

FREWEN COLLEGE

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

This policy applies to the whole school

The Policy is available to the school staff via sharepoint

We have a whole school approach to safeguarding, which is the golden thread that runs throughout every aspect of the school. All our school policies support our approach to safeguarding (child protection). Our fundamental priority is our children and their wellbeing; this is first and foremost.

(In our school the pupils are referred to as students. Therefore the using the term 'child' or 'student' is interchangeable in this policy as is appropriate and the age range of the students at Frewen College is from 7 – 19)

Scope: All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours, including activities away from school. All new employees and volunteers are required to state that they have read, understood and will abide by this policy and its procedural documents and confirm this by signing the *Policies Register*.

Legal Status: Complies with The Education (Independent School Standards) (ISS) (England) Regulations currently in force and the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Residential Special Schools (RSS) (DfE: September 2022).

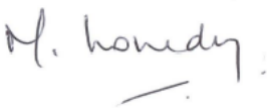
Monitoring and Review: These arrangements are subject to continuous monitoring, refinement, and audit by the Headmaster. The Board of Governors will undertake a full annual review of this document, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been implemented. This review will be formally documented in writing. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay. All staff will be informed of the updated/reviewed arrangements and it will be made available to them in writing or electronically.

Signed:

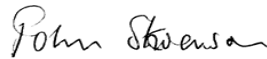
Policy Agreed: September 2024

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Next Review: September 2025



M. Loveday
Headmaster



J. Stevenson
Chair of Governors

Introduction

Frewen College prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to all of its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure. It is the aim of this procedure to resolve complaints either to the parent's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils. We aim to be open about the decisions we make and the actions we take and will always explain our rationale. Those who have complaints should feel these can be voiced and that they will be taken seriously.

A complaint is likely to arise when there are issues of physical or emotional well-being and security at stake, or when the school's stated aims or values are being ignored. A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint. At every stage of the procedure, the handling of the complaint will be swift (using the agreed time frame), fair and necessarily confidential. Throughout the process, Frewen College will be willing to: listen, learn, admit mistakes, apologise if appropriate, address any issues raised and change practices and procedures if appropriate.

The Complaints Process

At all stages in the complaints process a written record is to be kept. Notes (the minutes of meetings, written outcomes and investigation write up) will be kept by the member of staff investigating, and these notes will be stored securely by the headmaster at the end of the investigation. The notes will include the date a resolution was reached and the agreed nature of this. The parents will then be informed in writing.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution (Who should you contact?)

(References to the number of working days refer to term-time only)

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- Any person with a complaint, should normally raise it in person with the member of staff/individual concerned.
- The member of staff/individual involved will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Our ideal is that no concern should ever become a formal complaint, as through open dialogue, a resolution should always be accomplished. If the member of staff/individual cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to consult with colleagues.
- For matters on the curriculum, subject related issues or general academic concern, please contact the Deputy Headteacher or Head of School.
- For matters concerning finance, fees and non-academic services, please contact the Bursar.
- Should the matter not be resolved within seven (7) school working days, or in the event that Frewen College and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (What to do if you remain dissatisfied?)

(References to the number of working days refer to term-time only)

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing, with any relevant documents, to the Headmaster who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will either meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within seven (7) school working days of receiving the complaint at Stage 2, to discuss the matter. Ideally this would take place on the day that the complaint is received. The Headmaster will establish what has happened so far and who has been involved; clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved and what the parents feels would resolve the issue. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations that may delay a resolution. The Headmaster may ask the Deputy Head or another appropriate member of the SLT to act as investigator.
- The Headmaster will keep written records 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 the parents will be informed of this decision in writing within twenty (20) school working days of receiving the complaint at Stage 2, if possible. The Headmaster will give reasons for the decision. A written record will also be kept of when a final outcome was reached.

