



**Chipping Campden School**  
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## **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

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**Relevant Policies:**

- Responsible Use of ICT
- Anti-Bullying and Anti-Hate
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Safeguarding and Child Protection and Response to Covid-19 and Annex 7 – Early Help Offer
- Confidentiality
- E-Safety
- Health & Safety
- RHSE
- SEND



## Aims

At Chipping Campden School, we value our partnership with parents and endeavour to avoid issues that cause dissatisfaction. Our skilled and professional staff work hard to ensure that students are helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially, and maintain the highest standards at all times.

We recognise that in a school community consisting of around 1500 students, almost 150 staff and 3000 parents/carers, sometimes there will be concerns that need to be addressed, in order for all parties to move forward. This policy aims to support parents/carers by offering clarity regarding how to respond when they have a concern, and also how to respond when a concern remains unresolved and they wish to make a complaint.

## Scope

This policy is for parents/carers of pupils who are on-roll at the school. As a public body, the Secretary of State for Education expects academies to handle complaints from people who are not parents/carers of children at the school respectfully and expediently. However, these sit outside the scope of this policy.

## Exceptions

Exceptions to this policy include:

- (a) Complaints which are vexatious.
- (b) Complaints related to admissions. (*Refer to Gloucestershire Local Authority Admissions*)
- (c) Complaints related to exclusions. (*Refer to Department for Education – Discipline*)
- (d) Complaints made more than three months after the incident(s) in question.

Anonymous complaints will not be investigated, except in exceptional circumstances, such as matters of safeguarding.

## General Principles

Every attempt will be made to adhere to the time limits specified in the procedures which follow, but these may, in exceptional circumstances, need to be adjusted. If this is the case, the person managing that stage of the process will communicate that to the complainant, advising the reasons and setting out an adjusted timescale.

## Confidentiality

Notwithstanding, the school's duty to safeguard pupils and staff, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE), the school will treat all correspondence, statements and records in strict confidence, only disclosing information to those who are directly involved in the matter.

## Record keeping

We keep a record of all complaints that have proceeded to Stage 2, 3 or 4. This record identifies the status of the complaint as Stage 2, Stage 3 or Stage 4, and records any actions taken by the school as a result. We see this as a helpful way of identifying areas where the school can further develop its systems and processes. Records are stored in-line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

## Conduct during the complaints procedure

It is a requirement that all parties involved in the complaints process act with respect and courtesy towards each other at all times, and behave in a non-adversarial manner. Failure to adhere to these expectations may



result in unnecessary delays to the timeframe for the complaint to be considered, or in exceptional circumstances, termination of the complaints process.

## School Complaints Stages in Detail

### Level 1

It is hoped that most concerns can be resolved quickly and informally by discussion with the member of staff concerned. To do this, parents/carers may wish to make an appointment to speak with the member of staff concerned over the telephone or in person at the school. If the complainant does not feel it is appropriate to speak with the member of staff directly, the concern should be raised with their line manager. Our Reception team will be able to support with providing this information. Guidance regarding how best to contact the school can be found on our school website [here](#).

Where the concern is specifically about the Principal, if appropriate, the parent/carer should discuss this with them first. Where this is not resolved, a complaint against the Principal should be referred to the Chair of Trustees.

### Level 2

A concern that remains unresolved after being considered at level 1, will be deemed a complaint and may be escalated to level 2 by the complainant. Any concern escalated to level 2, when an attempt to resolve the concern at level 1 has not been made, will be responded to at level 1. In addition to this, a concern escalated to level 2 at a time that is greater than two working weeks after the concern was responded to at level 1, will be responded to as a new concern at level 1.

In order to make a complaint at level 2, the complainant should write to the Principal (letter or email to [chaynes@campden.school](mailto:chaynes@campden.school)) and clearly state:

- i) The nature of the complaint.
- ii) A summary of what was attempted to resolve the concern at level 1.
- iii) The preferred outcome for the complainant.

Whilst the school acknowledges the importance of responding to complaints in a swift manner and will often do so very rapidly, the maximum timescales for the complaint to be handled are as follows:

- The complaint will be acknowledged within two working days of the complaint being received.
- The complaint should be responded to within twelve working days of the complaint being received. The response at level 2 will be from a school leader, other than the Principal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, this is likely to be either the line manager of the member of staff who responded to the concern at level 1, or the member of the Senior Leadership Team who line manages the relevant department.
- Where a meeting is deemed necessary, it should be arranged to take place at a time which still allows the complaint to be responded to, in full, within the twelve day period.
- Any complaint received at level 2 should be responded to in writing (email or letter) and a copy of the response will be placed on the relevant student's school file.



