



# Complaints Policy

Revised: July 2021

Review date: June 2022

This policy should be read in conjunction with the OxSFC COVID-19 policy that overrides the guidelines/procedures in this policy, where appropriate. The guiding principle will always be to maintain the health and safety of all stakeholders.

## Introduction

Oxford Sixth Form College is committed to working in a close partnership with students, parents, guardians, agents and carers. A vital aspect of this partnership is the need for the College to know when you feel that things are not going right. If you have any concerns about any aspect of life at College, please contact an appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. The College takes all such expressions of concern seriously and aims to follow them up courteously and promptly. In any College things can go wrong but Oxford Sixth Form College wants to do all it can to sort those things out.

Two things tend to cause reluctance to complain or to express concerns:

- A fear that the College will not see the issue to be important: please be assured that, if it is important to you, it is important to us
- A fear that a concern or complaint may lead to repercussions for the student. Under no circumstances will the College discriminate against a student because of expressions of concern or complaints. The College is very experienced in ensuring that, if other students are involved (e.g. in an allegation of bullying), there are no repercussions from other quarters

This policy seeks to explain the systems we have put in place to give you confidence in our willingness to listen to concerns and complaints and in our determination to be open, honest and fair in our dealings with you. It highlights the routes anyone can follow if they feel that something is not right, that their child or ward is fed up, unhappy, being treated unfairly or bullied, or if they have any other concern or complaint.

## **Aims**

Our aims are to:

- make it as easy as possible to voice a concern or submit a complaint
- treat each concern or complaint as a constructive expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of College life and, as such, deserving of a response
- treat each concern or complaint seriously, however it is made, whether in person, by telephone or in writing (letter or e-mail)
- deal with each concern or complaint promptly and politely; where appropriate, this may be by telephone or in conversation
- respond appropriately, with for example
  - an explanation
  - an apology, if we have made an error
  - information on the action we have taken
- learn from the concerns and complaints of parents and students by referring the outcomes to the Senior Management Team and keep confidential records of complaints (and whether they are resolved at a preliminary stage or proceed to a full panel hearing) so that they are available for consultation in the future

## **PROCEDURE FOR RAISING A CONCERN OR MAKING A COMPLAINT**

### **Stage 1 - Informal raising and resolution of concerns – Contact Senior Tutor**

Most problems or uncertainties at College begin life as concerns. We hope that you will feel that such concerns can initially be raised and resolved on an informal basis. You should always feel free to speak in person or by phone to the appropriate member of the College staff, or to write a letter or e-mail.

When a concern is raised, the Senior Tutor will acknowledge the message and respond to the concern as quickly as possible but certainly within five working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the College holidays. If we are not able to provide a full reply within this time, for instance because an investigation is necessary, we will tell the parent or student what is being done and when they can expect a full reply. We will

usually respond by telephone to matters raised orally and make a written response to matters raised in writing, unless told otherwise. Once an initial response has been made to you will be asked to confirm your satisfaction with this process. If you are not satisfied, you will be asked if you would like a meeting in College to see if the problem can be resolved. If you are unable to attend such a meeting or think it is not appropriate, it may be suggested that you raise the matter at the next highest or any further level.

## **Stage 2- Formal complaint to Senior Management – Contact the Assistant Principal (Academic Administration) or the Vice Principal.**

There are two reasons why you might wish to make a formal complaint:

- if you feel that your initial expression of concern has not been:
  - handled properly by a member of staff
  - resolved within a reasonable period
  - resolved in a satisfactory way
- if you feel that your complaint is more serious than a concern

Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint should, where details have not already been made available via Stage 1 of the process, send full written details to the College of the nature of the complaint, including any relevant documents and full contact details in an email addressed as follows:

- If the complaint concerns an academic matter or a wider question of College policy or procedure to the Assistant Principal (Academic Administration)
- If the complaint concerns a pastoral or welfare matter, to the Vice Principal.

It would be very helpful if you could also indicate what you envisage as the desired outcome.

After considering the complaint, the person written to:

- will if necessary consult other colleagues, and will decide upon the appropriate course of action to take

- may ask to meet you for a discussion about the problem, normally within 10 days of receiving the complaint
- will conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or students involved

If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. You will receive a written response to your complaint, giving reasons for the way the complaint has been resolved.

In more complex cases it may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations that may delay a resolution. Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made about how best to resolve the complaint, and parents informed of this decision in writing (within a further 14 working days after the initial discussion). The letter will also give reasons for the decision.

### **Stage 3 - Panel Hearing**

If you still feel dissatisfied after going through stage 2 or your complaint concerns the Principal, please contact the College's Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will acknowledge requests within five working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the College holidays.

