

# **CLIFTON COLLEGE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (BUTCOMBE)**

## **Introduction**

Clifton College has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the College in accordance with the procedure detailed below. Criticism of professional or personal behaviour is an extremely sensitive matter which needs to be handled with discretion. Nevertheless, the College will regard any such allegation as extremely serious.

## **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Class Teacher. In the majority of cases it is anticipated that the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult others including a Head of Year or, exceptionally, the Head. In some instances, it may be appropriate for parents to raise their concerns directly with the Head.
- In every instance, a written record will be made of all concerns and complaints, together with the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 14 days or in the event that the Class Teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents are advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

## **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged and the Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- Almost invariably the Head will wish to speak with, and preferably meet, the parents concerned, normally within 14 days, if it is in term time, of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to investigate further.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they should write to the Secretary to Council outlining their complaint and the redress sought. The Secretary to Council will refer the matter to the Chairman of Council who has the authority to appoint and convene the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of Council. The Secretary to Council, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a Hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 30 days.
- If the 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 3 days prior to the Hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the Hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. Parents are required to notify, 24 hours before the Hearing, the Secretary to Council of the details of the person accompanying them to the Hearing.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need to investigate further.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all relevant facts, the Panel will reach a decision within 7 days of the ending of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the associated reasons. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the Parents, the Head, the Council and, where relevant, the person against whom the complaint has been made.

Records of complaints will be kept for a period of three years. The record will state whether the complaint was resolved at the preliminary stage or if it proceeded to a panel hearing. 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. The above procedure is intended to produce a resolution that everyone can accept.

**Complaints to the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools  
and the Independent Schools Inspectorate**

(taken from IAPS website <http://www.iaps.org.uk>)

IAPS is proud of the quality of its schools and takes any complaints about them seriously. If you have a concern about an IAPS school, you should in the first instance look to the school's procedures for dealing with complaints. A school's complaints procedure should be made available to parents either via the website or on request. The policy will set out the process for making a complaint. Initially the policy should allow for a complaint to be made and considered on an informal basis, for example by taking it up with the class teacher, an appropriate member of the senior management team or the head. If this does not resolve the issue, then the procedure should provide for making a formal written complaint and, if this fails to produce a satisfactory outcome, a hearing before a panel. The policy should set out clear times for the management of the complaint.

If you feel that your complaint has not been adequately addressed, you can write to David Hanson, Chief Executive of IAPS at 11 Waterloo Place, Leamington Spa CV32 5LA. The Chief Executive will take the matter up with the school. You can also raise concerns by writing to Ofsted at Ofsted, Royal Exchange Building, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA.

You can also raise concerns by writing to the Independent Schools Inspectorate, which is responsible for the inspection of IAPS schools. If you wished to take this step, you can contact them at ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA, or to [info@isi.net](mailto:info@isi.net). However, ISI cannot become involved in individual cases, or investigate disputes about fees or complaints about pupils no longer at the school. Concerns may be copied by ISI to the Department for Education (DfE). Depending on the nature of the complaint, DfE may instruct ISI to visit the school.

You can also contact the DfE directly as the authority responsible for the registration of independent schools. You should write to Georgina Carney, DfE, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3 9BG (telephone 01325 735568, e-mail [eorgina.Carney@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:eorgina.Carney@education.gsi.gov.uk)).

If the concerns relate to bullying or possible child abuse, then in addition to ISI and/or DfE, parents can contact the child protection unit of the Local Authority Social Services Department .

**There have been no formal complaints in Butcombe over the last year.**

*WEB 02/11*