



**HARROW INDEPENDENT COLLEGE**

*School of Mathematics, Science & Economics*

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This policy and procedure is for the benefit of students, and parents or guardians of students, at Harrow Independent College. This policy and procedure will be relied upon in respect of all complaints by parents, guardians and students made against the college except in respect of:

- (a) child protection allegations where a separate policy and procedure applies; and
- (b) expulsions where a separate policy and procedure applies.;
- (c) appeals relating to internal assessment decisions for external qualifications where a separate appeals procedure applies.

Complaints made by members of the public about the college will be dealt with under the Harrow Independent College Complaints Procedure.

The college expects that most concerns can be resolved informally and will use their best endeavours to resolve any complaints that are made informally, or any concerns that are raised, on that basis. If informal procedures fail to resolve the issue, a formal complaint about any matter not involving child protection allegations, internal assessment decisions or a decision to expel or remove a student, must be stated courteously in writing to the Principal and will be dealt with under this Harrow Independent College Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Every complaint shall receive fair and proper consideration and a timely response. This policy and procedure is available to students, the parents of students and prospective students of the college. While students may, themselves, raise concerns and complaints under this policy and procedure, the college will involve parents should this occur.

This policy and procedure in no way overrides the right of the college to act in accordance with the college's Terms and Conditions agreed by parents upon enrolment of their child in the college, although parents are not prevented from raising concerns or complaints pursuant to this policy and procedure where they are of the reasonable view that the college has not acted in accordance with the college's Terms and Conditions. Please Note: Parents can be assured that all complaints and expressions of concern, whether raised informally or formally, will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will remain confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the college's inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless guidance/legislation/experience requires an earlier review.

#### Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their personal tutor. The personal tutor will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received. In many cases, the complaint will be resolved immediately by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the complaint is of an academic nature, it is likely that the personal tutor will discuss it with, or refer the complaint to, the relevant Head of Department. If the personal tutor cannot resolve the complaint alone, it may be necessary for him to consult a senior colleague, the Year Head.

Parents should expect a response within 5 working days explaining how the college proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a further 10 working days.

If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, parents should expect a response within 5 working days of the start of the next term explaining how the college proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a further 10 working days from the start of the next term. The response will provide an outcome of the complaint, explain the conclusion, the reasons for it and, if appropriate, describe any action taken or proposed. Parents may prefer to take the complaint directly to a more senior member of staff, for example, the Year Head and the provisions of this Stage 1 – Informal Resolution shall apply.

#### Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

In the event that parents are not satisfied with the response (whether from the personal tutor, or other senior member of staff) under Stage 1 above, they should put the complaint and the reasons why they are not satisfied with the response in writing either to the Principal or, if the complaint is about or implicates the Principal, to the Chairman of Governors.

#### EITHER

##### To the Principal

Parents should expect a response within 3 working days explaining how the college proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a further 10 working days. If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, parents should expect a response within 3 working days of the start of the next term explaining how the college proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a further 10 working days from the start of the next term.

Within the time periods set out above:

(i) In most cases, the Principal will speak to the parents concerned. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary, however, for the Principal to ask the Year Head or another appropriate member of staff to carry out investigations.

(ii) The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the

complaint. Once he is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made with a written response to parents, informing them of his decision, giving reasons for his decision and, if appropriate, describe any action taken or proposed.

OR

To the Chairman of Governors (if the complaint is about or implicates the Principal)

If the complaint is about or implicates the Principal, parents may write to the Chairman of Governors with their complaint by writing to the Clerk to the Governors at the following address:

Clerk to the Governors of Harrow Independent College  
Harrow Independent College  
308-310, Eastcote Lane  
Harrow  
HA2 9AH  
E-mail: [admin@harrowindependentcollege.co.uk](mailto:admin@harrowindependentcollege.co.uk)

Within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint, the Clerk will refer the complaint to the Chairman of Governors who will nominate a Governor to consider the complaint and, via the Clerk, write to you with the name of the nominated Governor. The nominated Governor will ask for a report from the Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding and will normally do so within 10 working days, from the date of his nomination. If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, parents should expect a response within 10 working days from the start of the next term. Before responding, the nominated Governor will normally speak to the parents concerned, although if there is a meeting, the time limits set out above may extend the timeframe within which the nominated Governor would respond but this should be by no longer than 10 working days from the date of the meeting. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. The nominated Governor will keep written records of all meetings held in relation to the complaint. Once he is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made with a written response to parents, informing them of his decision, giving reasons for his decision and, if appropriate, describe any action taken or proposed.

### Stage 3 - Appeal

Should the matter not be resolved at Stage 2 (above) parents may wish to invoke an appeal within 10 working days, by notice in writing to the Clerk to the Governors at the following address:

Clerk to the Governors of Harrow Independent College  
Harrow Independent College  
308-310, Eastcote Lane  
Harrow  
HA2 9AH  
E-mail: [admin@harrowindependentcollege.co.uk](mailto:admin@harrowindependentcollege.co.uk)

The Clerk will refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors who will refer the matter to a Complaints Panel (the "Panel") who shall be selected by the Chairman of Governors from the college's Parents' Complaints Committee. The Panel shall comprise 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 college, and one of whom shall be appointed the chairman of the Panel. The chairman of the Panel, in consultation with the Chairman of Governors, reserves the right to substitute members of the Panel with other members of the college's Parents' Complaints Committee. A hearing before the Panel ("Hearing") will take place as soon as practicable, and normally within 15 working days (this may be longer if the complaint is received during holiday periods) of receipt of the notice by the Clerk.

Parents will be asked if there are any papers they would like to have circulated beforehand. If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related information be supplied in advance of the Hearing. Copies of all papers shall be supplied to all parties usually not later than 5 working days prior to the Hearing. The parents may be accompanied to the Hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, Master or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate and only allowed in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the chairman of the Panel. The Hearing shall not be conducted in an adversarial way and the primary concern of the Panel is to deal with matters fairly and, therefore, the chairman of the Panel has discretion to conduct the Hearing (including deciding on who may attend) in any way which will achieve this. The chairman of the Panel can give directions, which may include adjourning the Hearing in order to request further information (from either the parents or the college or third parties) or otherwise carry out further investigations or call witnesses.

After due consideration of all the facts the Panel considers relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make findings and recommendations, which it shall complete within 8 working days of the Hearing. 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 Principal, the Chairman of Governors and, where relevant, the person(s) complained about.

The Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the college premises by Governors and the Principal.

Records - A written record of all formal complaints shall be kept and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure (i.e. Stage 2) or proceed to Appeal (i.e. Stage 3) and action taken by the college as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Confidentiality -Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially, although the Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection, as referred to above. It is the college's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

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. Furthermore, knowledge of the complaint (and any relevant papers) will usually be limited to the person to whom the complaint is addressed, the Principal, the Chairman of Governors, the Clerk to the Governors and those directly involved.

Action which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints will be handled confidentially within the college.

Anonymity - Anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

Information requests - The complaints procedure is for genuine complaints or concerns and should not be used simply to obtain information from the college. Parents' rights to information are governed by the standard terms and conditions and by law.

Leavers - If parents wish to complain about something affecting their child after he has left the college, this must take the form of a letter to the Principal or Chairman of Governors within three months of leaving.

Modified on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Guidance - Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016 -

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