Stage 3 – Complaints Panel Hearing

- If the parents remain unhappy with the response from the Headmaster, they will be referred to the Chairman of Governors, who will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel.
- Parents will be asked to provide the specifics of the complaint in writing
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel within seven (7) school working days of receiving the complaint at Stage 3 for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three (3) people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The panel members are appointed by the Proprietor. The Proprietor will normally be a member of the panel. At least one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school. The Department for Education has given the following guidance on the identity of an independent panel member. *“Our general view is that people who have held a position of*

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responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, Headmasters or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered.”

- The Clerk to the Governors , on behalf of the Proprietor, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen (14) school working days of referral to the panel. A secretary will be present to take notes.
- If the Complaints 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 (5) school working days prior to the hearing.
- The complainant(s) may be accompanied to the hearing. This may be a relative or friend, or, if appropriate, a legal representative. The school should be informed in advance of the identity and role of the accompanying person.
- If possible, the Complaints Panel will resolve the parents complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Complaints Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Complaints Panel will reach a decision and may make findings and recommendations, which it shall complete normally within five (5) school working days of the Hearing.
- The Complaints Panel’s findings, and, if any recommendations and the reasons for them will be sent by electronic mail or in writing to the parents and, where relevant, the person complained about. These findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises and kept by the Proprietor and the Headmaster at least until the next full inspection. The decision of the panel will be final.
- Our school will take the Complaints Panel findings seriously and will make appropriate changes to policies, procedures and practices as a result.

Summary of Time Scales

During School Time:

- *Stage 1 Informal resolution:*
Resolved in seven (7) school working days or progress to Stage 2
- *Stage 2 Formal resolution:* Response to parents within seven (7) school working days for meeting to resolve. If still unresolved or a further investigation needed, a letter from the Headmaster will be received by the parents within twenty (20) school working days of the initial meeting.
- *Stage 3 Panel Hearing:*
Complaint sent to the Complaints Panel within seven (7) school working days. The date of the hearing is to be set normally no later than fourteen (14) school working days. Copies of the particulars of the complaint are supplied to all parties not later than five (5) school working days prior to the hearing. If possible the parent’s complaint will be resolved immediately. If further investigation is required, a decision will be sent within five (5) school working days of the hearing.

During Holiday Periods

The complaint will normally be resolved as soon as practicably possible. This will depend upon the availability of relevant personnel, who may be unavailable during holiday periods. In this case the parents will be kept informed. However, as far as possible, the meeting should not be delayed if the referral comes at the end of term, especially at the end of the Summer Term. Since the aim of the procedure is to resolve the issue and effect reconciliation if necessary, it will be best if the matter can come to the Panel as quickly as possible, especially if the parents will already have been engaged over a longer period in attempts to put things right.

Confidentiality

Parents and Guardians can be assured that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except:

- where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them where disclosure is required in the course of the school’s inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Record keeping for the Whole School

A written record of all complaints of whether they are resolved at the informal stage or following a formal procedure, or proceeding to a panel hearing, is kept by the Headmaster for a minimum of three years. We also keep a record of informal complaints. The record includes, at least: the person making the complaint, the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, any action taken and the outcome of the complaint (regardless of whether they are upheld). A written record will also be kept of when a final outcome was reached. The Headmaster/Deputy Head examine this written record on an annual basis. The number of formal complaints, received in an academic year, is made available to parents. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the last school year is available from the Headmaster upon request . The school will provide, on request to the inspecting body, a written record of all complaints made during a specified period and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint.

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Complaints from External Bodies

Complaints from the public about the behaviour of a group of pupils will be dealt with on a general basis,

Grievance, Disciplinary and Capability Procedures with reminders to all about the school's expectations

This Complaints Procedure is totally separate from any Disciplinary or Capability Procedures. Should a complaint lead to concerns on the part of the Headmaster or Proprietor about the capability or conduct of a member of staff, these would not be discussed or dealt with within this procedure. This procedure does not apply to members of staff who wish to make a complaint as this would need to follow the school's Grievance Procedure.

Parents may also make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish to. The relevant contact details are:

- Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD.
Telephone: General Helpline 03001234666 Textphone number 0161 618 8524
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk