



Cheltenham College Complaints Procedure

In accordance with the requirements of the Children Act (1989), the school has a Complaints Procedure which is given to all pupils in the Cheltonians' Handbook which highlights the routes they can follow if they feel that they are fed up or unhappy, if they feel they are being treated unfairly, if they are being bullied, if there are problems at home, if they are being subject to physical mistreatment etc.

Parents

(For the purpose of our Complaints Policy and procedures the term parents includes guardians and the parents of prospective pupils). The College's Complaints Policy is applicable to all pupils in the School including those in the EYFS. .

A vital aspect of working in a close partnership with parents is the need to know when things are, in the view of parents, not going right. If you have any concerns about any aspect of your child's life at school, please contact an appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. The College takes all such expressions of concern seriously and follow them up courteously and promptly. In any school things can go wrong but the College wants to do all it can to sort those things out.

Two things tend to make parents and pupils reluctant to express concerns:

- A fear that the school will not see the issue to be important: please be assured, if it is important to you, it is important to the College.
- A fear that a concern or complaint may lead to repercussions for the pupil: please be assured that under no circumstances will the school discriminate against a pupil because of expressions of concern or complaints. The College is very experienced in ensuring that, if other pupils are involved (e.g. in an allegation of bullying), there are no repercussions from other quarters.

Who should you contact?

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

It is to be hoped that most concerns can be expressed and considered on an informal basis. For a minor day-to-day issue, please contact the relevant teacher, tutor or, if it is an issue to do with boarding, the housemaster or housemistress. For a more serious subject-related academic concern, the Head of Department should be contacted. For a more serious general academic concern or pastoral matter, the housemaster or housemistress. For concerns relating to boarding please contact the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the housemaster or housemistress. For concerns about the curriculum, please contact the Deputy Head (Academic) or the Curriculum Director in the Junior School. For any other pastoral or disciplinary concerns, please contact the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Deputy Head of Pastoral Care at the Junior School.

In matters regarding finance, fees and non-academic services please contact the Bursar.

The College does all it can to ensure that it responds to concerns in a highly professional manner. However, if you feel that an expression of concern has not been handled properly by a member of staff, please contact the relevant Deputy Head, or the Head of the Junior School.

The member of staff concerned makes a written record of every concern; this record includes the date on which the concern was received. The College endeavours to acknowledge a written notification by telephone, fax, e-mail or letter within five working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the School holidays. Should the matter not be resolved within a reasonable period (one not normally exceeding two term-time weeks) or in the event that the relevant staff and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised to proceed with a written complaint by writing directly to the Headmaster.

What to do if you remain dissatisfied:

Stage 2- Formal Resolution

If you remain unhappy, please contact the Headmaster. This should be in writing. You should send full written details of the nature of the complaint, any relevant documents and full contact details in an envelope addressed to the Headmaster. It would be very helpful if you could also indicate what you envisage as the desired outcome.

The Headmaster decides, after considering the complaint, upon the appropriate course of action to take and may ask to meet you for a discussion about the problem, normally within ten days of receiving the complaint. The Headmaster conducts a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations that may delay a resolution. The Headmaster may ask a senior member of staff to act as investigator and may involve one or more members of the Council. Written records are kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. 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 informed of this decision in writing (within a further 14 working days after the initial discussion). The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision. (The Headmaster of the Junior School will consult with the Headmaster of College before making his final decision)

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

If having discussed the matter with the Headmaster, you still feel dissatisfied please contact the President of Council who will convene a panel of at least two members of Council and one person independent of the management and running of the College to consider the complaint. No member of the panel may have any involvement with any matter detailed in the complaint. You can write to the President in confidence c/o the Bursar who is Secretary to Council. The Secretary to Council acknowledges requests within 5 working days. If possible, the Panel resolves a parental complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel decides how it should be carried out.

At the Panel Hearing, the complainant(s) may be accompanied by one other person e.g. a relative or friend. Legal representation is only permitted if the Chairman considers it appropriate. If it is considered appropriate, the Chairman informs the complainant(s) to that effect so that they may choose to be legally represented at the

Panel Hearing if they so wish. Should they decide to be so represented they shall inform the Chairman at least seven days before the date set for the Panel Hearing that that is their intention. If the complainant(s) chose to be legally represented the Chairman notifies the other parties of that decision to enable them to have legal representation at the Panel Hearing should they so wish.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel reaches a decision and may make recommendations, which it completes within seven days of the meeting or Hearing or as soon as reasonably practicable. The Panel writes to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within seven days of reaching this decision. The Panel's findings and any recommendations are sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, Members of Council and, where relevant, the person(s) about whom the complaint was made. The decision of the Panel is final. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints are treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Education Act, as amended, requests access to them, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Parents are always welcome to address their serious concerns on any matter to the College or Junior School Headmaster. Written records of all serious complaints and their outcomes (including at what stage they were resolved) are kept and reviewed at least annually by the Headmaster(s) and the Deputy Heads as appropriate.

Any parent is entitled to contact the ISI (details below) on any area of concern. Boarders and their parents are entitled to contact OFSTED at any time if they have concerns about welfare. All concerns and complaints relating to any boarding matters will be fully dealt with in accordance with this policy. Concerns may also be raised with the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) at the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (details also below).

The College maintains a record of all complaints for at least three years and provides OFSTED with details of any complaints during the specified period and the details of any action taken as a result of each complaint.

Contact Details

OFSTED Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Tel: 0300 123 1231

ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

Telephone: +44 (0)207 600 0100

Fax: +44 (0)207 776 8849

LADO and Education – Jane Bee: 01452 426994

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