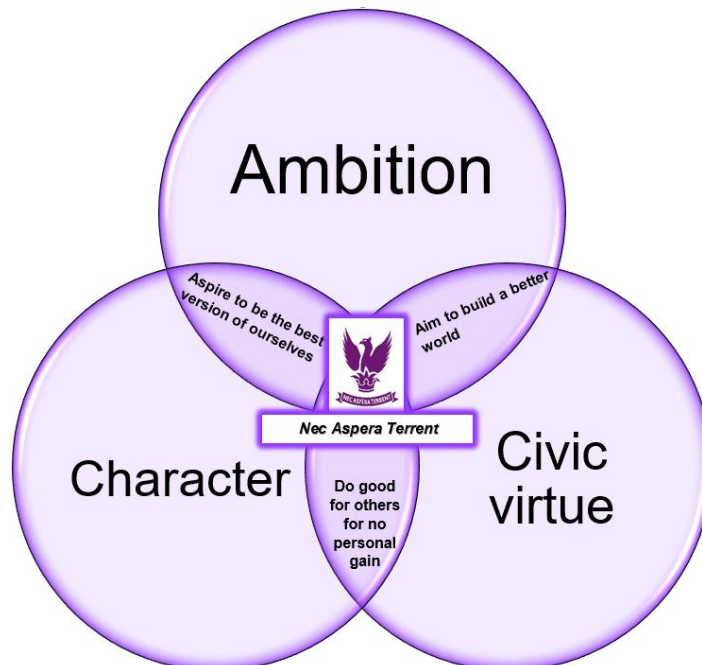




DRAYTON MANOR HIGH SCHOOL

PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE SCHOOL





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DRAYTON MANOR HIGH SCHOOL

PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE SCHOOL

MATTERS DEALT WITH

This procedure is not intended to deal with matters which are subject to separate legal procedures, such as admissions and exclusions. It is also separate from the School's disciplinary procedures for staff. Separate action will be taken as appropriate if, during the course of consideration of a complaint, it is decided that disciplinary proceedings should be initiated against staff, or that the matter is properly dealt with under different formal procedures. The School may delay the completion of the Complaints Procedure in an individual case to better deal with such proceedings, or other proceedings which relate to the subject of the complaint.

PRINCIPLES

- Concerns or enquiries should be dealt with at an informal level whenever possible. In most cases issues can be resolved with an individual member of staff.
- Formal complaints must be dealt with fairly, impartially and in a non-adversarial fashion.
- Formal complaints will normally be dealt with within the stated time limits but a thorough investigation that addresses the issues raised in the complaint may sometimes require more time.
- Complainants are encouraged to indicate what actions they feel might resolve the issue at an early stage.
- The procedure is intended to provide a practical solution to concerns and effective redress where necessary.
- The procedure is intended to provide a practical solution to specific concerns affecting a student at the school, and effectively redress where necessary. The procedure is not intended to address non student specific concerns about the school, though consideration will always be given to how best to respond to any raised which do not fall within the scope of this procedure.
- The procedure is not intended to deal with matters which have become academic by reason of changes of circumstances: for example, when the original cause for concern has passed in a way which indicates there will be no repetition and/or where no effective remedy would be possible (for example where a student has left the School). These may still be considered as part of the complaints procedure if there are issues of such significance that it would be in the interests of the student or wider School community to have them addressed through the kind of investigation contemplated by this complaints policy rather than less specific consideration by staff or governors.

OUTCOMES

In some cases it may be sufficient for the School to acknowledge that a concern or complaint is justified in whole or part. However in other cases it may be appropriate for the School to provide a remedy. Typically this would be one or more of the following, though might include others.

- an apology
- an explanation
- an acknowledgement that the situation could have been handled better
- an assurance that the situation will not recur
- an explanation of the steps taken to ensure that the situation will not recur
- an undertaking to review the school's systems, procedures or policies in light of the situation

The procedure is not generally intended to give rise to financial remedies, though exceptionally these may be appropriate when it is clear that the School's default have caused hardship.

THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage One: Informal Stage - Concern heard by a member of staff

Any concerns expressed by parents and others should be dealt with in informal discussion with teachers and/or the Head of Faculty/Department in the first instance. Parents or others can express a concern via the student diary, by telephone or in writing and staff will normally acknowledge the concern within two school days.

In some circumstances it will be appropriate for the concern to be considered by a member of staff not directly involved with the issue in question.

Resolution of the concern will normally take no more than 10 school days although this may be dependent upon the nature and complexity of the issue.

Stage Two: Formal complaint heard by the Head

If no satisfactory resolution can be reached, the complainant may then submit a formal complaint to the Head by completing the School's Complaints Form (see Appendix 2) and sending it to the School's Complaints Coordinator.

