



**SLINDON
COLLEGE**

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Last review:	January 2026
Next review:	September 2026
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Slindon 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 with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. Slindon College makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the website and on request from the Front Office during the school day. Slindon College will ensure that parents/carers of all pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available, and of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014, Slindon College will also make available, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Boarding complaints are dealt with under this procedure and will be identified separately from other complaints.

Although this Procedure is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them; it may only be used by parents/carers of current pupils.

Complaints by parents/carers of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the College. The only exception to this is if the complaint is a review of a decision taken by the Headteacher to exclude or require the removal of a pupil under Clause 7 of the Parent Contract Terms and Conditions in which case such a review must be requested by no later than five working days from the date of the decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil.

The College will be mindful of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in the application of this policy.

Although the College endeavours to manage complaints in an open and transparent manner, parents/carers should be aware that there may be circumstances which mean the College is unable to share complete details about how a complaint has been handled by the College, the evidence collated, steps taken in response or other related matters. This could be the case even when a complaint is upheld. For example, this may be because such information constitutes sensitive third-party data (for example belonging to a staff member, pupil or other parent/carer), legal or regulatory requirements prohibit disclosure, or withholding information is in accordance with specific instructions from a statutory agency. This list is not exhaustive

“Parent(s)/carer(s)” means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a current pupil about whom the complaint relates.

What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the College as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the College is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent/carer believes that the College has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them. There may also be other circumstances in which the College is required to share information relating to a concern or a complaint in order to comply with its legal or regulatory obligations.

The College is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.

The College is committed to continuous improvement and views complaints as valuable feedback. Each concern is considered not only on its own merits but also as an opportunity to identify underlying issues and implement measures to prevent similar situations in the future.

The Three-Stage Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents/carers have a complaint they should normally contact (via telephone, email, Portal or in person) their child's Head of House. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents'/carers' satisfaction. If the Head of House cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for them to consult the Deputy Head. An informal complaint will be concluded within 10 working days.
- Complaints made directly to the Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant Head of House or Deputy Head unless the Headteacher deem it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Head of House will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. In the event that the Head of House and the parent/carer fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents/carers will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Complaints Procedure.
- If, however, the complaint is against the Headteacher, parents/carers should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors who can be contacted via the Clerk to the Governors clerk@slindoncollege.co.uk.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents/carers should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher using the appended Complaint Form to proceed to Stage 2. The Headteacher may

require further information from the parents to help clarify the scope and nature of their concerns. The Headteacher may in some circumstances deem it appropriate to nominate a staff member to hear the complaint and manage the Stage 2 complaint process. The Headteacher (or their nominee) will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Headteacher (or their nominee) will speak to the parents/carers concerned, **within 10 working 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 Headteacher, or their nominee, to carry out further investigations. The Headteacher (or their nominee) will determine who should carry out any investigation and this may be someone external to the College.

- **Written records** will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headteacher (or their nominee) is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents/carers will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headteacher (or their nominee) will also give reasons for the decision. In most cases, the Headteacher will make the decision and provide the parents /carers with reasons within 20 working days of the complaint being put in writing (or following the provision of any further clarificatory information about the complaint to the Headteacher, if so requested).
- If the complaint is against the Headteacher, the complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors who can be contacted via the Clerk to the Governors in writing at the College address or by email clerk@slindoncollege.co.uk.
- The Chair of Governors will nominate someone to determine the complaint. The Stage 2 process described above will then be followed as if the references to the Headteacher (or their nominee) is to the individual nominated by the Chair of Governors to determine the complaint against the Headteacher.
- If parents/carers are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents/carers seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they should do so in writing to the Vice Chair via the Clerk to the Governors in writing at the College address or by email clerk@slindoncollege.co.uk within 5 days of receiving the decision at Stage 2, setting out their grounds of appeal. Any supporting evidence which the parents/carers wish to rely on should also be provided with their grounds of appeal. To the extent the parents are unable to provide their complaint within the time period stipulated due to extenuating circumstances which have impeded the parents from taking action, the parents should request an extension in writing. Such a request should be made to the convenor to the Panel in advance of the original deadline, setting out the further time period requested and the reason for this. This will be considered. In the event the parents are unable to provide their complaint within the time period stipulated (including to the extent applicable any extensions if agreed) the

College reserves the right to conclude the complaint process and not progress the matter to Stage 3.

