schools	As required, and at least termly
Maintaining up to date records of all information created in relation to the policy and its implementation as required by the GDPR and the ISSR	The Head Master's PA and the school secretaries of the Preparatory Schools	As required, and at least termly
Seeking input via parent and pupil questionnaires from interested groups (such as pupils and parents) to consider improvements to the College's procedures	Senior Deputy Head and Exec. Director of External Relations	Annually

7 Publication and Availability

7.1 This policy is available in hard copy on request and is published on the College website.

7.2 A copy of the policy is available for inspection from the Head Master's Office during a working day.

7.3 This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required and the College will make other reasonable adjustments required to enable complainants to access and complete this procedure, such as holding meetings in accessible locations.

7.4 Information regarding the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure of this policy during the preceding school year is available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate. The school makes this available if requested in writing to the Head Master.

8 Definitions and Interpretation

8.1 Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

8.1.1 References to working days mean Monday to Friday, when the College is open during term time. The dates of terms are published on the College's website. In the
event that the application of this definition is likely to introduce excessive delays, due to intervening school holidays, the College's approach is to take sensible and reasonable steps so as to minimise any hardship or unfairness arising from such delays.

9 Management of Complaints

9.1 The College's policy allows for complaints to be considered at three stages:

Stage 1: Informal raising of a complaint. Further details of this procedure are set out in Appendix 1.

Stage 2: A formal complaint in writing. Further details of this procedure are set out in Appendix 2.

Stage 3: Reference to a complaints panel. Further details of this procedure are set out in Appendix 3.

9.2 Separate procedures apply if:

9.2.1 the Head expels or requires the removal of a pupil from the College and the parents seek a review of that decision. See the College's *expulsion and removal: review procedure* or

9.2.2 to complaints by pupils. See the pupil complaints policy in the Pupils' Charter.

10 Expected Standards of Behaviour

10.1 While the College will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school, attention is drawn to the information included in Appendix 4 which is drawn from:

10.1.1 the Department for Education's Best practice advice for school complaints procedures 2021; and

10.1.2 the Department for Education guidance Controlling access to school premises 2018.

11 Record-Keeping and Confidentiality

11.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the College's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

11.2 The College keeps a written record of all formal complaints, including the following:

11.2.1 whether they were resolved at Stage 2 or Stage 3;

11.2.2 the action taken by the College as a result of the complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld);

11.2.3 whether the complaint relates to the College's boarding provision.

11.3 The records created in accordance with this policy may contain personal data. The College has a privacy notice which explains how it will use personal data about pupils and parents. The privacy notice is published on the College's website.

11.4 College staff will ensure that they follow the College's data protection policies and procedures when handling personal data created in connection with this policy. This includes the College's data protection policy and information security policy.

11.5 In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be kept only for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary in the circumstances.

11.6 Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications will be retained for a minimum of seven years and may be kept longer subject to further consideration by the Head.

11.7 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of an inspection or under other legal authority or court order.

12 Contact details for the Independent Schools Inspectorate

12.1 ISI can be contacted at concerns@isi.net or on 020 7600 0100 or by writing to Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA.

13 Training

13.1 The College ensures that regular guidance and training is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.

13.2 The level and frequency of training depends on the role of the individual member of staff.

14 Data Protection Complaints

14.1 The School acknowledges its obligations under section 164A of the Data Protection Act 2018 in relation to data protection complaints.

14.2 Where a complaint made under this policy includes elements relating to data protection, the College will ensure it complies with its data protection obligations.

14.3 Where appropriate, the College may respond to a matter under the relevant statutory data protection procedures, rather than through the formal complaints process. The College will determine whether the complaint is best dealt with under this policy or under the separate procedure for data protection complaints set out below., taking into account the substance of the complaint as a whole.

14.4 If you have a complaint solely or primarily about the College's handling of data or if you believe that the College has not complied with the Privacy Notice on its website or if you consider that the College has acted otherwise than in accordance with data protection law, you should email: clerk@lancing.org.uk with details of your complaint. The College will acknowledge your complaint within 30 calendar days of receipt and will investigate and inform you of the outcome of your complaint without undue delay (keeping you informed of progress as necessary).

