



# SHEBBEAR COLLEGE

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## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### Whole School Policy

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Reviewed by SLT: September 2023  
Next Review: September 2024

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### Policy Review at Shebbear College

**The SLT acknowledge their responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective and follows regulatory requirements. The SLT and Governors undertake a regular review (at least annually) to satisfy themselves that the implementation of this policy is effective.**

#### Introduction

Shebbear 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 by the school with care and in accordance with this procedure.

Shebbear College makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day, and Shebbear College will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.

In accordance with paragraph 24(3)(g) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, Shebbear College will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the ISI for the purposes of section 162A (1) of the Education Act 2002 (as subsequently amended), details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Shebbear College welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and guardians and will always take seriously any complaint that might be raised. The School is here for your sons and daughters and we want to hear your points of view. If parents do have a

complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure.

**A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly.**

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. All 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 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Shebbear College will maintain a written record of all complaints that are made, including whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and the action taken by the school as a result of those complaints regardless of whether they are upheld.

Ofsted may be contacted by email – [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
ISI may be contacted on by email – [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

The school 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.

### **Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints**

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within **five** working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure **within 28 days** if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed **within a further 28 days**, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

### **Recording Complaints**

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

- 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 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)

## **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- Within the Prep School, parents are regularly updated with the e-mail address of the Head of the Prep School and with that of their child's class teacher. They are encouraged to contact staff directly with any concerns they have and time is then made for these issues to be discussed further. By reacting quickly to parental concerns it is hoped that issues will be addressed quickly and parents will be satisfied with outcomes.
- If any parents within the school have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Teacher, Tutor or HsM. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff contacted cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to involve their line manager. Complaints made directly to a line manager (ie Head of Prep, Deputy Head/ the Head) will usually be referred to the relevant Teacher or Tutor unless the line manager deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Teacher, Tutor, HoF or HsM will record all concerns and complaints with a member of SLT and the date on which they were received. The member of SLT will record stage 1 complaints with the Head's PA. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 working days or in the event that the member of staff 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.

## **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 Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will send a letter of acknowledgment within two working days and will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within five 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 Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head keeps a log of Stage 2 complaints and reviews this with the Governing Body on a termly basis.
- The Head of the Prep keeps a log of all concerns and complaints in EYFS and the Prep School and reviews this with the Head on a termly basis. All Stage 2 complaints in EYFS and the Prep are recorded on the Prep School pastoral log
- In the case of formal complaints relating to the fulfilment of EYFS requirements there is a requirement for the school to investigate and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. These complaints must be available to Ofsted on request. Contact details for Ofsted are - [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings, telephone conversations and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head 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 Head will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- If the parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to The Chair of Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors 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 Board of Governors on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within ten working 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 five working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- 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 ten working 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 Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. A copy of the findings will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Head

In the Academic Year September 2022 to 2023, the School dealt with two complaints at Stage Two level and three complaints at Stage Three level.