- **The Vice Chair via the Clerk to the Governors in writing at the College address or by email clerk@slindoncollege.co.uk, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel, will then refer the appeal to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the College.** The convenor to the Panel will appoint one of the Panel members to act as the Chair of the Panel. The convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint **within 5 working days** and schedule a hearing to take place **within 20 working days**.
- If the Panel or the convenor to 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 or further investigation be carried out. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties **not later than 5 working days** prior to the hearing.
- **The parents/carers may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish.**
- The Stage 2 decision-taker shall also be entitled to be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not be appropriate and the companion should not be a lawyer or an ex employee. The identity of the companions should be confirmed to the convenor to the Panel as soon as possible and by no later than 2 working days before the hearing. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.
- A note-taker will attend the hearing to take a note. This will not be a verbatim note but an accurate reflection of what was discussed. Notes of the hearing will be shared with attendees as soon as practicable after the hearing. To the extent there is any disagreement about the content of those notes or further comments from the parties, these will be considered by and, where possible, resolved by the Chair. A copy of any comments on the notes will be appended to the notes.
- The remit of the Panel shall be at the discretion of the Chair of Governors and the manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents'/carers' complaint 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 the merits of the complaint and all facts they consider relevant, **the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and decide whether to:**
 - dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part;
 - uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and
 - make recommendations for the College to consider
 - Stage 3 Panels cannot require that any financial compensation is paid to parents/carers or otherwise obligate the College to take particular steps.

- The Panel will write to the parents/carers informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, **within 5 working days of the hearing** (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents/carers, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Stage 2 decision-taker. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the College premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.
- Any complaint of a decision taken by the Headteacher to exclude or require the removal of the pupil under clause 7 of the Parent Contract Terms and Conditions will be governed by this Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure. There may be circumstances in which the College consider it necessary and appropriate to deviate from the Stage 3 procedure in the context of appeals for exclusion and required removal, and the College will inform the parents of this. In such circumstances, the Panel may only uphold the complaint and ask the Stage 2 decision-taker to reconsider their decision if they consider, having regard to the process followed by the Headteacher, that the Headteacher's decision to exclude/require the removal of the pupil was not a reasonable decision for the Headteacher to have taken.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously, sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the College's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure **within 30 working days**. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed **within a further 30 working days**.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, **working days** refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays and half term. This means that during school holidays it may take longer to resolve a complaint although the College will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid undue delay. It may also take longer to resolve a complaint during periods of significant disruption to College life or as a consequence of unavoidable staff absence, however deviation from the normal timescale for resolving a complaint during term time will only occur on an exceptional basis, and the College will take all reasonable steps to limit any such delay. The College expects parents to engage in the process in a reasonable, constructive and responsive manner to help ensure matters can be dealt with in a timely way and in line with the targets set out in this Procedure.

Persistent Correspondence

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this may be regarded by the College as vexatious and outside the scope of this procedure.

Recording Complaints and use of Personal Data

Following resolution of a complaint, the College will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at the formal stage (Stage 2) or proceed to a Panel hearing (Stage 3) and any action taken by the College as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

The College processes data in accordance with its [Privacy Notice](#). When dealing with complaints the College (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

- Any completed Complaint Form
- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name and contact details of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Notes/minutes of the hearing, and
- The Panel's written decision

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the Data Protection Policy, but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.

The College will keep confidential records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Data Protection Policy and Retention of Records Policy. All records relating to complaints shall be treated as confidential. In addition to where requested by the Secretary of State or an inspector (see above), there may be other circumstances where disclosure of the substance of a complaint or particular confidential records relating to it is required, for example, where there is a legal, regulatory, safeguarding or data protection obligation (eg, in response to a subject access request) which prevails over the requirement to maintain the records as confidential.

For the academic year 2024-2025 the College received one formal complaint.

Slindon College will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept in accordance with its Privacy Notice and Retention of Records Policy.

OFSTED Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD	TEL: 0300 123 4666 (Monday to Friday from 8am to 5pm) EMAIL: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Independent Schools Inspectorate ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA	TEL: 0207 600 0100 EMAIL: concerns@isi.net

Appendix 1: Complaint Form

Please read the College's Complaints Procedure before completing this form. It provides information on when and how this form should be completed.

To be completed by those with parental responsibility¹ for a current pupil and returned to the Headteacher via head@slindoncollege.co.uk or, if the complaint is against the Headteacher, to the Chair of Governors via the clerk@slindoncollege.co.uk.

Your Name:
Pupil's Name:
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Email: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details² of your complaint.

¹ Parental responsibility is defined in the Children Act 1989 as "*all rights, duties, powers and responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his or her property*". It equates to legal responsibility for the child. If you have any doubts about whether you do or do not have parental responsibility for the child you may wish to seek legal advice.

² Please provide details of the nature of your complaint. If you have more than one ground of complaint we suggest numbering them so that each is considered in turn. If you require more space you may wish to attach an additional page setting out your complaint.