14.5 If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, or if you feel the College has not handled it appropriately, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

15 Version Control

Date of adoption of this policy	March 2022
Date of last review of this policy	October 2026
Date for next review of this policy	March 2027
Policy owner (SMT)	Senior Deputy Head, Head Master and Heads of the Preparatory Schools
Ratified By	The Governing Body

Appendix 1 Stage 1: Informal Complaint

1 Informal Resolution of a Complaint

1.1 We hope and expect that most complaints can be resolved informally without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. For example, dissatisfaction about some aspect of teaching or pastoral care or a billing error should be able to be resolved by the relevant member of staff.

2 Who to Contact

2.1 Where appropriate, complaints should initially be raised as follows:

2.1.1 **educational issues**: if the matter relates to the classroom, the curriculum or special educational needs, please speak or write initially to the pupil's Housemaster/ Housemistress (Senior School and Sixth Form) or Form Teacher (Prep Schools). Your complaint may be passed to a more senior member of staff if appropriate;

2.1.2 **pastoral care**: for complaints relating to matters outside the classroom, please speak or write to the pupil's Housemaster/ Housemistress (Senior School and Sixth Form) or Form Teacher (Prep Schools).

2.1.3 **disciplinary matters**: a problem over any disciplinary action taken or a sanction imposed should be raised first of all with the member of staff who imposed it / the Assistant Head (Pastoral) (Senior School and Sixth Form) or Deputy Head (Prep Schools)

2.2 An informal complaint will be acknowledged by telephone, email or letter within five working days of receipt, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely timescales. Such action may include an investigation and / or a meeting with the parent.

2.3 Wherever appropriate, the College will ask the parent at the earliest stage what they think might resolve the issue.

2.4 The parent will usually receive a response to the complaint within 15 working days.

2.5 If the parent is dissatisfied with the response to the informal complaint or in the event that the complaint cannot be resolved by informal means, the parent may make a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure as set out in Appendix 2.

3 Complaints about the Head Master or Preparatory School Head

3.1 The procedure for dealing with an informal complaint about the Head Master/ Head is set out below:

3.1.1 parents may choose to raise complaints directly with the Head Master/ Prep School Head (depending on setting) if they feel that the matter is capable of resolution informally. The complaint may be raised orally or in writing. If in writing, the College will not automatically treat the complaint as a formal (Stage 2) complaint and the Head will endeavour to resolve the complaint informally under Stage 1;

3.1.2 the Head will acknowledge informal complaints within five working days and will seek to resolve the matter under this Stage 1 by means of direct conversation or a meeting with the parents, to be held within 15 working days of the initial complaint;

3.1.3 if the parent is dissatisfied with the Head's response to the informal complaint or in the event that the complaint cannot be resolved by informal means, the parent may make a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure as set out in Appendix 2.

3.2 Alternatively, parents may choose to make their complaint about the Head Master to the Chair of Governors or, if about the Head of the Prep School, to the Head Master of Lancing College. In this case, the complaint will be treated as a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure as set out in Appendix 2.

4 Complaints about the Governors

4.1 Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governors via the School office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

4.2 The procedure for dealing with an informal complaint about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor, or the whole governing body is set out below:

4.2.1 The complaint may be raised orally or in writing. If in writing, the Clerk to the Governors will not automatically treat the complaint as a formal (Stage 2) complaint and the Chair of Governors, or Deputy Chair of Governors (in the event that the complaint is about the Chair of Governors) will endeavour to resolve the complaint informally under Stage 1;

4.2.2 the Clerk to the Governors will acknowledge informal complaints within five working days and will ask the Chair of Governors, alternatively the Deputy Chair of Governors, alternatively a designated non-conflicted governor (to be identified by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair/Deputy Chair) to seek to resolve the matter under this Stage 1 by means of direct conversation or a meeting with the parents, to be held within 15 working days of the initial complaint

4.2.3 if the parent is dissatisfied with the response to the informal complaint or in the event that the complaint cannot be resolved by informal means, the parent may make a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure as set out in Appendix 2.

