



## **PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

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| <b>REVIEWER:</b>         | <b>BURSAR</b>      |
| <b>REVIEW DATE:</b>      | <b>August 2025</b> |
| <b>NEXT REVIEW DATE:</b> | <b>August 2026</b> |
| <b>APPROVED BY:</b>      | <b>PRINCIPAL</b>   |

### **Introduction**

Framlingham College has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a Complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the College with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. Framlingham College makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on its website and at its school offices during the school day. Framlingham College will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available, and of the number of Complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014, Framlingham College will also make available, on request, to the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of Complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the Complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the Complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the School.

The only exception to this is if the Complaint is a review of a decision taken by the College to exclude or require the removal of a pupil under clause 9.5 of the School's Terms and Conditions in which case such a review must be requested by no later than five working days from the date of the decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil.

"Parent(s)" means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a current pupil about whom the Complaint relates.

### **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 or a governor, 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.

Parents can be assured that all Complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The College is here for your child, and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a Complaint that you [or your child] raise[s] in good faith.

### **The Complaints Process Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most Complaints will be resolved quickly and **informally**.
- If parents have a Complaint they should contact their child's Form Tutor (Prep School) or Housemaster/Housemistress (Senior School). In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to parents' satisfaction. If the Complaint cannot be resolved, it may be necessary to consult the Senior Deputy Head (Senior School) or Deputy Head (Prep School).
- Naturally there will be some concerns where it may be more appropriate to contact the Deputy Head Co-curricular, the Directors of Sport, Music or Drama in the first instance.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, Senior Deputy Head, the Deputy Head, the Head of the Prep School or the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant Tutor or Housemaster/Housemistress unless it is deemed appropriate for it to be dealt with personally.
- The Form Tutor or Housemaster/Housemistress or appropriate person dealing with the Complaint will make a written record of all concerns and Complaints and the date on which they were received. They will also record the resolution if agreed. Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days (a working day is defined as Monday to Friday) or in the event that the Form Tutor or Housemaster/Housemistress and parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the parents will be advised in writing to proceed with their Complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.
- If, however, the Complaint is against the Head of the Prep School, parents must make their Complaint directly to the Principal and if the Complaint is against the Principal it must be made to the Chair of Governors whose contact details are available from the College on request.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- If the Complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should make their Complaint in writing to the Principal or Head of the Prep School. The Principal or Head of the Prep School will decide, after considering the Complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Principal or Head of the Prep School will discuss the matter with the parents concerned, normally within 5 working days of receiving the Complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. Any resolution at this stage will be communicated to the parents in writing.
- It may be necessary for the Principal or Head of the Prep School to carry out further investigations. At this stage they will normally consult with the Chair of Governors or the Vice-Chair. Where the Complaint has been made to the Head of Prep School, they will also consult with the Principal.

- The Principal or Head of the Prep School will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the Complaint.
- Once the Principal or Head of the Prep School is satisfied that, so far as it is practical, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. They will also give reasons for this decision. The College will endeavour to ensure this process is completed within 10 working days.
- If the Complaint is against the Principal, the Complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors or their nominee will call for all of the relevant documents and interview the Principal to obtain an understanding of the Principal's interpretation of the Complaint. The Chair of Governors or their nominee may also call for a briefing from other members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to by telephone or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair of Governors or their nominee is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair of Governors or their nominee will give reasons for their decision.
- If the parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should inform the College in writing and formally request to proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure. This request must be received by the College within 15 working days of the outcome of Stage 2 being communicated to the parents.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Vice-Chair of Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to chair review panels.
- The matter will then be referred to the Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of the Vice-Chair and two other Governors and an independent person (a person who shall be neither an employee nor a Governor of the College, and who shall be suitably qualified to deal with the Stage 3 Complaint). Each member of the panel will be appointed by the Vice-Chair who will consider any parental comments regarding the composition of the panel but will not be bound by these. None of the members of the Panel will have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the Complaint.
- The Complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days and a hearing will be scheduled to take place as soon as practical, normally within 15 working days. Availability of parents and Panel members will be taken into consideration when setting a hearing date as far as is practically possible.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the Complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties no later than two working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents have the right to attend the hearing and may be accompanied by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not be allowed unless expressly permitted by the Chair of the Panel.
- The Panel will convene a hearing unless the parents indicate prior to the hearing that they are satisfied and do not wish to proceed further.
- The remit of the Panel shall be at the discretion of the Chair of Governors and the manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.
- If the parents decide not to attend a hearing it will proceed in their absence in order to consider the Complaint and issue findings on the substance of the matter.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' Complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- After due consideration of the merits of the Complaint and all facts that the Panel considers relevant, it will determine as to whether the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and decide whether to:
  - dismiss the Complaint in whole or in part;
  - uphold the Complaint in whole or in part; and
  - make recommendations.
- The parents will be informed of the Panel's decision in writing in hard copy and / or email within five working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and any recommendations will also be sent to the Principal and where a Complaint involves the Prep School, to the Head of the Prep School, the Governors and, where relevant, the person subject of the Complaint. A copy of the findings and any recommendations will be made available for inspection on the school premises.

#### Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All Complaints will be handled seriously, sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a Complaint as speedily as possible. The College's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 25 working days and Stage 3, including the Panel Hearing, within a further 25 working days.

For the purposes of the Complaints procedure, working days refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays and half term. This means that during School holidays it may take longer to resolve a Complaint although the School will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid undue delay. It may also take longer to resolve a Complaint during periods of significant disruption to School life or as a consequence of unavoidable staff absence. A departure from the prescribed timescales set out above for resolving a Complaint during term time will occur on an exceptional basis only, and the School will take all reasonable steps to limit any such delay.

#### Persistent correspondence

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same Complaint after it has already gone through all three stages set out in this document, such instances may be regarded by the School as vexatious and outside the scope of this procedure.

#### Recording Complaints and use of personal data

The School will retain a written record of all formal Complaints, whether they are resolved at the formal stage (Stage 2) or proceed to a Panel hearing (Stage 3) and any action taken by the School as a result of the Complaint (regardless of whether the Complaint is upheld). This retention process is a regulatory requirement.

The College processes data in accordance with its Data Protection Policy. When dealing with Complaints the College (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent

- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name and contact details of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Notes/minutes of the hearing, and
- The Panel's written decision

This may include 'special category personal data' (but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the Complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.

The number of complaints in the previous school year may be obtained by contacting the Principal's PA.

### **Complaints Procedure EYFS**

Parents of EYFS children should follow the three stages of this Complaints Procedure. If parents remain dissatisfied and their Complaint is about the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, then parents may refer their Complaint to the ISI. Parents will be notified by ISI of the outcome of the investigation into their Complaint within 28 days of the Complaint being received.

Framlingham College will provide ISI, on request, with a written record of all Complaints made during any specified period, and the action that was taken as a result of each Complaint. The record of any such Complaints will be kept in accordance with its Privacy Notice.

Parents may complain directly to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Schools must make available details of how to contact the ISI:

ISI can be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

[ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA](#)