### Level 3

A complaint that remains unresolved after being considered at level 2 may be escalated to level 3 by the complainant. Any complaint escalated to level 3, when an attempt to resolve the complaint at a level 1/level 2 (as appropriate) has not been made, will be responded to at level 1/level 2 (as appropriate). In addition to this, a complaint escalated to level 3 at a time that is greater than two working weeks after the concern was responded to at level 2, will be responded to at level 1 as a new concern.

In order to make a complaint at level 3, the complainant should write to the Principal (letter or email to [chaynes@campden.school](mailto:chaynes@campden.school)) and clearly state:

- i) The nature of the complaint.
- ii) A summary of what was attempted to resolve the complaint at level 2.
- iii) The preferred outcome for the complainant.

Whilst the school acknowledges the importance of responding to complaints in a swift manner and will often do so very rapidly, the maximum timescales for the complaint to be handled are as follows:

- The complaint will be acknowledged within two working days of the complaint being received.
- The complaint should be responded to within seventeen working days of the complaint being received. The response at level 3 will be from the Principal.
- Where a meeting is deemed necessary, it should be arranged to take place at a time which still allows the complaint to be responded to, in full, within the seventeen day period.
- Any complaint received at level 3 should be responded to in writing (email or letter) and a copy of the response will be placed on the relevant student's school file.

### Level 4

A complaint that remains unresolved after being considered at level 3 should be escalated to level 4 by the complainant. Any complaint escalated to level 4, when an attempt to resolve the complaint at level 1/level 2/level 3 (as appropriate) has not been made, will be responded to at level 1/level 2/level 3 (as appropriate). In addition to this, a complaint escalated to level 4 at a time that is greater than two working weeks after the complaint was responded to at level 3, will be responded to at level 1 as a new concern.

In order to make a complaint at level 4, the complainant should write to the Clerk to the Trustees ([clerk@campden.school](mailto:clerk@campden.school)) and clearly state:

- i) The nature of the complaint.
- ii) A summary of what was attempted to resolve the complaint at level 3.
- iii) The preferred outcome for the complainant.

Whilst the school acknowledges the importance of responding to complaints in a swift manner and will often do so very rapidly, the maximum timescales for the complaint to be handled are as follows:

- The complaint will be acknowledged within five working days of the complaint being received.
- The Chair of Trustees will appoint a panel of three impartial Trustees to form a Complaints Panel to hear the complaint.



- The panel will convene a Complaints Hearing and the panel will aim to conduct the hearing within twenty school days of the complaint being received, providing ten school days notice of the date of the hearing.
- Any written submissions from the school or the complainant, which are to be considered by the panel at the hearing, should be sent to the Clerk to the Trustees, at least seven school days prior to the complaints hearing.
- At least five school days prior to the hearing, the Clerk to the Trustees will circulate an information pack to all attendees, which includes an agenda for the hearing, any written submissions received from the school or the complainant and any relevant school policies.
- Following the hearing, the Complaints Panel will deliberate and will arrive at a decision to either uphold or quash the complaint. This decision, along with clear justification for making the decision and any recommendations for the school, will be communicated in writing to the school and the complainant, within five school days of the hearing.
- A copy of the response will be placed on the relevant student's school file.

### **Further recourse beyond the complaints policy**

#### **a) Department for Education**

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome following consideration at level 4, their next recourse is to contact the Department for Education (DfE).

The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of any complaints, nor overturn the decision reached through using the school's complaints policy, however, they may investigate whether the school have adhered to relevant education legislation or statutory policies, in reaching their decision.

#### **b) Ofsted**

Should a parent/carer wish to make a complaint to the Education Inspectorate (Ofsted), please note that the complaint must relate to the school as a whole, and in order for Ofsted to consider the complaint, the complainant must have exhausted the school's complaints procedure first.

In addition to the above, Ofsted cannot:

- Consider issues about individual pupils.
- Investigate specific incidents.
- Judge how well a school responded to a complaint.
- Mediate or resolve disputes between you and the school.
- Consider complaints if there are other legal ways to pursue them (for example, complaints about Admissions or providing education for individual pupils with special educational needs).