

CONCORD COLLEGE
Summer School

Complaints Policy

Procedure - Parents

The 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 investigated and treated with appropriate seriousness by the College in accordance with this procedure.

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 an appropriate senior member of staff such as the Director of Studies, Assistant Directors or the Summer School Director. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the senior member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to investigate further and consult with other senior colleagues - such as the Summer School Director. If a parent wishes to make a complaint about a Senior Teacher, then the Summer School Director should be contacted since they will handle complaints about Senior Teachers herself.

- The member of staff receiving the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. All staff dealing with complaints will make sure that the Director's Office receives a record of any concerns raised by students so that these can be recorded.

Should the matter not be resolved within 10 days, or if the designated member of staff dealing with the complaint and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.

- It should be noted that complaints at this stage can be in writing and that a written complaint does not automatically constitute a formal complaint. An informal complaint can take the form of an email or letter, phone call or face-to-face conversation.

During an investigation of an informal complaint, the following procedure should normally be followed:

1. The complainant should be given an opportunity to put their concern to the appropriate member of Senior Management. Although this may initially be in writing, a face-to-face conversation or phone call should always take place.
2. The complainant (especially if it is a student) should be able to bring a friend to any discussion.
3. The member of staff dealing with the concern should undertake appropriate investigations and should consider whether support mechanisms are required for both the complainant and the focus of the complaint while the investigation is under way.

4. Once a conclusion has been reached, the member of Senior Management should make sure the complainant is clear what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed.
5. This stage should be completed speedily and concluded in writing with appropriate detail.
6. Where no satisfactory solution has been found, the complainant should be informed that s/he will need to consider whether to make a formal complaint in writing to the Summer School Director. To assist in this process a complaint form should be provided (& an example can be found in handbook doc. 11.7).

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 Summer School Director. The Summer School Director will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Summer School Director will meet with or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 10 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Summer School Director to carry out further investigations.

The Summer School Director will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Summer School Director 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 Summer School Director will also give reasons for his decision.

During an investigation of a formal complaint, the following procedure should normally be followed:

1. The Summer School Director should acknowledge the complaint in writing.
2. The Summer School Director should consider providing an opportunity to meet with the complainant to supplement any information previously provided.
3. If the complaint is against a member of staff, the Summer School Director should talk to the staff member against whom the complaint has been made.
4. If necessary, the Summer School Director should interview witnesses and take statements from those involved.
5. The Summer School Director should keep reasonable written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.
6. Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Summer School Director should produce a written response to the complainant. The Summer School Director may wish to meet the complainant to discuss/resolve the matter before confirming the outcome in writing.
7. The written response should include a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, it should include what action the school will take to resolve the complaint. Stage 1-7 should be completed in 15 school days (term time). However, it is recognised that where the case is complex it may prove difficult to meet this timetable. In such cases, the Summer School Director should write to the complainant giving a revised target date. (When complaints are made during holiday periods, they will be dealt with as quickly as possible. However, some complaints might require investigations to be conducted in order to address issues raised. This could mean that

a full response is not made until an additional period of 10 school days [term time] have elapsed after the conclusion of the holiday in question.)

8. The formal stage response should also advise the complainant that if s/he is not satisfied with the response and wishes to take the matter further, s/he should write to the Chair of Trustees within 15 school days of receiving the outcome letter. The outcome letter should set out the name of the Chair of Trustees and the address to which the complainant can send the letter.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, who has been appointed by the Trustees to call hearings of 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 the Board of Trustees. The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 20 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 5 days prior to the hearing.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher, friend or representative.

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 10 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, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Course Director, the Trustees and, where relevant, the person complained of.

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)(k) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2002; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Procedure – Students

Policy

The opinions of students are highly valued at Concord College. Their views are sought and offered on a wide range of issues. There are times when they may feel that they wish to make a complaint about an individual aspect of College life, a member of staff or another student. Such complaints will be taken seriously. The following principles apply to any student making a complaint:

- Student views will be taken seriously and students should feel that they are able to make a complaint without fear of any reprisal.
- Students have the right to group together to make a complaint.
- The student may be accompanied to any meeting regarding their complaint

Students can raise concerns with members of staff, such as their Teacher, Boarding Parent, Director of Studies or Safeguarding Manager.

In addition, students can make a complaint in the following manner:

Informally

Most complaints can be raised informally with a Boarding Parent, Teacher, Assistant Director of Studies, Assistant Director or Summer School Director. Students should expect any complaint that they make to be taken seriously and given due consideration. Any member of staff approached with such a complaint should endeavour to resolve the difficulty and feed-back to the student concerned within a reasonable time. It is hoped that most, if not all complaints can be dealt with in this way.

All complaints will be recorded and staff dealing with complaints will make sure that the Summer School Director's office receives a record of any concerns raised by students and that the Safeguarding Manager is also informed.

If a student wishes to make a complaint about a Teacher, then the student should be referred to the Director of Studies since they will handle complaints about Teachers.

Formally

If the issue is of a very serious nature or if the student feels that an informal complaint has not resolved the issue to their satisfaction, then a formal complaint should normally be made to the Director of Studies or Assistant Director. It might well be that the Summer School Director will also become involved in handling the complaint.

This formal complaint can be made in person or in writing or by completing the [online Complaints Form](#). The Summer School Director, or another Senior Teacher, will then investigate the matter fully, gathering evidence from appropriate sources and keeping a full written record, before coming to a judgement and putting into place any necessary remedial action. The student making the complaint will be informed of the judgement. Once again, every effort will be made to deal with any issue raised in this way within a reasonable time.

Appeals Procedure

If the above procedure has been followed and the student feels that their complaint has not been dealt with effectively, they may then choose to ask their parents to make a complaint following the parent's procedure. Within this procedure, parents have the right to appeal to the Trustees against any decision made by the Summer School Director.

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the College will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the informal stage or proceed to a panel hearing. At the College's discretion additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- **Date when the issue was raised.**
- **Name of parent.**
- **Name of student.**
- **Description of the issue.**
- **Records of all the investigations (if appropriate).**
- **Witness statements (if appropriate).**
- **Name of member of staff handling the issue at each stage.**
- **Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations).**

Adapted from Concord College Main Term Policy Section 11.5 & 11.5.1

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