



COMPLAINTS POLICY

General Principles

Elizabeth College has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. Elizabeth College is keen that parents are aware that staff in both the Junior (Acorn House and Beechwood) and Upper Schools are readily available to deal with any issues that arise. It is our hope and intention that matters can be dealt with promptly to the mutual satisfaction of all parties. On the rare occasions when this is not possible parents may wish to make a formal complaint and this document sets out the procedures that will be followed. College would always wish to deal with all complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible. The time this takes will vary with the circumstances, gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled.

The school will record all complaints received. The outcome of the complaint shall be recorded, together with reasons for that decision and whether the complaint was resolved at a preliminary stage or proceeded to Stage 4. All correspondence, statements and records relating to the complaint will be kept confidential to the parties involved, except where inspecting bodies may wish to see them.

Urgent complaints will be identified as such and given priority. All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully and complainants will be kept informed. The main aim will be a speedy and mutually agreed resolution of the issue.

Procedures

The handling of complaints falls into four stages as set out below.

Stage 1: Informal resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. If you have a concern about College, please try to talk to someone at school, ideally at an early stage. You can contact them informally or arrange an appointment to meet with them.

Your concern can usually be settled quickly and without fuss by contacting the right person in College. In the first instance, this is most likely to be your child's Class teacher in the Junior School or Head of Year in the Upper School. Alternatively, you can contact one of the Deputy Headteachers or the Headteacher of the Junior School or one of the Vice Principals (Academic or Pastoral) at the Upper School. If this informal route cannot resolve your concern or you are not happy with the way it has been dealt with you may take the matter to Stage 2:

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then you should complain to the Principal who will investigate your complaint. You would normally do this in writing. An appointment is likely to be necessary, so that the Principal can give the matter his full attention. The school will let you know that it has received your complaint within 5 school days. You will be

Reviewed September 2015

Next Review September 2016

Principal

given the results of the investigation in writing within 15 school days. If your complaint is about the Principal you should complain directly to the Chairman of the Board of Directors (see Stage 3).

Stage 3: Informing the Chairman of the Board of Directors

If your complaint has still not been resolved to your satisfaction you may write to the Chairman of the Board of Directors (addressed to c/o The Clerk to the Board of Directors). You should make it clear why you are complaining, to whom you have already spoken and what you want to happen as a result of your complaint. The Chairman of the Board of Directors will let you know that he has received your complaint within 7 school days and will either investigate the matter or nominate a fellow Director to do so. You will be told about the outcome of the Chairman of the Board of Directors' investigation in writing within 20 school days.

If you are still not satisfied after receiving the Chairman of the Board of Director's report, you can ask to have your complaint referred to a Complaints Committee of the Board of Directors as outlined in Stage 4. The complaints committee would be convened by The Clerk to the Board of Directors.

Stage 4: Complaints Committee

You should write to the Clerk to the Board of Directors (who is also College Bursar). You should say exactly why you are unhappy with the Chairman's findings and ask that a Complaints Committee to be set up to look at your complaint. An appeal committee will be appointed and will comprise:

- Two Directors (but not the Chairman or any director who has already been nominated to investigate the matter at Stage 3).
- An independent person who ideally has some relevant experience but is independent of the management and running of the school and is not a parent of a current pupil in any part of the school.

The Committee will meet between 12 and 20 school days after the Clerk to the Directors receives your letter. You will be told in advance about the process and what will happen at the meeting of the committee. You can attend and bring a relative or friend to support you if you wish. You will be told in writing about the committee's findings and recommendations within five school days from the date of the meeting, as will the Principal, Chairman of the Board of Directors and the subject of the complaint.

Please contact the Principal for any further clarification on these matters.

The number of formal (Stage 2) complaints received in the school year 2014-15 was 1.

Separately, and in the event of expulsion, paragraph 77 of the College Statutes allows pupils the:

“Right of Appeal on expulsion”

If a pupil is expelled (or permanently excluded) from the school he has the right of appeal to the Board of Directors. Notice of any appeal should be made in writing addressed to the Chairman of the Board of Directors, care of the Clerk to the Board of Directors. The Chairman will then convene a meeting of the Board of Directors (excluding Directors who may have had any prior involvement in the matter). You will be advised of which of the Directors will hear the appeal and the procedures to be followed in relation to it.