



**HAMPTON COURT HOUSE**  
Independent Co-Educational School

**School Complaints Procedure**  
2011 – 2012



## **Contents**

School Complaints Procedure .....	2
Introduction .....	2
Making a Complaint .....	2
General Principles .....	2
The Stages .....	3
Informal Stage .....	3
Formal Complaint .....	3
Appendix: Hampton Court House Complaints Form .....	4

# School Complaints Procedure

## Introduction

1. In accordance with Section 39 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Section 29 of the Children Act 2002, Hampton Court House has in place a complaints procedure in order to facilitate the resolution of complaints.
2. It is helpful if, at the outset, both parties (i.e. the complainant and the School) can be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. The School does take informal concerns seriously and concerns raised orally will often be dealt with swiftly and easily. Parents are also invited to raise concerns in writing. In such cases, the School will respond in writing within 7 days (though usually sooner).
3. The School actively seeks the input of parents and no parent should hesitate to raise a concern he or she may have about the School or the welfare of his or her child.

## Making a Complaint

4. The School's formal procedures should be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.
5. Hampton Court House has nominated Sarah Carroll (the Registrar) as the person in charge of the operation and management of the school complaints procedure.

## General Principles

6. All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. The length of the period will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled. However, the intention is that all complaints should be settled within a period that is reasonable in all the circumstances.
7. All complaints received, including those ultimately resolved at an informal stage, are recorded by Sarah Carroll, the School's nominated Complaints Officer. The outcome of the complaint shall also be recorded, together with reasons for that decision, the outcome falling into one of the following categories:
  - a. complaint resolved informally
  - b. complaint dismissed
  - c. complaint to be dealt with under another procedure
  - d. complaint upheld and the appropriate action is deemed to be one of:
    - i. counselling
    - ii. training
    - iii. general supervision
    - iv. other management action
8. Urgent complaints will be identified as such and given priority.
9. All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully and complainants will be kept informed of progress during, as well as at the end of each stage.
10. The main aim at all times will be to secure that that complaint is settled or that a decision is taken about the complaint and it can then, if required, proceed to the next stage.

## The Stages

11. The arrangements set out two levels at which a complaint could be considered. These are the informal stage and the formal complaint to the Governing Body. A complaint could be considered at both of these levels if necessary.
12. A complaint is considered to be informal unless this procedure is invoked and the complaint form in the appendix of this document.

## Informal Stage

13. Many minor complaints can be resolved quickly and informally. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straightaway through the class teacher or the Director of Studies, depending upon the nature of the complaint. This is where the procedure should start and unless there are exceptional circumstances there should always be full discussion at the informal stage.
14. If the complaint has not been resolved at the first meeting, the parent should contact the Headmaster. The complaint should be made in writing. An appointment is likely to be necessary, so that the Headmaster can give the matter his full attention. If the complaint is against the Headmaster, the Headmaster should nominate another senior person to attempt to resolve the complaint informally.

## Formal Complaint

15. If the Headmaster or other senior person cannot resolve the complaint informally, the school undertakes to deal with the complaint as follows:
  - a. formally acknowledge the complaint within 5 school working days
  - b. tell the complainant the name of the person looking into the complaint. This will generally be the Complaints Officer, unless the complaint is against the Complaints Officer, in which case the Headmaster shall appoint another person to look into the complaint
  - c. respond to it within 20 school working days, or if this is not possible
  - d. answer telling the complainant what is being done to investigate and how long it is expected to take
16. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant should contact the Chairman of the Governing Body.
17. The Chairman of the Governing Body *will initially attempt to resolve the complaint informally* and may contact the Local Education Authority for advice. If the Chairman of the Governing Body cannot resolve the complaint informally, he/she will convene a meeting of the members of the Governing Body.
18. If appropriate, someone independent of the school's management may be asked to act as an Advisory Member of the Governing Body.
19. Following the meeting of the members of the Governing Body, the complainant will be notified in writing of the Panel's response. The letter will explain further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed.
20. **The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person.** This may be a relative, teacher or friend.
21. If possible, the Governing Body will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

22. Where further investigation is required, the Governing Body will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts, the Governing Body will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within five working days.
23. The Governing Body will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Governing Body will be final. The Governing Body's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster and, where relevant, the person complained of.
24. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

