



Complaints Policy and Procedure for Students

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By whom:	Principal

Introduction

This policy is addressed to students at Oxford International College so that if a student has cause for complaint that relates to any aspect of College life, every effort can be made to address this complaint in accordance with a fair procedure.

Timescales

This procedure needs to be applied with common sense and judgement; the College recognises that it is of utmost importance that students' complaints are addressed in a timely manner. However, due to limitations on personnel in half term and the holidays, it is only natural that complaints raised in term time will be dealt with more quickly than those raised in school holidays. The College is aware that students' concerns can be particularly upsetting to their studies and may have an impact on their time out of school; so it is important to the College to deal with these matters swiftly.

However, the College asks students to be tolerant of the limitations imposed by the working week and understand that only the most serious of complaints will be dealt with in special meetings after school hours or over the weekend. For any normal concern, it is reasonable to expect redress within the timescales set out below.

The College takes any threat to the safety and welfare of students very seriously and will respond to any student complaints that are indicative of a health and safety concern, a threat to a student's welfare inside or outside of the College, or a situation that may place or have placed a child or vulnerable adult in danger immediately.

Confidentiality

A written record will be kept of all complaints and their resolution. Correspondence, statements, and records relating to grievance matters will be kept *confidential*. No student should feel afraid that their complaint will harm their standing at the College by influencing teaching or administrative staff; or feel afraid that registering a complaint might unduly influence their applications to other educational institutions. The College is aware that fear of reprisals can prevent complaints and would like to reassure students: please feel free to register your concerns with the College, confidentiality is taken very seriously.

The following steps should be followed by any student who has a complaint

a. Share Your Concern

If you have a concern, it is best to share it as soon as possible. Problems should be resolved promptly, fairly and as directly as possible. The Principal and the Director of Studies will be happy to see you to discuss any concerns you would like to raise. If you feel more comfortable talking to a tutor or to your personal tutor, then do raise the concern with them so that they can relate the details of your concern to the Principal, Chief Education Officer or the Director of Studies on your behalf.

b. Raise a Formal Complaint

It may be the case that your concern is of such a serious, detailed or delicate nature that you would prefer to write out an explanation of your concern. In many cases, writing down the nature of your concern, including details and the resolution you desire can be very helpful toward the process of resolving the concern. After writing down your concern please give it to the Principal, Chief Education Officer or the Director of Studies as you prefer.

****It is not necessary to formally raise a concern in writing for it to be taken seriously; concerns raised orally or in an informal note or electronic mail will be given due attention.**

Investigation

The Director of Studies, Chief Education Officer or the Principal will investigate the facts and potential solutions to your concern.

Meeting

After your concern has been raised and investigated, you will be invited to a meeting with the Principal, Deputy Principals or Chief Education Officer to discuss the matter. You will be informed in advance of the date, time and location of the meeting. The College make sure that, unless the complaint is about a very serious matter, the meeting does not conflict with your classes. The purpose of this meeting is to listen to your concerns. If you feel you would be more comfortable discussing how you feel with a friend, parent, or tutor present, you may be accompanied by one person to support you. You may be asked to write down some of your specific concerns, if you have not already done so. Any minutes or notes taken will be shared with you, and the copy kept by the College will remain confidential.

****The meeting is intended to be a sympathetic, as in not adversarial, environment. Students should not worry about preparing for this meeting.**

Decision

While in the meeting, the Principal, Chief Education Officer or Deputy Principals will make decisions and help you form plans of action to make sure that your complaint is addressed. Solutions brainstormed in this meeting will need to not only satisfy your complaint, but also meet the needs of the College, especially in respect of safeguarding the rights of other students and respecting the needs of tutors and staff. In the meeting, an action plan with dates and times to follow up on the outcome of the meeting will be agreed. The Principal may also want to schedule a follow up meeting to check and see that your complaint is being successfully addressed.

Appeal

Should you be dissatisfied with the outcome of the meeting, you may appeal the decision by notifying the Principal or the Chief Education Officer. At this point, it will be necessary for you to write down the nature of your complaint, and the reasons why you would like to appeal the outcome of your meeting with the Principal.

Appeal procedure

The Principal or a Member of the Board of Governors will investigate your complaint and invite you to attend a further meeting. As at the grievance meeting, you may be accompanied by one person for support. At this point, the College may also wish to invite your parents or guardians to the meeting.

NB: If the matter remains unresolved, the student's appeal will be completely independent. Therefore, if the Principal has been involved at an earlier stage, at the point of appeal, an independent person will become involved, such as a Member of the Board of Governors.

Outcome

After the appeal meeting the Principal will either uphold or nullify the decision taken earlier by a Member of the Board of Governors. You will be notified in writing of the Principal's decision, and if they have reached a different conclusion the terms of their decision will be set out. You should expect to find:

- b. What steps the College will take to address your complaint.
- c. An estimated timescale for review of those steps.

Record Keeping

It is in the interest of all parties involved that students' complaints are resolved in a timely manner and in such a way that the resolution is perceived to be fair and productive for improving the learning environment at Oxford International College. To help achieve this, meticulous records must be kept as follows:

- A record is made of every complaint.
- Each stage of the process is recorded with clear dates and references to everyone involved.
- If the matter remains unresolved, the student's appeal will be completely independent. Therefore, if the Principal has been involved at an earlier stage, at the point of appeal an independent person will become involved such as a Member of the Board of Governors.

College Listener

The College has a listener and students are made aware of this. The listener can be called in confidence by any student if they want to discuss any concern of any nature. Details of the College Listener are available on notice boards around the College.

Further information

If you have any questions about the Complaints Policy and Procedure for Students at Oxford International College, please contact:

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