

LONDON NAUTICAL SCHOOL

Complaints and Conciliation Policy



This policy is designed to enhance the standard of service the school provides to its parents.

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COMPLAINTS AND CONCILIATION POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The majority of parental complaints arise from misunderstandings, which can be dealt with satisfactorily through informal discussion. This policy has been introduced to manage those other occasions where matters cannot be resolved through informal discussion between parents or guardians (called 'parents') and staff.
- 1.2 Disciplining matters directly relating to exclusions of pupils by the Headmaster are normally dealt with by the Governors Pupils' Discipline (Appeals) Committee and separate procedures exist covering this. This type of complaint should be made to the Chairman of Governors by writing to the Clerk to the Governors, C/o the school. If there is any doubt, the parent(s) should always first seek redress by using this policy.

2. The Policy and The School

- 2.1 The school recognises its accountability to parents. This policy is designed to enhance the standard of service the school provides to its parents. By accepting and acting upon positive criticism, the school aims to improve its relations with parents.
- 2.2 This policy is designed not only as a means for making staff accountable but also to protect staff enabling them to confirm their professionalism through clear procedures, following a complaint.
- 2.3 In the event of a complaint involving an allegation of professional misconduct, this process will be suspended while the Headmaster investigates the allegation, advising the Chairman of Governors appropriately. Should the alleged misconduct involve the Headmaster then the Deputy Headmaster will be appointed by the Chairman of Governors to conduct the initial investigation, advising the Chairman of his findings.

3. Procedure – Stage 1

- 3.1 When faced with parental complaints every effort should be made by staff to resolve matters informally at the earliest stage.
- 3.2 Informal discussions with aggrieved parent(s) may involve class teachers, Form Tutor, Head of Department, Head of Faculty or Head of Year.

4. Procedure – Stage 2 (i)

- 4.1 If Stage 1 has proved to be unsuccessful, the next (stage 2(i)) should be initiated. This stage is for the Deputy Headmaster, in school to accept responsibility for the complaint. When the Deputy Headmaster becomes involved, s/he will advise the Headmaster of the incident. Should the complaint be directed at the Deputy Headmaster then the matter will pass immediately to Stage 2 (ii).
- 4.2 In some circumstances correspondence may suffice, but in others a meeting with the complainant may prove essential.

- 4.3 Should the complaint remain unresolved, then the matter should be referred to the Headmaster for more formal action, under Stage 2 (ii).

5. Procedure – Stage 2 (ii)

- 5.1 The complaint must be in writing and arrangements should be made, as necessary, by PA/Headmaster to assist those who have difficulty in presenting their complaint in writing.
- 5.2 The written complaint, when received, must be acknowledged by PA/Headmaster within two working days of receipt. After not longer than a further 5 working days, the Headmaster's PA should contact the parent(s) by letter, arranging a meeting on a mutually convenient date.
- 5.3 After his initial meeting with parent(s) the Headmaster will continue his investigations with all those involved. In the event of matters being more prolonged, the complainant will be advised of actions being taken and will be kept regularly informed of progress.
- 5.4 The Headmaster's formal response in conclusion will address the substance of the complaint, clarifying factual matters and either acknowledging the accuracy of the complaint, or identifying areas which are erroneous or where there have been misunderstandings. The complainant will also be given a further opportunity to discuss the matter with the Headmaster.
- 5.5 If the complaint is acknowledged as being valid, the Headmaster will indicate the action to be taken and how he will prevent similar situations occurring. If the complaint is found to lack substance, he will notify the parent(s) that the complaint is unsubstantiated. It is accepted that such a response may not be welcome and the Headmaster's arguments will be reasoned.

6. Procedure – Stage 3

- 6.1 In the event of the parent(s) still being dissatisfied, they have a right of appeal to the Chairman of Governors. Should contact be made with the Chairman, s/he will arrange for a governor to meet with the parent(s). The Clerk to the Governors will be present at this meeting and will note proceedings. The governor responsible will fully investigate the matter, and confirm with the parent(s), Chairman of Governors and Headmaster, in writing, the results of the investigation and actions recommended to be taken.
- 6.2 If the complainant is still dissatisfied after Stage 3, the matter may be referred to Lambeth Education. The parent(s) will be provided with relevant contact details by the Clerk to the Governors.