Within five working days of the acknowledgement, The Chair of Governors will convene a panel of at least two members of the Governing Board and one person independent of the College and Governing Body consider the complaint. No member of the panel may have any involvement with any matter detailed in the complaint. At least 10 days' notice will be given of the date on which the Panel will meet.

You may attend the Panel Hearing and may be accompanied by one other person e.g. a relative or friend. Legal representation is only permitted if the Chair of Governors considers it appropriate. If it is considered appropriate, the Chair of Governors will inform you so that you may choose to be legally represented at the Hearing if you so wish. Should you decide to be so represented you shall inform the Chair of Governors of your intention at least seven days before the date set for the Hearing. If you choose to be

legally represented the Chair of Governors will notify the other parties of that decision, to enable them to have legal representation at the Panel Hearing should they so wish.

If possible, the Panel will resolve a 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 relevant facts, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations. The Panel will write to you informing you of its decision and the reasons for it within seven days of reaching this decision. The Panel's findings and any recommendations are sent in writing by email or in hard copy to you, the Principal, members of the Governing Body and, where relevant, the person(s) about whom the complaint was made. A copy of the Panel's findings will be made available by the Principal for inspection on the College premises. The decision of the Panel is final.

## **RECORDS AND CONTACTS**

### **Record-keeping**

A written record is kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with this policy and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and action taken by the College as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Written records are kept of all complaints, of all meetings and interviews held in relation to complaints, and of the outcomes of complaints. All correspondence, statements and records of concerns must be kept confidential but must be shown to ISI when they inspect.

Parents, guardians and carers can be assured that all concerns and complaints are treated seriously and confidentially with due compliance with GDPR regulations. Correspondence, statements and records are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Education Act, as amended, requests access to them, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

## **Review**

The Senior Management Team will review complaints annually.

## **Stage 4 complaints received in the College year 2020/21**

None

## **Contact details**

All contact details are available on the College website or can be supplied in hard copy on request.

### **Chair of Governors: Johnathan Cuff**

Doverbroecks

111 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6JX

Email: [Jonathan.Cuff@doverbroecks.com](mailto:Jonathan.Cuff@doverbroecks.com)

Tel: 01865 688500

### **Principal: Mr Mark Love**

Oxford Sixth Form College, 12 King Edward Street, Oxford OX1 4HT

(Please mark envelope Private and Confidential)

Email: [mark.love@oxfordsixthformcollege.com](mailto:mark.love@oxfordsixthformcollege.com)

Tel: 01865 793333

### **Vice Principal: Carole Nyssen**

Oxford Sixth Form College, 12 King Edward Street, Oxford OX1 4HT

(Please mark envelope Private and Confidential)

Email: [carole.nyssen@oxfordsixthformcollege.com](mailto:carole.nyssen@oxfordsixthformcollege.com)

Tel: 01865 793333

### **Assistant Principal (Academic Administration): Marc Lewis**

Oxford Sixth Form College, 12 King Edward Street, Oxford OX1 4HT

(Please mark envelope Private and Confidential).

Email: [Marc.Lewis@oxfordsixthformcollege.com](mailto:Marc.Lewis@oxfordsixthformcollege.com)

Tel: 01865 793333

## **National bodies**

### **Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI).**

The College is registered with the Department for Education as a 15-19 school. The College is inspected by the ISI.

Details of the Government and ISI's role with regard to complaints can be found via:

[www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/private-schools](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/private-schools)

[www.isi.net/parents-and-pupils/concerns-about-a-school](http://www.isi.net/parents-and-pupils/concerns-about-a-school)

### **The Children's Commissioner**

[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

The role of the Children's Commissioner was created by the Children Act 2004 and has been strengthened by the Children and Families Act 2014. The Children's Commissioner has a legal duty to promote and protect the rights of all children in England with a particular focus on children and young people with difficulties or challenges in their lives, and in particular those living away from home, in or leaving care, or receiving social care services. Her work focuses on making sure that adults in charge, or making decisions, listen to what children and young people say about things that affect them.

Children's Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings

20 Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT

The free phone number is **0800 528 0731**; email [advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk).

The line is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

## **General Advice**

Complaints Policy 2021 - 22



If parents or students are unsure about a situation or events, several organisations will speak to them in confidence to advise what would be the best thing to do:

NSPCC: 01793 683100

Childline: 0800 1111

Kidscape: 020 7730 3300

### **Child Protection**

If parents or students are concerned that a student may be at risk of harm, please see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for details of how to contact the relevant authorities.