



# MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE

## Complaints Procedure

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Summer Term 2022



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## **Standard 18 - Complaints**

The College has, and follows, an appropriate policy on responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards.

This procedure addresses The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (including updates from September 2020), Part 6, paragraph 32, (3)(f) - Provision of information and Part 7, paragraph 33 - Manner in which complaints are to be handled.

### **Introduction:**

The College 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 to be treated by the College in accordance with this Procedure.

### **1. Stage 1: Informal Resolution**

- 1.1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- 1.2 If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their son's/daughter's Housemaster or Housemistress (HM). In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the HM cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department, a member of the College's Senior Management Team or the Master.
- 1.3 Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, a member of the College's Senior Management Team or the Master will usually be referred to the relevant HM unless the Head of Department, Member of the College's Management Team or the Master deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- 1.4 The HM 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 14 days, or in the event that the HM 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.

### **2. Stage 2: Formal Resolution**

- 2.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Master. The Master will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- 2.2 In most cases the Master will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 2.3 It may be necessary for the Master to carry out further investigations.
- 2.4 The Master will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

- 2.5 Once the Master is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision or conclusion will be made and parents will be informed of this decision or conclusion in writing. The Master will also give reasons for her decision or conclusion.
- 2.6 At this stage, parents should indicate either that the complaint has been resolved or investigated to their satisfaction, or, if still not satisfied with the decision or conclusion, that they wish to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.
- 2.7 Parents should indicate their response to the Master's decision or conclusion, in writing, within 7 days of receipt.

### **3. Stage 3: Panel Hearing**

- 3.1 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should do so within 7 days of receiving a Stage 2 response. They will then be referred to the Clerk to the Council (The Convenor) who has been appointed by the Council to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- 3.2 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 College. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of Council. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.
- 3.3 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 7 days prior to the hearing.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- 3.6 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 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 Master, Council and, where relevant, the person complained of. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations will also be available in the Master's Office for inspection by Council.

A written record of complaints made under the formal part of the procedure (i.e. Stages 2 and 3) will be kept, indicating whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or proceed to a Panel, and the action taken by the College as a result of the complaint (whether or not it is upheld). Such records will be retained for a minimum of seven years, or longer if there is a safeguarding angle to the complaint.

The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding academic year is two.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. That is, 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.

#### **4. Monitoring and review**

The Council will monitor the number and type of complaints received and the operation of the procedures set out in this policy. They will also review the policy at least annually to ensure it meets statutory requirements and continues to reflect best practice.

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