

## Lyndon School Humanities College

### COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy is based on the latest SMBC Model Complaints Policy and should be used in conjunction with:

- The DfES Guidance (School Complaints Procedure 22.5.03)
- Lyndon School Schools Home School Agreement (Appendix C)

#### **Introduction:**

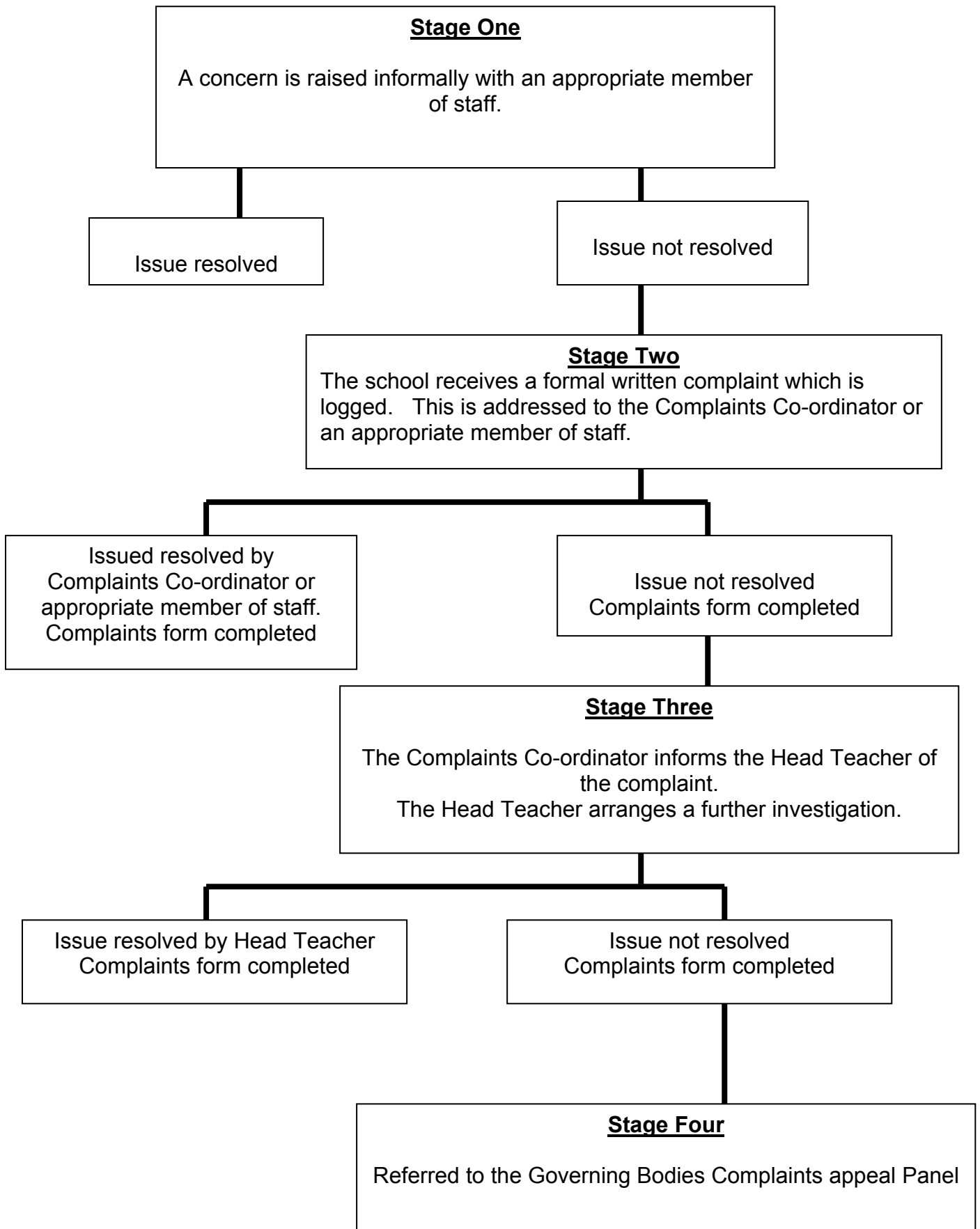
---

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community, or students, are concerns rather than complaints. Lyndon School is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without recourse to formal procedures. However, in those instances where a complainant does not feel a concern has been addressed, or it is of sufficient gravity, then the school's formal complaints procedure should be used. For the school to be able to investigate a complaint it needs to be made within one year of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year it will not be investigated.

