



MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL

FOUNDED BY WILLIAM OF WAYNFLETE, 1480

Complaints Procedure



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I: Concerns and their resolution (informal)

Magdalen College School seeks to foster good relations between parents, pupils and staff. It welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, not least as feedback is often an effective way of furthering the quality of the school's operation. This policy can be found on the school's website and is also available on request.

It is expected that any issues arising between parents and the school will be resolved informally in the first instance. The Red Diary explains how to progress any informal concern:

Where parents have concerns they should contact their child's Tutor in the first instance. The Tutor will, if appropriate, sequentially progress the concern to other members of staff such as Head of Department, Housemaster, Head of Section, Deputy Head (Academic) or Usher. Should these concerns relate to the Master, parents may proceed to contact the Chairman of Governors via the Clerk to the Governors, Mr Tim Knowles, who is also the Bursar. All informal concerns will be handled within a timescale that is reasonable, i.e. generally within two working weeks, not including school holidays, and the outcome communicated to the parents.

II: Formal Complaints – role of the Master

If a parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal procedure above, the parent should write to the Master with their complaint. This will only be considered a formal complaint by the Master if the informal procedure has been gone through. If this is the case, the Master will look at the matter afresh and respond to the parents accordingly, alerting them to this procedure and the right of appeal.

III: Formal Complaints

It is always expected that a parent will have used and exhausted both the informal process explained above, which forms the necessary preliminary to any formal complaint, and has written to the Master. If a complaint comes directly to the Chairman of Governors, he will refer it directly to the Master to deal with it appropriately.

Any parent not satisfied with the way in which their concern has been handled, informally in Stage I or formally in Stage II, may complain formally in writing to the Chair of Governors c/o the Clerk to Governors. The formal complaint should be acknowledged within one working week and the response

made within two working weeks. If an investigation is required, an additional two working weeks can be allowed for this, and the parents will be informed of the reason.

If the matter is not then resolved, Governors will convene a panel of at least three individuals not directly involved in the matters that are subject to complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. A hearing will be held as soon as practicable and within 10 working days of the school's response. Parents will be entitled to attend, accompanied if they wish by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The findings, and recommendations, if any, will be made available in writing to the appropriate parties, including the parents and, where relevant, the person complained of, within ten working days, not including school holidays. They are also made available for inspection on the premises by the Master and the Governors.

This formal procedure is only available to parents of current pupils, though concerns of former parents may still be of interest to Governors as a matter of constructive feedback.

This formal procedure is also not appropriate or available in matters of admissions, exclusions, or debt, which should be progressed as follows:

- concerns around admissions from parents of prospective or former pupils are explained in the relevant policies, and have their own procedures.
- if a pupil is excluded or a parent is required by the Master to remove their child, parents have a right to review of that decision by the Governors. A copy of the Review Procedure is made available to relevant parents by the Bursar at the appropriate time. A complaint under this policy is neither available nor appropriate in these circumstances.
- issues around unpaid fees are dealt with as a contractual matter.

It is essential that any complaint, and all associated correspondence, statements and records, are kept confidential by all parties. This is primarily to preserve the ability of the school to convene a panel of Governors with no former knowledge of the matters forming the basis of the complaint. However, confidentiality is also crucial to preserve the necessary relationship of trust for all parties to work together after resolution of the complaint.

A written record will be kept of all formal complaints made in writing under the formal procedure outlined above, and of the resolutions, and action taken by the school as a result of these complaints regardless of whether or not they are upheld. This includes whether they are resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidentially (except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them) and are available for inspection on the school premises by Governors and the Master. Parents may make a request to know how many complaints the school received in the last academic year by making such a request in writing to the Master.

Magdalen College School aims to deal with complaints in a positive manner, and to use complaints in order to improve standards and prevent any cause for further concern. However, it should also be noted that frivolous and vexatious complaints or concerns, whether progressed informally or formally, may evidence or lead to a breakdown of the relationship between parents and the school.

Concerns and Complaints regarding Fundraising

Magdalen College School is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and complies with the Fundraising Code of Practice. The complaint process will follow sections I, II and III above, although the complainant may come from the wider MCS community, including alumni, friends and former parents. Under Stage I, any informal concerns should be raised with the Director of the Waynflete Office in the first instance, who will air the concern with the Bursar, Usher or Deputy Head (Education Development). All informal concerns will be handled within a reasonable timescale, usually within two working weeks. If the concern cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint should be made in writing to the Master as in Stage II above, and could move to Stage III if necessary. If the complainant feels that the final outcome is not satisfactory, the Fundraising Regulator can be contacted at: www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk or on **0300 999 3407**.

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