The Complaints Coordinator will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint within one school day (normally by telephone).

If in his/her view the complaint falls outside the scope of this procedure the Complaints Coordinator will advise the complainant accordingly and may indicate other recourse they may have.

The Head will normally investigate complaints within 10 school days of receipt of the complaint. If the investigation is to take longer than this, the Complaints Coordinator will notify the complainant of how much longer it is likely to take.

Urgent complaints will be considered as quickly as possible.

The Head may delegate the investigation of the complaint to an appropriate senior member of staff, who will report to the Head with their findings which the Head will consider when making his decision on the complaint.

Following the decision on the complaint by the Head, the Complaints Coordinator will inform the complainant of

- the decision the Head has reached and the reason(s) for it
- any action taken or proposed, including details of any direction to those complained against to take particular actions to resolve the complaint

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Head's response they should notify the Complaints Coordinator in writing.

This should normally be done within 15 school days of the date the Head's response was sent to the complainant. The Governors' Complaints Committee may refuse to consider a complaint provided later than this, and will have regard to the seriousness of the matter and the length and reasons for delay in deciding whether to do so.

Complaints against the Head

Where any complaint is against the Head, it should be pursued informally in the first instance by identifying very briefly in writing what the complaint is about. The Head may then decide to speak to the complainant him/herself informally, or ask a senior colleague to do so, in order to see if it can be resolved without the need for a formal complaint.

If a complaint against the Head cannot be resolved informally, the Chair of Governors, or such other governor/s as the Chair of Governors nominate, shall act in the place of the Head for the purposes of Stage 2, and may delegate any part of their investigation to a senior member of staff other than the Head.

Stage Three: Formal complaint heard by the Complaints Committee

The Complaints Coordinator will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint to the Complaints Committee within one school day (normally by telephone). As soon as practicable after that, the Complaints Coordinator will write to the complainant with details of how and when the Complaints Committee will consider the complaint.

If the complaint appears to be urgent, the Complaints Committee will meet as soon as practicable, and not normally later than 10 school days from receipt of the Stage Three complaint.

If the complaint is not urgent, the Complaints Committee will normally meet within 20 school days.

Except in very urgent cases, the complainant will be given five school days notice of the date, time and place of the meeting. Any reasonable request made by the complainant for an alternative date should result in a mutually convenient alternative date being set at the earliest possible time.

If the complainant does not wish to attend the meeting, they may present the complaint in writing to the Complaints Committee. The complainant must submit any such material to the Complaints Coordinator no later than two school days before the meeting.

The Complaints Committee hearing the complaint will be appointed by the School's governors, and will comprise three members, none of whom shall have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the running and management of the school.

At the meeting, the complainant may be accompanied by a friend or family member, though that person may only speak if the Committee agrees. The Committee may refuse the attendance of the nominated friend or family member in exceptional circumstances where it appears to prejudice the efficient and fair hearing of the complaint.

The Head or their representative should be present at the meeting and may be accompanied by another member of staff to assist, in addition to any staff the Committee decides it would like to hear from.

Where the complainant chooses to attend in person, the usual order of proceedings will be as follows

- The Chair of the Complaints Committee will welcome and introduce those present.
- The complainant may restate the complaint.
- The complainant may be asked questions by the Committee and by the Head.

- The Head or other relevant staff may address the meeting.
- The Head may be asked questions by the Committee or by the complainant
- The complainant may summarise the complaint.
- The Head, complainant and any person accompanying them will be asked to leave and the Committee will consider its decision.

The time allocated to the hearing will depend on the complexity of the issues, but a hearing will rarely last less than one hour or more than two hours, in addition to any breaks taken.

Outcome of Stage Three

The Complaints Committee will

- state whether they uphold or reject the complaint, either in whole or part, with a brief summary of their reasons
- decide on appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.

The summary of reasons given by the Complaints Committee is not required to deal with every disputed issue, provided that the reason for upholding/rejecting the complaint are clear.

The Complaints Committee may in addition

- make recommendations to change the school's systems, procedures or policies to ensure that similar problems do not recur.
- decide to investigate the complaint further.

The Complaints Coordinator will inform the complainant and the Head in writing within five school days of the decision reached by the Complaints Committee and the reasons, including details of any action to be taken to resolve the complaint.

If the Committee decides that the complaint falls outside the scope of this process, the Complaints Coordinator may inform the complainant of any further recourse they may have.

If the Committee decides further investigation is required, the Complaints Coordinator will inform the complainant of the steps to be taken and of the progress made. Any subsequent meeting of the Complaints Committee will be subject to the provisions described above in so far as they are relevant.

A copy of the findings and recommendations should be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.