Appendix 2 Stage 2: Formal Complaint

1 How to Make a Formal Complaint

1.1 Complaints will usually only progress to Stage 2 after first being considered at the informal stage and only then if the parent indicates that they intend to escalate a matter to the formal stage.

1.2 The formal complaint should be in writing addressed to the Head Master/Prep School Head/Clerk to the Governors (as the case may be) usually within 15 working days from receipt of the response to their complaint and should include:

1.2.1 The complainant's name and full contact details;

1.2.2 details of the complaint and who it has previously been raised with;

1.2.3 a copy of any relevant documents;

1.2.4 and the outcome desired.

1.3 The complaint form in Appendix 5 can be used to submit a formal complaint.

1.4 The complaint will be acknowledged within three working days, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely timescales.

2 Investigation

2.1 The subject matter of the complaint will be investigated in the most appropriate manner, which may include some or all of the following steps:

2.1.1 delegation of the investigation to a senior member of staff or third party;

2.1.2 involvement of one or more Governors;

2.1.3 request for additional information from the parent, including what they think might resolve the issue (if not already requested under Stage 1); and

2.1.4 request for a conversation and / or a meeting with the parent personally and / or others with relevant knowledge of the circumstances to define the scope of the complaint and or assist in the investigation.

2.2 Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Where the investigation is conducted by someone else they will prepare a report on the investigation which will usually then be considered by the Head Master. Personal data may be redacted, and names anonymised or cyphered in line with data protection principles.

3 Decision

3.1 The parent will be notified by email or letter of the Stage 2 decision and the reasons for it, usually within 20 working days from receipt of the formal complaint.

3.2 If the parent is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response to the complaint, the parent can request that the complaint be referred to a complaints panel under Stage 3, using the procedure set out in Appendix 3.

4 Complaints about the Head

4.1 The procedure for dealing with a formal complaint about the Head Master of the Senior School and Sixth Form or the Head of the Prep School is set out below:

4.1.1 In the event that the complaint is about the Head Master, the complaint should be put in writing to the Chair of Governors. The complaint should include the same information referred to above.

4.1.2 Chair of Governors will acknowledge the complaint within five working days of receipt and indicate the action that is being taken and the likely timescale. Such action may include an investigation and/or a meeting with the parent. The parent will usually receive a response to the complaint within 20 working days.

4.1.3 In the event that the complaint is about the Head of a Lancing College Preparatory School, the complaint should be put in writing to the Head Master of Lancing College. The complaint should include the same information referred to above.

4.1.4 The Head Master will acknowledge the complaint within five working days of receipt and indicate the action that is being taken and the likely timescale. Such action may include an investigation and/or a meeting with the parent. The parent will usually receive a response to the complaint within 20 working days.

4.1.5 If the parent is dissatisfied with the response to the complaint, the parent can request that the complaint be referred to a complaints panel under Stage 3, using the procedure set out in Appendix 3.

5 Complaints about the Governors

5.1 Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governors via the School office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

5.2 The procedure for dealing with a formal complaint about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body is set out below:

5.2.1 In the event that the complaint is about the Chair of Governors, the complaint should be put in writing to the Deputy Chair of Governors. The complaint should include the same information referred to above.

5.2.2 In the event that the complaint is about the Deputy Chair of Governors, an individual governor, or the whole governing body, the complaint should be put in writing to the Chair of Governors. The complaint should include the same information referred to above.

5.2.3 The Chair of Governors/Deputy Chair of Governors will acknowledge the complaint within five working days of receipt and indicate the action that is being taken and the likely timescale. Such action may include an investigation and/or a meeting with the parent. The parent will usually receive a response to the complaint within 20 working days.

