

Lincoln Minster School

Complaints

1. Policy Statement

The School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint or concern, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this policy.

If parents have a concern, this may be raised informally and is dealt with as such. However, a complaint is dealt with more formally.

Complaints are expected to be resolved within 28 working days either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils, without unreasonable delay.

Pupils are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith.

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting.

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Lincoln Minster School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Complaints Policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

Lincoln Minster School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

In line with our Provision of Information policy, this document is available on our website and on request from the main school offices and should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Behaviour and Discipline, Exclusion, Removal and Review, United Learning Complaints and Whistleblowing.

This document is reviewed annually by the Headmaster and Head of the Preparatory School or as events or legislation change requires. The next scheduled date for review is August 2019.

Reviewed By	J M Wallace; Headmaster F Thomas; Head of the Preparatory School
Date	August 2018
Reason for Change	Annual review
Next review date	August 2019

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2. Senior and Preparatory School Procedure

a. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Form Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head of Year / Assistant Head (Pupil Support and Progress) / Head of Sixth Form / Head of the Preparatory School / Deputy Head of the Preparatory School / Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School / Deputy Head / Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Assistant Head (Pastoral) / Head of Sixth Form / Head of the Preparatory School / Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School/ Deputy Head / Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor or Head of Year where appropriate, unless the Assistant Head (Pastoral) / Head of Sixth Form / Head of the Preparatory School / Deputy Head of the Preparatory School / Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School / Deputy Head / Headmaster deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The recipient of the complaint 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 5 working days or in the event that the Form Tutor and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in a formal manner, in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

b. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their formal complaint in writing to the Head of the Senior or Preparatory School. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head or a senior member of staff not so far involved in the complaint, will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint (but in not more than 10 working days) to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head or a senior member of staff to carry out further investigations.
- The Head or the designated senior member of staff will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for the decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they may proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

c. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents or the Head seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Convenor who is the Clerk to the Local Governing Body, who calls hearings of the LGB Appeals Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the LGB Appeals Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the United Church Schools Trust or its representatives. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 8 working days.
- 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 not later than 3 working days prior to the hearing.
- 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, and the proceedings will not be tape-recorded without the consent of both the Chairman of the LGB Appeals Panel and the parents, and any tape-recording will be used only to assist the Panel members in reaching their decision and formulating their reasons, and will belong to the School.
- 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 all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 5 working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Local Governing Body and, where relevant, the person complained about.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails. Lincoln Minster School will keep a written record of all complaints and at what stage they were resolved. This written record of complaints and their outcomes will be reviewed regularly at senior leadership level so that patterns can be identified and appropriate interventions made.

For boarders the whole school complaints policy complies with National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2013), Standards 17: Securing Boarders' Views, and 18: Complaints.

Boarders have an opportunity to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaint, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school.

The policy is made available to staff and boarders in addition to parents. Boarders and their parents can make a complaint to ISI and the Local Authority Designated Officer regarding any concern about boarding welfare.

3. Early Years Foundation Stage Procedure

a. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's class teacher in the case of Reception children or the Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School or Head of EYFS as appropriate. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class teacher/ Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School / Head of EYFS cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Head of the Preparatory School / Deputy Head of the Preparatory School.

Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School / Head of the Preparatory School / Deputy Head of the Preparatory School will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher unless the Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School / Head of the Preparatory School / Deputy Head of the Preparatory School deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.

- The recipient of the complaint 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 5 working days or in the event that the class teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

b. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School. She will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School or a senior member of staff not so far involved in the complaint, will meet and speak to the parents concerned, normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, (but in not more than 10 working days) to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School to carry out further investigations.
- She will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School will also give reasons for the decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they may proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

c. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents or the Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Convenor who is the Clerk to the Local Governing Body, who calls hearings of the LGB Appeals Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the LGB Appeals Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the United Church Schools Trust or its representatives. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 8 working days.
- 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 not later than 3 working days prior to the hearing.
- 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, and the proceedings will not be tape-recorded without the consent of both the Chairman of the LGB Appeals Panel and the parents, and any tape-recording will be used only to assist the Panel members in reaching their decision and formulating their reasons, and will belong to the School.
- 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 all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 5 working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Deputy Head of the Pre-Preparatory School, the Head of the Preparatory School, the Local Governing Body and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially, and the school will meet its requirement to notify the complainant of the outcome of an investigation within 28 working days. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

4. Recording and Monitoring Complaints

Records of complaints are kept for at least three years. Lincoln Minster School will keep a written record of all complaints and at what stage they were resolved.

This written record of complaints and their outcomes will be reviewed regularly at senior leadership level to identify whether review or change in practice is needed and so that patterns can be identified and appropriate interventions made.

OFSTED and ISI, on request, will be provided with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Complaints Panel Record: During 2017-18 three formal complaints were registered.

5. Independent Authorities

Parents can make a complaint to the following if they so wish:

ISI – Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

Phone: 020 7600 0100 or e-mail info@isi.net

OFSTED (regarding EYFS and Activzone)

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M21 2WD

Phone: 0300 123 1231 or e-mail enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Local Authority Designated Child Protection Officer (regarding boarding)

Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board

Orchard House, Room 4-11, Orchard Street, Lincoln LN1 1BA

Tel: 01522 554085 / 553975

Fax: 01522 554267

Email: nicola.brangam@lincolnshire.gov.uk or anne.faulkner@lincolnshire.gov.uk