VEXATIOUS AND MALICIOUS COMPLAINTS

If it appears to the Head at Stage Two, or the Chair of the Complaints Committee or the Chair of Governors at Stage Three, that a complaint:

- raises matters which have already exhausted the procedure; or
- is academic; or
- is frivolous by reason of raising no issue that could possibly significantly affect the welfare or education of a student(s) or student(s) family
- or is malicious in nature, containing knowingly false or defamatory allegations, or seeking to intimidate or cause reputational harm*

they may inform the complainant of this, and the complaint will be closed.

*In rare instances, the school recognises that complaints may be made with **malicious intent**, including:

- discriminatory, inflammatory, or defamatory content
- use of complaint processes to harass or intimidate staff or students
- deliberate fabrication or falsehoods
- repetitive or obsessive complaints lacking substantive merit
- attempts to publicly discredit the school or individuals without evidence

The complainant may ask that a decision of the Chair of the Complaints Committee or the Chair of Governors to this effect be reviewed by the full Complaints Committee who may close the complaint without further considering its substance if they agree with the earlier decision.

If it appears to the Head at Stage Two, or the Complaints Committee, or its Chair or the Chair of Governors, at Stage Three, that lack of cooperation from the complainant, or anybody on whose behalf the complaint is brought, prejudices the efficient and fair operation of the procedure they may inform the complainant of this and the complaint will be closed.

The complainant may ask that a decision of the Chair of the Complaints Committee or the Chair of Governors to this effect be reviewed by the full Complaints Committee who may close the complaint without further considering its substance if they agree with the earlier decision.

The school recognises its wider responsibilities under safeguarding and employment law. The Headteacher and Governing Body have a duty to protect the wellbeing, dignity and safety of students and staff. Where the nature or conduct of a complaint compromises this duty, including through intimidation, harassment, or reputational harm, the school may take appropriate action to prevent further impact, which may include restricting engagement with the complainant or escalating the matter to external authorities.

Where such behaviour is identified, the school reserves the right to:

- dismiss the complaint without further investigation
- limit or restrict communication with the complainant
- deny access to staff or school premises
- take appropriate legal or safeguarding action

The complainant will be informed in writing of any such decision and may request a review by the full Complaints Committee. Where necessary, the school may also report malicious complaints to relevant external authorities (e.g. Local Authority, Police, LADO, DfE).

RECORDING, REPORTING AND REVIEWING COMPLAINTS

The Complaints Coordinator will be responsible for keeping a written record of all formal complaints and whether they are resolved at or before a panel hearing.

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 or like provisions requests access to them.

The level and nature of complaints will be reported termly to the governing body via the Curriculum and Student Welfare Committee. The Curriculum and Student Welfare Committee will also review the outcomes of complaints to ensure the effectiveness of the procedures and make changes where necessary.

Any reports to the Curriculum and Student Welfare Committee or returns that the governing body may be required to make to any authority showing the number of complaints dealt with and their outcome will not identify individual complainants.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions about these procedures for dealing with complaints, please contact the Complaints Coordinator at the school.



DRAYTON MANOR HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOL COMPLAINTS FORM

