

The Governing Body of Denstone College understands its regulatory responsibilities and will maintain an effective oversight of this policy, by evaluating its effectiveness, and reviewing and implementing change.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The College has a long history of providing its pupils with high quality teaching and pastoral care. However, if parents do have a complaint they can expect it to be dealt with in accordance with this procedure. This procedure is made available on the college website as well as by request at the College.

Stage One – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should contact their son or daughter's Tutor (for academic issues), and for other issues, his or her Head of School/Moss Moor (boarding pupils) or Head of House (day pupils). In many cases, the matter will be immediately resolved by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Tutor, Head of School/Moss Moor or Head of House cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Second Master and/or the Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Second Master or the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff unless the Second Master or Headmaster deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
- The Tutor, Head of School/Moss Moor, or Head of House will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received.
- Should the matter not be resolved within 2 weeks, or in the event that the Tutor, Head of School/Moss Moor or Head of House and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage Two of this Procedure.

Stage Two – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 days of receiving the complaint during term time, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- 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 parents will be informed of this decision in writing within 21 days. The Headmaster will give reasons for his decisions.
- Appeals process: If parents are still not satisfied with the decision they should proceed to Stage Three of this procedure.

Stage Three – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage Three following failure to reach an earlier resolution they will be referred to the Chairman of Governors of the College.

- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Suitable panel members would likely be people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinizing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments. Examples of persons likely to be considered would be serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the School Council. The Chairman of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as possible and normally within 21 days.
- The College should provide the Panel with clear terms of reference as regards the complaint.
- 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 7 days prior to the Hearing.
- The parent(s) may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person, for example a relative, or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate and parents are not entitled to insist on this. Should the parent decide not to attend the hearing, the panel should still consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion. This requirement to proceed does not prevent the College from accommodating parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning the composition of the panel.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 21 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. 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 Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person who is the subject of the complaint. The Panel's findings will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Governors and the Headmaster.

A written record of all informal and formal complaints that are made will be kept by the College. This will include a record of the resolution (whether at Stage Two or if it progresses to Stage Three Panel Hearing), it will include whether the complaint was related to boarding provision and it will include the action taken by the College regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. 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 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act (Education and Skills Act 2008) requests access to them, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Parents and pupils may also contact the following with a complaint (these are also listed in student planners):

Pupils' Welfare Issues: Julie Astall 01785 278958 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Complaints Procedures

In order to ensure that the Complaints procedures are effective, efforts are taken to identify any patterns or trends in the causes of complaints. As such the complaints file kept in the HM Office is reviewed by the Second Master twice per term.

Number of formal complaints (Stage 2) received in the preceding academic year:
 2017/18: 0 (of which relating to boarding: 0)