



Complaints Procedure

Reviewed September 2017

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

At Cedar Lodge we welcome suggestions and feedback from parents related to all aspects of school life. We also ask that parents do not hesitate to contact the school should they have an issue or concern. The purpose of the School Complaints Procedure is to address concerns raised mainly by parents/guardians. The complaints procedure covers all matters relating to the actions of staff and the application of school systems, where they affect individual pupils.

Where it becomes evident at an early stage that the nature of the complaint should be dealt with according to other established procedures or appeals mechanisms this complaints procedure would be set aside in favour of the alternative procedure such as Child Protection, Special Education, Admissions, Suspensions and Expulsions, Grievance, Discipline, Harassment or Unsatisfactory Teacher Procedure.

When making a complaint the steps to be adhered to are outlined below -

Step 1 - Speaking with the Teacher concerned

Contact the school first and tell a teacher about your complaint. The majority of school-related concerns and complaints are dealt with successfully in this way. You should observe the school's existing protocols for arranging and conducting such approaches or meetings and observe the school's policy with respect to access to members of teaching staff.

If your complaint remains unresolved continue to next step

Step 2 - Speaking with the Principal

The Principal will immediately endeavour to deal effectively with your concerns but in some circumstances may require time to investigate and prepare a response. If further time is required you will be informed of the timescale and the likely date by which a response will be issued.

If you have concerns relating to the Principal, you should arrange a meeting with her to discuss the issues.

Sometimes it will not be possible for you to have your complaint resolved through the informal processes proposed above. If so, you should continue to the next step.

Step 3 – Writing to the Principal

When writing to the Principal, state the grounds for your complaint as concisely as possible, addressing specifically the issue or issues that are of immediate concern to you.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within 10 working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and will either provide a response to the issues you raised or indicate that your concerns are being investigated and when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 20 working days from the date on which your letter was received). The investigation may require you to meet the Principal and due notification will be given of such meetings. The Principal will also talk to the other relevant parties.

If your complaint is against the Principal you should proceed to the next step.

Step 4 - Writing to Chairperson of the Board of Governors

If you still believe that your complaint has not been dealt with in a satisfactory manner, or in a case where you decide to raise an issue at this level, you may write to the Chairperson of Board of Governors, including, if possible, copies of the original correspondence relating to Step 3. The Chairperson will be responsible for referring your complaint to a Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors, which will investigate and respond to your complaint. The Complaints Sub Committee will have a minimum of 3 voting members.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within 10 working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received and provides a response to the issues you raised or will indicate that your concerns are being fully investigated and when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 25 working days from the date on which your written complaint was received).

The investigation may require you to meet the Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors. Again, a mutually convenient time will be arranged. The Sub-Committee will also talk to other parties relevant to the complaint.

If the Chairperson of the Board of Governors is the subject of the complaint, you should write to the Secretary of the Board of Governors.

RECORD KEEPING

The Principal and Chairperson shall maintain a record of all correspondence, conversations and meetings concerning your complaint. These records shall be held confidentially in the school and shall be kept apart from pupil records. All records will be destroyed five years after the date of the last correspondence.

FRIVOLOUS OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

Where the Board of Governors considers the actions of a parent/group of parents to constitute a frivolous or vexatious complaint, it will seek advice from the Education Authority in order to protect staff from further such actions.

Parental Access to Staff

Request to speak with a teacher

- Teachers cannot receive telephone calls during class teaching time.
- Messages requesting contact from the teacher can be left with the school office at any time throughout the school day.
- Teachers will endeavour to respond to the request on the day it is received.

Request to meet with a teacher

- Any meeting between a teacher and parent/guardian must be arranged by contacting the Principal.

To maintain confidentiality staff will not discuss issues concerning individual pupils on Social Media or in a public area i.e. at the school entrance or foyer.