



CARGILFIELD

CARGILFIELD SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Cargilfield School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes all complaints and concerns very seriously as they may arise. This procedure will show you how to use our complaints system.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response.

We wish to ensure that:

- Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so and what the procedure will be for dealing with the complaint.
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way.
- Parents' experience is that we listen and take complaints seriously.
- We take action where appropriate.

“How should I make a complaint?”

You can talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter, e-mail, or telephone. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you. Any member of staff will be happy to help. It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue—for example, to raise boarding matters with the Matron or House Tutor; sports concerns with the Head of Games and PE.

They may be able to sort things out quickly with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to more senior members of staff, for example, the Deputy Heads, the Assistant Head or the Headmaster.

“I don't want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me”

The School is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Contact a member of staff, as described above.

“I'm not sure whether to complain or not”

If, as parents, you have concerns, you are entitled to complain. If in doubt, you should contact the School as we are here to help.

“What will happen next?”

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you within five working days, to respond in writing to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a written response. If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the first point of contact, Headmaster and those directly involved. The Chairman of Governors may also need to be informed. It is the School’s policy that complaints made by parents shall not rebound adversely on their children.

We may need to make external third parties aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would be likely to happen where, for example, a child’s safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. You would be fully informed.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

Action which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures, as a result of any complaint will be handled confidentially within the School.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

If you are not satisfied, the Headmaster will offer to refer the matter to a Panel of the Board of Governors (excluding the Chairman of Governors). Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Convener of that Panel. Contact details will be given to you at the time you indicate you are not satisfied with the outcome

The Panel will receive a full report from the Head Master on the complaint and the matters considered when concluding the outcome, and will examine matters thoroughly before responding in writing. This may result in a positive solution, but if it does not, the Convener of the Panel will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage. If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter would be referred to Patrick S. Hodge (Lord Hodge), c/o Cargilfield School, who will act as an independent arbiter, whom failing such other independent Arbiter as is notified by the Convenor of the Panel at that time (“Independent Arbiter”). It is the task of the Independent Arbiter to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Independent Arbiter will invite you to a meeting. You will be asked if there are any papers you would like to have circulated beforehand. You will be invited to bring a friend with you.

We hope that we shall be able to satisfy your concerns. If we are unable to do so, you may wish to seek legal advice. Serious complaints can also be addressed to your MSP, the Registrar of Independent Schools in the Scottish Executive or to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

If you do not agree with Cargilfield’s response to any complaint on a child protection issue, you may also contact **The Care Inspectorate, Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY (0845 603 0890)**.

Cargilfield recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

John Collins
Bursar
26th February 2018