

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### **Introduction**

This policy is available on our website but a copy of it can be supplied by the school on request.

Leighton Park School has always aimed for a high quality of teaching and pastoral care, and enjoys close relationships with parents. Should a concern or complaint arise, it is expected that parents will contact the School as a matter of urgency so that the issue can be discussed. 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**

- i) It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- ii) If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son's/daughter's Tutor or Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction.
- iii) If the Tutor or Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department; the Head of Fryer, Middle School or Sixth Form; the Housemaster/Housemistress; the Deputy Head or the Head.
- iv) Complaints made directly to staff in iii) above will usually be referred to the relevant Tutor or Teacher unless he/she deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- v) The Tutor or Teacher 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 10 working days, or in the event that the Tutor or Teacher and 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**

- i) 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.
- ii) The Head will respond to the parents concerned, within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- iii) It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- iv) The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- v) 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 the parents will

be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his decision.

- vi) If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- i) 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 will arrange for a hearing of the Complaints Panel to be called.
- ii) The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three members not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, including two Governors and an additional member who shall be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 days.
- iii) 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 five days prior to the hearing.
- iv) 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.
- v) If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- vi) 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 Head, the Chair of Governors and, where relevant, the person against whom the complaint was made. The findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chairman of Governors and the Head.
- vii) A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required of the School by part 7 paragraph 25 (k) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection under Section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, or where any other legal obligation prevails. This policy has been drawn up having regard to Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (Revised September 2010).

If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, complaints can also be directed to Ofsted on 08456 404040 or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) through Wokingham Borough Council on 0118 974 6000.

**October 2010**

## **INFORMATION FOR PUPILS**

### **Any Problems, Complaints or Suggestions?**

If so, the school would like to hear.

#### **How do I make a complaint?**

- By talking about it – or by writing it down if you find that easier.
- You can do it by yourself, or as part of a group, or through your parents.

#### **To whom?**

- To anyone on the staff.

#### **Does it matter what the issue is?**

- No, it can be a big problem or a small one. By discussing it, you may come up with some positive ideas to resolve the issue.

#### **What will happen next?**

- If possible, the staff member will deal with it in person. If not, he or she will go on your behalf to someone who can help.

#### **Do others have to know?**

- If you are worried about confidentiality, tell the staff – they will understand, and explain their response and any action which they may need to take.
- Even if you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, don't worry – it will only be discussed by staff who can help you.

#### **Where can I find further information?**

- In "What to do at Leighton Park" published each term in the school calendar.

#### **What happens if the complaint is not resolved?**

- Ask your parents to follow this up using the School's Complaints procedures.
- If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, complaints can also be directed to Ofsted on 08456 404040 or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) through Wokingham Borough Council on 0118 974 6000.