5.2.4 If the parent is dissatisfied with the response to the complaint, the parent can request that the complaint be referred to a complaints panel under Stage 3, using the procedure set out in Appendix 3.

Appendix 3 Stage 3: Complaints Panel

1 Complaints Panel Hearing

1.1 If a parent is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response to the complaint, they can request a complaints panel hearing.

1.2 A complaints panel Hearing (Hearing) is a Hearing to review those elements of the decision made at stage 2 about which the parent remains dissatisfied. The panel is not obliged to consider any new complaints at this stage.

2 How to Request a Hearing

2.1 A request for a Hearing must be put in writing to the Clerk to the Governors and will usually only be considered if the procedure at Stage 2 has been completed.

2.2 The written request should usually be made within 20 working days from receipt of the stage 2 decision and should include:

2.2.1 the complainant's name and full contact details;

2.2.2 details of those aspects of the complaint about which the parent remains dissatisfied;

2.2.3 copies of any relevant documents which the parent would like the panel to consider; and

2.2.4 the outcome desired;

2.2.5 whether the parent wishes to attend the hearing and if so, whether they propose to be accompanied.

2.3 If assistance with the request is required, for example because of a disability, please inform the Clerk to the Governors who will be happy to make appropriate arrangements.

2.4 The Clerk to the Governors will acknowledge the request for a Hearing in writing within five working days of receipt.

2.5 Every effort will be made to enable the Hearing to take place within 15 working days of receipt of the request.

3 Planning the Hearing

3.1 The Clerk to the Governors will send written notification to each party of the date, time and place of the Hearing at least ten working days before the date of the Hearing.

3.2 Copies of any documents (additional to those specified in 2.2.1 and 2.2.3) that the parent wishes the complaints panel to consider should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors to be received at least seven working days prior to the Hearing.

3.3 The Clerk to the Governors will circulate a copy of the bundle of documents to be considered by the complaints panel to all parties at least five working days prior to the Hearing, unless shorter notice is agreed.

3.4 The parent may be accompanied at the Hearing, for example by a relative or friend. The Hearing is an internal proceeding, not legal proceedings, and legal representation is unnecessary.

3.5 The parent should note that the complaints panel will wish to speak to him / her directly. If they are accompanied by a legally qualified person, that person will not be permitted to act as an advocate or to address the Hearing unless invited to do so by the Chair of the complaints panel.

3.6 A person will be appointed to take a minute of the Hearing.

4 Composition of the Complaints Panel

4.1 The complaints panel will comprise at least three individuals who have no detailed prior knowledge of the circumstances of the complaint, including at least one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the College.

4.2 The parent may ask the Clerk to the Governors to inform them who has been appointed to sit on the complaints panel ahead of the Hearing. Fair consideration will be given to any reasonable objection to a particular member of the panel.

4.3 The Chair of the Governors will usually appoint one of the panel members to be the Chair of the panel throughout the proceedings, except where the complaint is (a) about the Chair of Governors, in which case the Deputy Chair of Governors will make the relevant appointment of the Chair of the panel (b) about the whole board of Governors, in which case a designated member of the Woodard Corporation will make the relevant appointment of the Chair of the panel.

5 Role of the Complaints Panel

5.1 The role of the complaints panel is to establish the facts surrounding the complaints that remain in issue by considering:

5.1.1 the documents provided by both parties; and

5.1.2 any representations made by the parties;

to review the process and the decision reached at Stage 2, and to consider on the balance of probabilities, whether or not to uphold each complaint.

6 The Hearing

6.1 Unless prior to the commencement of the Hearing, a parent confirms that they are satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, the Hearing will proceed notwithstanding that the parent may decide not to attend. In these circumstances, the complaints panel will consider the parent's complaint in his / her absence [and issue findings on the substance of the complaint].

6.2 The panel will usually hear representations from the Stage 2 decision-maker and the Parent(s).

6.3 The Hearing is not a legal proceeding, and the complaints panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses to the issues complained of but may do so and / or may take written statements into account.