The prime aim of Lyndon School's policy is to:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- Be easily accessible and publicised
- Be simple to understand and use
- Be impartial
- Deal with all issues sensitively
- Be non-adversarial
- Allow swift handling, within established time-limits, for action and keeping all parties informed
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respect the confidentiality of all concerned
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress
- Recognise malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school
- Provide information to the schools Leadership Team and Governing Body so that services can be improved.

**The Lyndon School Policy has four main stages.**



**Investigating a complaint – at any stage, the member of staff should make sure that they:**

- Establish WHAT has happened so far, and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary)
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- Keep notes of all interviews

**At any stage of the procedure it should be noted that a complaint may be resolved in a number of ways, including:**

- Acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part
- Offering an apology
- Offering an explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently and that this is not an admission of negligence
- An assurance that wherever possible the event / incident will not occur again
- An undertaking to review school policies and procedures in the light of the complaint
- Encouraging the complainant to suggest what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage
- Clarifying areas of misunderstanding in order to create a positive atmosphere in which to resolve the situation

## **Stage One – Raising a concern**

---

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. Apart from the school's normal Parental Consultation Evenings, or other arranged meetings with specific staff, the school requests that parents make their first contact with their child's Tutor, Pastoral Manager or Assistant Head Teacher. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case there will be an informal but informed response within a few days. It is anticipated that the vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way.

However if you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage One, please write to the school within ten school working days and state what you would like the school to do. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

It may be that the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with a complaint and may feel it fairer for all concerned if the matter is referred directly to Stage Two.

The member of staff should complete A "Record of Telephone Conversation / Meeting" form (see Appendix B) to record a concern has been raised, discussions have taken place and any action agreed. This should be filed in the student file.

## **Stage Two – Making a formal complaint which is heard by the complaints co-ordinator or by an appropriate staff member.**

---

Formal complaints should be put in writing and sent to the School, addressed to the Head Teacher or Complaints Co-ordinator. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received on a complaints form (see Appendix A) The School will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two working days of receiving it. Wherever possible this response will also report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting (or telephone call) may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within ten school working days of the receipt of the formal complaint.

If, on the other hand, it is felt that the matter is too serious to be dealt with at this stage, then the matter will be passed directly to the Head Teacher (see Stage Three below).

The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible, allowing for all the facts to be considered carefully. However, if you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage Two please write to or call the school within ten school working days of receiving your response. You will need to tell the school why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do.

### **Stage Three – Further Investigation, complaint heard by Head Teacher**

---

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage Two, or it is felt that the matter is too serious to be dealt with at Stage Two, the Head Teacher, (or in her absence a Deputy Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher), will undertake a further investigation. Following the investigation, the school will normally give a written response within ten school working days of the receipt of the complaint. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage Three, you will need to let the school know within ten school working days of getting the response.

### **Stage Four – complaint heard by the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel**

---

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage Three, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors, c/o Lyndon School, giving details of the complaint, within ten school working days after receiving the response at Stage Three. The Clerk to the Governors will convene a complaints panel. The Governors' Complaints Panel is the last school-based stage of the complaints process, and is not convened to merely rubber stamp decisions. The hearing will normally take place within ten school working days of the receipt of the written request for Stage Four investigation.

The aim of the Complaints Appeal Panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within three school working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further.

*Governors should note that when the FIRST approach is made to a governor, the next step would be to refer the complainant to the appropriate member of staff and advise them of the procedure. It would be useful if governors did not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stage in case they are needed to sit on the panel at a later stage of the procedure.*

*\* **N.B.** In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Head Teacher, both the Governing Body and the Head Teacher will be informed of the complaint and the Governors will arrange for the matter to be further investigated. The school will normally give a response within ten school working days.*

For further advice and guidance about the school's Complaints Procedure, please contact Solihull Council's Schools' Information Officer on 0121 704 8536.

Solihull Council adopts a complaint procedure that can be obtained from the Complaints Manager, Customer Feedback, (tel. 0121 704 6761). In respect of school complaints, the Council will consider a complaint when the school procedure, as set out in their policy, has been fully exhausted.

Attached:

Appendix A Compliant Record form

Appendix B Telephone Conversation sheet

Appendix C Home School Partnership Agreement