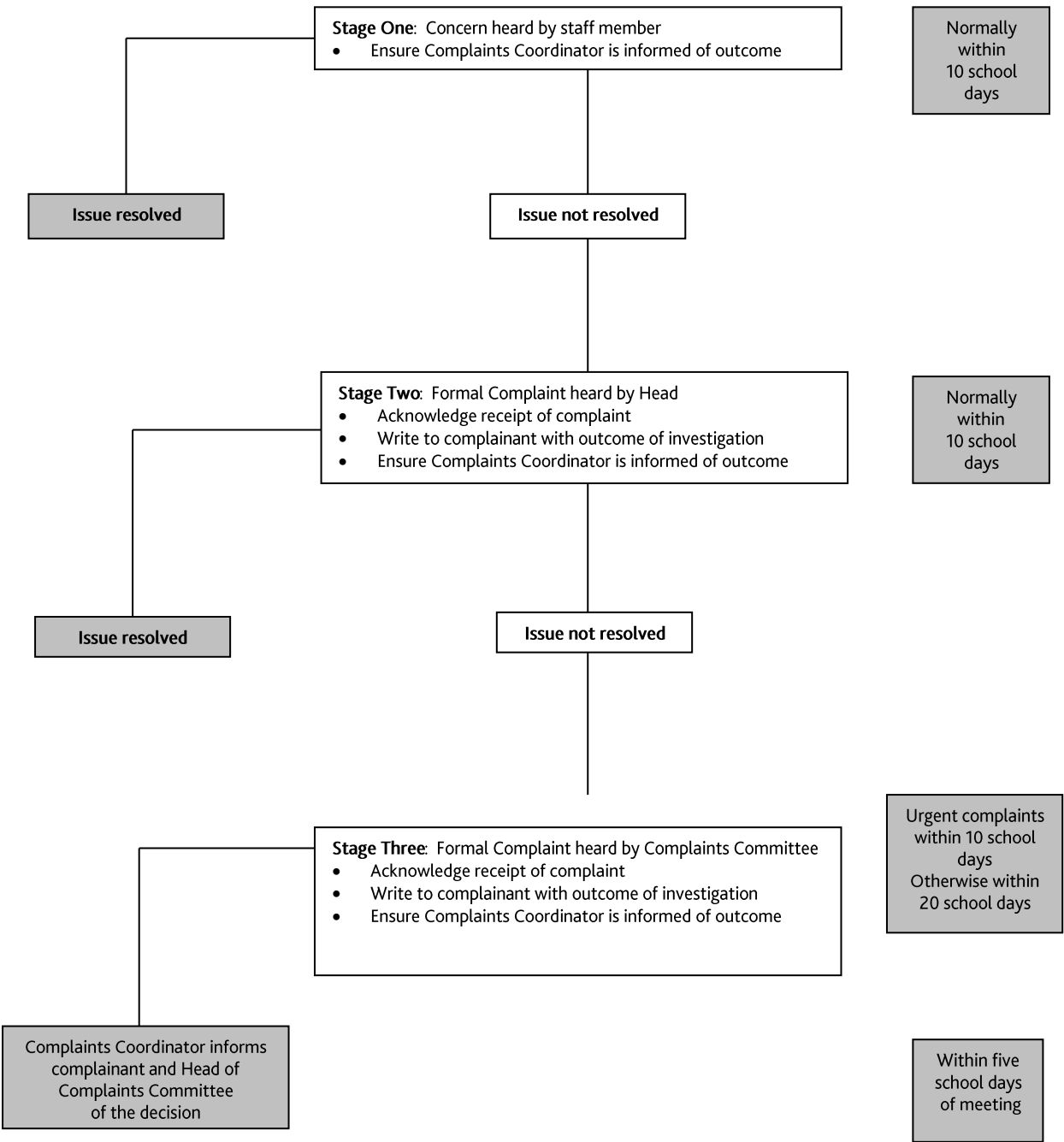
Please complete and return to the school's Complaints Coordinator who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken

Name
Student's name
Relationship to student
Address
Postcode
Day time telephone number
Evening telephone number
Please give details of your complaint
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (who did you speak to and what was the response?)
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details
Signature Date
<u>Official use</u> Date acknowledgement sent By Complaint referred for investigation to Date Agreed response date

PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE SCHOOL
FLOWCHART

TIMESCALE





DRAYTON MANOR HIGH SCHOOL

EXAMINATIONS APPEALS PROCEDURES

Appeals against internal assessment of work for external qualifications

Drayton Manor High School is committed to ensuring that whenever its members of staff assess students' work for external qualification; this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned. Assessments should be conducted by members of staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and who have been trained in this activity. Students' work should be produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the examinations board. Where a set of work is divided between staff, consistency should be assured by internal moderation and standardisation.

If a student feels that this may not have happened in relation to his/her work, s/he may make use of this appeals procedure. Note that appeals may only be made against the process that led to the assessment and not against the mark or grade.

This procedure is publicised to students in assemblies prior to examination series where it is applicable.

This procedure is available from Student Reception, and is posted on the student notice board.

- Appeals should be made as soon as possible, and must be made at least two weeks before the end of the last externally assessed paper in the examinations series. (So the appeal must be made before a date in mid-June for the summer series as presently timetabled.)
- Appeals should be made in writing to the Examinations Officer, who will investigate the appeal. If the Examinations Officer was directly involved in the assessment process of the piece in question (or is unable to conduct the investigation for some other reason), the Head will appoint another member of staff of similar or greater seniority to conduct the investigation.
- The Examinations Officer or other member of staff appointed by the Head will decide whether the process used for the internal assessment conformed to the requirements of the awarding body and the examinations code of practice of the QCA. This will be done before the end of the relevant exam series (Currently the end of June for the summer exam series).
- You will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any correspondence with the board, any changes made to the assessment of your work, and any changes made to improve matters in future.
- The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the Head and will be logged as a complaint under the complaints procedure. A written record of the appeal will be kept and made

available to the awarding body at their request. Should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding body will be informed.

After work has been assessed internally it is moderated by the awarding body (examinations board) to ensure consistency between centres. Such moderation frequently changes the marks awarded for internally assessed work. That is outside the control of the school and is not covered by this procedure. If you have concerns about it, please ask for a copy of the appeals procedure of the relevant examinations board.