6.4 All statements made at the Hearing will be unsworn. The parties will be entitled to write their own notes for reference purposes.

6.5 All those present are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners. If they fail to do so and after due warning, the Hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chair. Any person who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the Hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and his / her comment will be minuted.

6.6 The Chair may, at his / her discretion, otherwise adjourn the Hearing if he / she considers it appropriate to do so. This may include an adjournment for welfare reasons, to enable additional information to be obtained and/or considered or for the parties to take legal advice on a specific issue arising.

6.7 When the Chair of the panel is satisfied that sufficient consideration has been given to the documentation provided and any representations made by the parties, he / she will conclude the Hearing.

6.8 A Hearing before the complaints panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements relating to the complaint, or any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be published or otherwise made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media.

7 Decision

7.1 The complaints panel will make findings about each complaint on the balance of probabilities and may make recommendations.

7.2 It is not within the powers of the complaints panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, pupils or parents, although the complaints panel may make recommendations about these issues.

7.3 The minutes of the complaints panel hearing, together with the complaints panel's findings and any recommendations will be provided in writing to the parents and, where relevant, the person complained about, within ten working days of the Hearing.

8 Next Steps

8.1 The decision of the Panel is final. There will be no further opportunity within the school for consideration of the complaint. The completion of Stage 3 represents the conclusion of the school’s complaints procedure.

8.2 The school will however ensure that the panel decision is recorded appropriately and that any recommendations made in the course of a complaint are properly considered and actioned as appropriate.

8.3 The complaints panel's findings and any recommendations including any actions taken to implement them will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the governors of the College and the Head.

Appendix 4 Managing unreasonable conduct and repeated complaints

1 We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with us. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

2 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.

3 We adopt the Department for Education's good practice suggestions and guidance on managing serial and persistent complaints, set out in the Best Practice Guidance for academies complaints procedures (which are also set by the ISSR).

4 Where the complainant:

4.1 refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;

4.2 refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process;

4.3 refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;

4.4 insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;

4.5 introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;

4.6 makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;

4.7 changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;

4.8 repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);

4.9 refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed;

4.10 seeks an unrealistic outcome;

4.11 makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with;

4.12 uses threats to intimidate;

4.13 uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence;

4.14 knowingly provides falsified information;

4.15 publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums;

4.16 raises a complaint which is manifestly unjustified, inappropriate, or an improper use of formal procedure;

The College may implement a tailored communication strategy and/or decide not to respond at all. In assessing this, the College shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case and the nature of the complaint itself rather than the nature of the complainant. In assessing all of the circumstances of the case the College will consider a range of factors including:

4.17 whether a complaint has reasonable foundation;

4.18 the history and context of the complaint (and any evidence where relevant);

4.19 whether the time and cost of investigating the complaint is proportionate to the issue(s) complained of;

4.20 whether an investigation of the complaint is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress;

4.21 unexplained delay in raising a complaint or issue;

4.22 if the purpose of the complaint is to obtain an outcome which is unavailable via the complaints procedure, such as a claim for compensation, damages or a refund of fees paid;

4.23 any evidence of a complaint being brought for an improper purpose.

5 Whenever possible, the Head Master and / or Chair of Governors and / or Deputy Chair of Governors and/or designated governor will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally, asking them to change it, before declining to deal with a complaint.

6 In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the College will usually inform the police and communicate its actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the College.

Appendix 5 Complaint Form

Complaint Form			
Name of complainant			
Address:	**Telephone:**	**Mobile:**	**Email:**
Name and role of who the complaint has been raised with **(Please include any relevant dates)**			
Reason for complaint **(Please include as much information as possible about what specifically you are unhappy about and why)**			
Desired outcome			
List of relevant documents enclosed with the complaint form			

Declaration

The information included in this complaint form is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I agree to co-operate fully with the complaints procedure and acknowledge my ongoing obligation to treat the school and its staff in a reasonable manner at all times.

Signed:

Date: