



LAMBROOK

NURTURING
POTENTIAL
SINCE 1860

Complaints Procedure

This document applies to all parts of Lambrook School including parents and pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

September 2022

Review Date: September 2023

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Lambrook's Aims

Since 1860, Lambrook has been laying the foundations for its pupils' futures. Children have one opportunity for an education which will form the basis of their lives and, at the same time, one childhood; Lambrook aims to keep a happy balance between the two. During their time with us, we give our pupils the 'Feathers to Fly' so that when they leave us, they will spread their wings and will take flight; leaving Lambrook as confident, happy, engaging, mature, considerate and thoughtful young adults who are outward looking global citizens.

Inspiring

Inspiring pupils from Nursery through to Year 8, ensuring an outstanding level of education from our exceptional staff.

Nurturing

Nurturing all pupils through an outstanding level of pastoral care, enabling them to flourish in a happy environment

Providing

Providing pupils with an abundance of opportunities to discover, develop and showcase new talents.

Preparing

Preparing our children for the next stage of their educational journey by giving them the skills for scholarship and Common Entrance entry at leading Senior Schools.

Equipping

Equipping our children for the ever-increasing challenges of the world in which they live; giving pupils the skills and the confidence to understand technology, the environment and other cultures better, thus enabling them to make a difference in the world, both now and in the future.

Rationale:

The School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents or pupils do have a complaint or a concern, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure. Where the school's policies or their implementation of them, are open to criticism, parents must feel able to express criticism without fear or favour, provided only that complaints are addressed in a constructive tone and spirit. The maximum period of time that will elapse from the lodging of the complaint to its conclusion will be twenty eight school working days. This document in no way is intended to inhibit the free flow of information and comment between parents and the various responsibility holders in the school.

This complaints process is available to parents of pupils, meaning current registered pupils. The procedure does not apply to parents of prospective pupils. The complaints procedure does apply to past pupils but only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered, and it does not cover exclusions.

It is hoped that all complaints will be resolved as early and as informally as possible. The timescale for acknowledging, considering and resolving complaints is set out in working days which means term time only. The School will strive to deal with complaints during holiday periods but whether this is possible will depend on the nature of the complaint and to whom it is made.

The School does not distinguish between 'concerns' and 'complaints'. Whereas a concern may be an expression of worry or doubt, a complain is a statement of dissatisfaction in the actions or lack of action from the school. However, any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school will be regarded as a complaint and is in the scope of this procedure. Complaints will be formally logged at Stage 1 of the process but when they carry a likelihood of moving to Stage 2 depending on the School's response and given the seriousness of the circumstances.

All complaints will normally be acknowledged within five working days.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints/concerns can be resolved informally and swiftly.
- Dependent on the nature of their complaint or concern, parents should normally contact their son's or daughter's Form Teacher or Tutor. If the complaint is about boarding then the Head of Boarding should be contacted directly. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway to the parent's satisfaction by this means. If the member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone and depending on the nature of the complaint it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Deputy Head in line with the school's management structure. Complaints made directly to the Heads of School, Head of Pre-Prep, Deputy Head or Headmaster may well be referred to the relevant member of staff unless the 'line manager' concerned deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The relevant teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within seven working days or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure. If, however, the complaint is against the Headmaster, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chairman of Governors c/o the Clerk to the Governors.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then a parent should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. Although all formal complaints will be made in writing, this does not mean that the formal stage is automatically triggered whenever a concern is expressed in writing, for example, by email. Complaints will usually only progress to the formal stage after first being considered at the preliminary stage and only then if the complainant intends to escalate a matter to the formal stage.
- The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet the parents concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations and the Headmaster may choose to appoint a senior member of staff as an investigator.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 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 communicated to the parents in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for the decision.
- The School will keep a written record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint and will advise parents of the decision within 14 working days of receiving the complaint in writing under Formal Resolution. In the event that it is not possible for the School to complete its investigation or establish all the facts and so cannot make a decision within this period then parents will be advised as to why this is the case and informed of the revised timescale.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents seek to involve Stage 3 of this procedure, they are to write to the Headmaster informing him of their decision whereupon the matter will be referred to a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Chairman of Governors. The panel will consist of at least three persons who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One of these shall be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The complaint will be acknowledged by the Clerk to the Governors on behalf of the panel within five working days.
- The Clerk to the Governors will schedule a hearing with the Panel to take place as soon as practicable and within 21 working days of receipt of the complaint under Stage 3.

