



PUPILS' COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

When problems and difficulties occur, it is usually helpful, and can be important, to discuss them with someone suitable; if the problems are such as to justify a complaint, there ought to be a clear procedure which anyone can use when they feel the need to do so. The following guidelines are intended for use by boys in the School. Information about the Complaints Procedure for parents is given in the policies section of the School website.

How to raise a problem or make a complaint

- By talking about it or by writing it down if that is easier
- You can do it by yourself, or as part of a group, or through your parents
- Use the Whistleblower option on Firefly

To whom should the complaint be directed?

- To anyone on the staff.
- If the issue is one of safeguarding – if you feel someone is abusing you, making you feel uncomfortable, touching you or anything else that makes you uncomfortable – the Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mr Hindley. Email him – mark.hindley@abingdon.org.uk - go to B10 to find him or ring him on 07733 304715. He will always make time to listen to you, however big or small you feel the problem is, and he will be happy to listen to you, whatever time it is. His details are also in the back of every prep diary.
- Housemasters and tutors are also good people to go to and are particularly responsible for listening to those in their house and tutor group;
- other people with special roles in this connection could be the Chaplain, the School Doctor, the School Nurse, House Matrons (for boarders), the Upper Master or Middle Master, the Deputy Head (Pastoral), and the Second Master.
- If the Head is the person that you want to complain about, then you need to contact the Chair of Governors. If this is the case then ask the Second Master for the correct contact details.
- If you want to complain about a governor, then again you need to contact the Chair of Governors by writing to the Clerk to the Governors, Mr Tom Ayling. If this is the case then ask the Second Master for the correct contact details.
- If it is the Chair of Governors that you want to complain about, then you need to write to the Clerk to the Governors, Mr Tom Ayling.
- Don't forget that there is a team of School Counsellors, whom you can consult privately by appointment or by email - school.counsellor@abingdon.org.uk
- You can also use whistleblower - whistleblower@abingdon.org.uk

Does it matter what the issue is?

- No. It can be a big problem, or a small one, something which concerns the School as a whole or just you personally.

What will happen next?

- If possible, the staff member whom you approach will deal with it in person. He/she will contact you within 48 hours of the complaint.
- If it is necessary to go further, either you or the member of staff can ask for the matter to be referred to someone more senior. If the complaint is one of a safeguarding nature, the member of staff will go straight to the DSL, Mr Hindley.

- Senior people who can be approached include the Second Master, Deputy Head (Pastoral), Deputy Head (Academic).
- The senior member of staff will attend to your complaint within two days of receiving it.
- The final person you can go to is the Head.
- If the complaint goes to the Head and you still do not feel that it has been dealt with appropriately, then you will have to involve your parents. Your parents may then use the Parental Complaints Policy.

Do others have to know?

If you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, don't worry - it will only be discussed by staff who can help you.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure the school will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be enough to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

It would be useful if you think about what actions might resolve the problem at any stage.

At each point staff will try to find areas of agreement between you and the person against whom you are complaining. It is also important to clear up any misunderstandings that might have occurred in order to try to create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss issues.

Is it possible to find outside help?

- The school counsellors are contactable by email – school.counsellor@abingdon.org.uk or via their own website <http://www.phoenixcounsellingcooperative.co.uk/> and their independent contact details on 07866 581113 or phoenixcoop@yahoo.co.uk
- Available to listen to any worries is the Children's Commissioner. To contact her ring Freephone **0800 528 0731**, or use her website – www.rights4me.com.
- We also have an independent listener who is happy to listen to any concerns. Her name is **Mrs Liz Bedford** and her number is **01235 520173** or email ebedford@shsk.org.uk.
- ISI is responsible for monitoring welfare within the school, and inspects the school regularly. If you have any concerns then contact ISI on concerns@isi.net or **020 7710 9900** and they will advise.
- You can also telephone the national organisation Childline, **0800 1111**.
- Or the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000**, Text **88858** email help@nspcc.org.uk.

Deputy Head (Pastoral)

Last internal review: May 2018

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