



## 1. Introduction

The Chorister School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. It welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes seriously concerns or complaints they may wish to raise. We aim to respond courteously and efficiently and to take action where appropriate to ensure that we work in partnership with parents to promote the best interests of the young people in our care. Parents can expect any complaints to be treated in accordance with this Procedure which is for parents of all current pupils in the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

The complaints procedure is made available to parents, parents of EYFS, staff and boarders. It is published on our website: [www.thechoristerschool.com](http://www.thechoristerschool.com)

Boarders, parents and staff have handbooks in which they are informed how they may contact ISI regarding any complaint concerning boarding welfare. This policy does not cover suspensions or expulsions; these are covered in the 'Rewards, Discipline and Sanctions Policy'.

'Parent(s)' means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a [current] pupil about whom the complaint relates.

## 2. What constitutes a Complaint?

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, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

## 3. The Three Stage Complaints Procedure

### Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

Should a parent have a concern, we would want to know about it sooner rather than later. Experience shows that most issues can be resolved informally and swiftly if dealt with at an early stage.

To raise a concern parents may talk directly to a member of staff, or write or phone. It is best to start with the member of staff most closely concerned with the issue. They will usually be best placed to sort things out quickly with the minimum of complexity and difficulty. If this member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for them to consult a Head of Department or Deputy Head.

The teacher to whom the concern is made will make a dated written record. These will be discussed as appropriate. It may be that this includes the matter being raised at pupil briefing that takes place on every Monday at 08.10, or at a staff meeting. The teacher will hope to resolve the concerns and will keep the parent who had raised the matter informed on how they are progressing. Once any investigation has been completed the parent will be invited back at a mutually convenient time to discuss the matter.

Any parent wishing to speak to a member of staff with concerns will be contacted within 24 hours, wherever possible. If necessary a time to discuss the concern in person or more fully will be arranged within 5 working days. In all cases response by the member of staff will be expedient.

In the unlikely event of this failing to resolve the situation, you may wish to raise the matter with the Form Teacher, the Deputy Headmaster, the Head of Pastoral Care or with the Headmaster.

Your concerns will be treated in as confidential a manner as possible.

We trust having gone through the above channels you will be satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns will have been fully and fairly considered. Parents should be aware that we are not at liberty to discuss the outcome of interviews with other children and their parents who may be involved in the problem, and we would certainly not discuss any sanctions which may have been imposed on another child. If you believe them not to have been dealt with successfully then parents will be advised to proceed in accordance with **Stage 2** of this procedure.

Formal complaints are ideally made in writing. Anonymous complaints cannot be considered.

Written complaints about the EYFS will be investigated within 28 days and a record will be made available to ISI/ Ofsted.

For complaints against the Headmaster – the parents should make their complaint directly with the Chair of the Governors, the Dean whose contact details are available from the school on request.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

If it is thought that the initial concern has not been satisfactorily dealt with, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. This is a formal complaint.

The Headmaster will speak with the parents within 3 working days of receiving the complaint, to arrange a meeting.

It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations

The Headmaster will keep written records of all complaint meetings and interviews.

Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents invited into school to discuss the matter as soon as is mutually convenient. The matter should be investigated and resolved within a week of the meeting, wherever possible.

If the complaint is against the Headmaster the complaint is to be made to the Chair of the Governors (see above) and he will call for a full report from the Headmaster.

If parents are not satisfied with the decision made, they should proceed to **Stage 3** of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 - Panel Hearing**

If parents wish to invoke **Stage 3** they will be referred to The Custos who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Pupil Welfare Committee.

The matter will then be referred to the Welfare Committee for consideration. [see appendix 1 for the terms of reference and membership of the Committee.] The Custos will acknowledge the complaint on behalf of this committee and schedule a hearing with the committee to take place. The committee will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. This will, if at all possible, be arranged within one month of receiving the complaint at Stage 3 level.

Parents may attend and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

After hearing the complaint and making any further investigations, if necessary, the committee will, if at all possible resolve the complaint immediately.

If this is not possible the Committee will reach a decision within one week of the hearing. The Committee's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents and to the person being complained about. The decision of the committee will be final. The findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. The findings and recommendations will be available on the school premises for inspection by the Chair of the Governors and the Headmaster.

#### **4. Recording Complaints**

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

A written record will be kept of all complaints and there will be an indication of whether they were resolved at a preliminary stage or at a panel hearing.

At all stages the complainant will be kept informed of progress and any exceptions to the timescales detailed and reasons given, for example school holidays.

A written record is kept of all formal complaints showing the stage at which they were resolved and the action taken as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). These records are regularly reviewed by the Headmaster and the Custos.

The record of complaints is kept for at least three years. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year is available to parents on request.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.

Pupils are not penalised where parents have made a complaint in good faith.

Boarders and their parents have handbooks in which they are informed how they can contact ISI regarding any complaints concerning boarding welfare.

The school complies with Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

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#### **6. Review**

This policy will be reviewed in January 2020.

*Appendix 1*

**Pupil Welfare Committee**

**Members**

Custos or a Member of Chapter

At least 1 other Governor.

1 independent member

NB: The committee will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. They too should not be directly involved in the complaint.

The Organist will be co-opted for Chorister issues where it is clear that he/she is not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

## *Appendix 2*

### **Useful addresses**

Details for contacting ISI and Ofsted should parents wish to make a complaint:

ISI:                   Independent Schools Inspectorate  
CAP House  
9-12 Long lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA

Tel: 020 7600 0100

[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)

Ofsted:           Ofsted Complaints Department  
National Business Unit  
Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Anne's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

Tel: 08456 404040

Email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)