



Complaints Procedure Policy

MONITORING: Headmaster
UPDATED: January 2024
REVIEW DATE: January 2025

Introduction

Caldicott has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this 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 normally contact their son's tutor/form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the tutor/form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff unless the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally.
- The member of staff 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 five working days or in the event that the member of staff 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 Procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet the parents concerned, normally within a couple of days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations. These will be completed in seven working days or as soon as is practicable.

- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.
- Once the Headmaster 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 Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision. The written decision will be issued within fourteen working days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the Headmaster will write to the parents within the fourteen working day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why he is unable to issue his decision and informing the parents when he will do so, which shall be within twenty-eight days of receipt of the complaint in any event.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision and wish to appeal, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Appeal Procedure

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to Malcolm Swift, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by Malcolm Swift who, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 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. Any such further particulars received within five days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it may not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' 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 10 days 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, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils. Pupils will not be

penalised for making a complaint in good faith. Boarders and their parents who have a complaint about their welfare, which they feel has not been answered by the school's normal procedures, can inform an inspector when they visit the school, or contact ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate, Ground Floor, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA; telephone 020 7600 0100). ISI is responsible for the boarding provision and is available to investigate complaints.

They may also contact the Children's Commissioner about their concerns via their website www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk. The Local Authority Designated Officer can be contacted at secure-LADO@buckscc.gov.uk or by telephone (01296 382070).

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. 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 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them.

A written record of all complaints will be kept indicating whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. The records will be retained for 6 years after the date of the resolution of the complaint. They are available for inspection by authorised persons on the school premises.