



WESTMINSTER
SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Author: James Kazi
Lead: Head Master

Date: November 2019
Review Date: September 2020



WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Westminster prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care that it provides for its pupils. However, if pupils or parents do have a complaint in good faith, they can expect to be assisted by the School in accordance with the procedure detailed below. The aim of the procedure is to produce a resolution that everyone involved can accept.

In cases where the complaint has regard to the permanent exclusion of a pupil, the appeal process outlined in the exclusion policy should be followed and not the complaints procedure.

This complaint procedure is available to all pupils, parents of current pupils and prospective pupils and all staff on the Westminster School website and intranet.

FOR PUPILS:

Pupils should follow the suggestions set out in the "If you have a concern" page in the Almanack and posted on House Noticeboards. If the concern is not resolved then a pupil should ask his or her parents to follow the procedure below.

FOR PARENTS:

Informal Resolution (Stage 1)

It is hoped that all complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. If parents have a concern or a complaint they should normally first contact their son's / daughter's Housemaster. It is anticipated that Housemasters themselves will be able to resolve the majority of concerns to the parents' satisfaction, although it might be necessary to consult a Head of Department or the Deputy Head (Academic) if the question is an academic one. Similarly, Housemasters might need to refer to the Under Master if the concern is about a disciplinary matter. In some instances, it might be appropriate for parents to raise their concern directly with the Head Master.

The Housemaster will make a written record of all concerns and complaints, the date on which they were received and their outcome, and these will be made available to the Head Master for review. Should the matter not be resolved within a reasonable period of time (normally within 14 working days), or in the event that the Housemaster and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory solution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with the procedure below.

Formal Resolution (Stage 2)

If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then parents should put their concern in writing to the Head Master. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged, and the Head Master will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Head Master will meet with the parents, within 7 working days of receiving the complaint if it is in term time, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. In the case of a complaint about any matter concerning boarding welfare, the Head Master will also inform boarding pupils and their parents how to contact ISI.

It might be necessary to carry out further investigation, for example where there are other parties involved.

Once the Head Master is satisfied that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing within a further 7 working days or as soon as possible thereafter. The Head Master will also give reasons for his decision.

The Head Master will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. These written records will also show whether the formal complaint was resolved by the Head Master or proceed to a panel hearing (please see below) and also any action taken, which will be recorded separately (Appendix A).

If parents are still not satisfied, they should proceed as below.

Panel Hearing (Stage 3)

This stage of the Complaints Procedure will only be necessary should the matter not be resolved at the former two stages. If this stage has been reached, parents should write to:

The Secretary to the Governing Body
Westminster School
Little Dean's Yard
London
SW1P 3PF

A Panel, which consists of two Governors not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and a Chairman who is independent of the management and running of the School, will then be convened by the Chairman of the Governors to hear the concern.

The Secretary to the Governing Body will acknowledge the receipt of the letter of concern and will schedule a meeting to take place within 14 working days or as soon as practicable thereafter.

Parents may be accompanied to this meeting by their son / daughter and one other person in support. Parents are asked to notify the Secretary to the Governing Body, in advance of the hearing, of the details of any person accompanying them.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' concern 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 the relevant facts, the Panel will form a decision within 7 working days of the ending of the hearing. 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 recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the parents, and, where relevant, the person against whom the complaint has been made; and it will also be made available for the Chairman of the Governors and Head Master.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Furthermore, all decisions will be made impartially and within a reasonable time. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as disclosure is required of the School by the Secretary of State and the DfE in the course of an inspection (subject to section 109 of the Education Act 2008), or where any other legal obligation prevails.

APPENDIX A

RECORD OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

The School maintains a written record of all complaints that are made, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or whether they proceed to a Panel Hearing, and then the action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

In the **academic year 2018-2019** no formal complaints were received by the Head Master.

In the **academic year 2017-2018** no formal complaints were received by the Head Master concerning current pupils, although there was one relating to a prospective pupil.

In the **academic year 2016-2017** no formal complaints were received by the Head Master.