- If the convenor of the panel and/or the panel members deem it necessary, they may require (in writing) that further particulars of the complaint or any other related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five days before the hearing. Any such further particulars received within five days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it may not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the panel will resolve the parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However, should the panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required, the panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded. The panel will reconvene and, after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, will reach a decision and may make recommendations. The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision together with the reasons. The decision of the panel will be final.
- The panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person complained about. They will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Headmaster and Chairman of Governors/Proprietor.
- A written record is kept of all complaints, and of whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing. The written record of complaints is limited to all those made in writing under the formal part of the procedure. In relation to these complaints, the school will record whether they are then resolved at that stage and what action was taken, or proceed to a panel hearing. Informal complaints may be recorded by the school for management purposes to enable patterns of concern to be monitored.
- Parents can be assured that all complaints, concerns, correspondence, statements and records will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6 (2) j of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003; by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families; or where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them.

Number of Stage 2 complaints in the last year: 0

EYFS

- For parents of children in the Early Years, they may also contact Ofsted and ISI if they are unhappy with any aspect of the school's provision. The details for contacting Ofsted are:

Ofsted
Royal Exchange Building
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
0845 6014772

- A record of a complaint will be kept for three years.
- Complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.
- The complaints register and any action taken will be available to both Ofsted and ISI on request.

Complaints Procedure for Pupils

All pupil concerns, or complaints, should be handled with the utmost seriousness and confidentiality. A chain of communication exists through Duty staff, Form Teachers, Tutors, Boarding House Parents, Heads of Year/School, Boarding staff, Deputy Heads, Headmaster. The School Nurses, Chaplin and School Counsellor provide an extra layer of assistance for pupils at any level. Written records will be kept of serious complaints and their outcomes, which will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team. Complaints should be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.

We can all have worries, problems or difficulties from time to time and which might affect an individual or a group. They might cause anxiety or prompt complaint. For worries and complaints at Lambrook the procedure is as follows:

- If you are worried about something you should tell someone else because it will help you and we can try and do something about it.
- It is important to talk to someone but it does not have to be your tutor or a teacher. It is important to emphasise that you can choose the people with whom you would like to speak to. Your choice may depend upon the circumstances and your feelings at the time and you do not have to tell anyone else what you are doing. Here are some of the people you could talk to:
 - Another pupil, your age or older
 - Your Form Teacher or Tutor
 - Another teacher
 - Matron
 - Head of Academic (Mrs Desforges)
 - Head of Pastoral (Mr Marland)
 - Head of Staff & Co-Curricular (Mr Greenwood)
 - School Chaplain (Mr Savage)
 - Deputy Head (Mr Kay-Shuttleworth)
 - Your parents
 - The Headmaster or his wife (Mr or Mrs Perry)
 - The Director of Finance or one of the grounds staff
 - If you do not want to see anyone directly connected with the school, you may ask Matron if you can have an appointment to see the Doctor or the Counsellor. The Independent Listener/ School Counsellor – Janet 01628 637595
- Our pastoral system should support you through your time at Lambrook and deal with most matters of concern. Under some circumstances you might wish to make a formal complaint. You will **not** be penalised for making a complaint in good faith.
- You can contact Ofsted about complaints concerning boarding welfare:

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Independent and Boarding Team
Department for Children, Schools and Families
Mowden Hall
Staindrop Road
Darlington
DL3 9BG

We want you to be happy at Lambrook - if something is not going well please tell us about it. Your worry or complaint will be listened to and taken seriously.

The School Counsellor

We have a school counsellor and in line with the statutory requirements we also have an independent listener available to the boarders. Our school counsellor is Salome and she will visit the school and be available to speak to on the telephone at any time. In order for her to be able to see your children if need be on an individual basis we need to have your consent. She will occasionally work with groups. The pastoral system has been acknowledged as strength of this school. This Counselling service is designed to complement the strengths of the pastoral system by offering additional personal support to the pupils who may benefit from the opportunity to work with a professional counsellor. The service provided is confidential to pupils with social, emotional or behavioural concerns, to help them move towards greater wellbeing and to enable them to make the most of the opportunities offered for their social and academic development in school. The school counsellor belongs to a professional body and holds appropriate counselling qualifications.

Pupils may contact her directly on her home phone number 07855 795899. They can make appointments through Mr Marland, Matron or by writing a letter that will be delivered in confidence. Teachers will also refer some children who they feel may benefit from an independent listener.

Salome will visit the school regularly to talk to the boarders (usually on Thursdays) and as necessary to fulfil appointments or do group work within the school.

Annex 1

The School Counsellor

If you have worries or concerns and need somebody to talk to privately, you can speak to the school Counsellor, Salome, on the telephone.

Her number is: **07855795899**

She will be in school every Thursday.