Halliford School
SHEPPERTON

Complaints Policy

June 2026

Approved by the Governing Body June 2026
To be reviewed June 2027

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Introduction

Halliford School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. However, if parents do have a concern or a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this Procedure, which will be made available to them on request to the School Office.

A copy is displayed on the school website and parents of students and of prospective students who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.

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. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you raise in good faith.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

1. It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally. Most complaints do not go past this stage.

2. If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their son/daughter's Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for the issue to be raised with the Deputy Head (Academic) if an academic matter or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) if it is a pastoral matter or the Head of Sixth Form if it relates to a student in the Sixth Form.

3. Complaints made directly to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff or the Deputy Heads unless in exceptional circumstances the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally.

4. The member of staff will make a written record of all complaints and their outcome and the date on which they were received. All complaints will be acknowledged within two working days. Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days within term time or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised by the member of staff to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage two of this Procedure.

5. A written record of all complaints is kept for at least three years whether they are resolved at this stage or proceed to subsequent stages.

6. If, however, the complaint is against the Headmaster, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors, Mr K Woodward, email – clerktogovernors@hallifordschool.co.uk

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Stage 2 – Formal Resolution – First Stage

1. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis with the member of staff or the Deputy Heads or Head of Sixth Form, then the parents should put their complaint in writing preferably using the form located at the end of this document to the Headmaster.

2. Written complaints will be recorded in the Complaints file held by the school and will be acknowledged within two working days during term time. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

3. In most cases, the Headmaster or the Deputy Heads will meet or speak to the parents concerned, within ten working days during term time of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

4. It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.

5. The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

6. 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 parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for the decision. Complainants will be notified of the outcome of any investigation within fifteen working days during term time of the school receiving a complaint.

7. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage three of this Procedure.

8. If the complaint is against the Headmaster, this should be sent in writing to the Chair of Governors, Mr K Woodward, email – clerktogovernors@hallifordschool.co.uk

Stage 3 – Formal Resolution – Second Stage

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors (Bursar), who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

1. The matter will then be referred to the Complaints 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 (normally two governors plus another person). Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and arrange a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fifteen working days during term time.

2. The Panel may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars will be supplied to all parties not later than seven working days prior to the hearing.

3. The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The panel will proceed without the parent(s) present if necessary to bring the matter to a conclusion.

4. The panel will not meet if the parent(s) indicate they are now satisfied and they do not want to proceed further.

5. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

6. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.

7. The Chair of the Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within ten working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster. The Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster.

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing. At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of student
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name 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)
- Actions on behalf of the school following the resolution of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld or not)

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a Body conducting an Inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, delete comma requests access to them or where disclosure is required under other legal authority or court order.

Complaints Record 2025 – 2026

There was one formal complaint recorded during the period June 2025 – June 2026

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will normally be acknowledged within two working days, if received during term time, and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure each within twenty working days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will normally be completed within a further twenty-five working days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

External Agencies

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 6(3)(f) of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as subsequently amended); by the Secretary of State, or where disclosure is required by the ISI under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority, in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Parents may also wish to contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate for further assistance.

Independent Schools Inspectorate, 9 - 12 Long Lane, London. EC1A 9HA 020 7600 0100 or concerns@isi.net

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Appendix: Complaints Procedure

Independent Member of the Panel

The DfE has supplied the following guidance:

Whilst we do not wish to be prescriptive about who schools should appoint as an independent person our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered by schools. Schools will of course have their own views.

Governors asked if it would be acceptable to appoint former governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member. The regulations do not preclude this since the stipulation is that the person must be independent of the management and running of the school. Clearly former governors or staff would not have any such involvement. However, schools should bear in mind that they may be subject to criticism that such people would remain too close to the school and would not be truly independent.

Convening Panel

Where the parent is not satisfied with the school's response to their complaint at Stage 2 stage two and indicates a wish to continue to Stage 3, for compliance purposes a panel hearing should take place even if the parent later indicated that they are now satisfied. The panel hearing should, in this case, proceed even if the parent subsequently decides not to attend. If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion. The requirement for the panel to proceed does not prevent the school from accommodating parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning panel composition.

From January 2015, 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 only, schools are required to record whether they are then resolved at that stage or proceed to a panel hearing. It is up to schools to determine whether or how they also wish to keep a record of informal complaints. Inspectors may advise that many proprietors wish to ensure records are kept, even of informal complaints, for management purposes to enable patterns of low-level concern to be monitored, though this is not a requirement.

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Headmaster – head.pa@hallifordschool.co.uk

If your concern is specifically about the Headmaster, please complete and return to the Chair of Governors, Mr K Woodward, email – clerktogovernors@hallifordschool.co.uk

An electronic copy of the form is available from the Headmaster's PA via e-mail - head.pa@hallifordschool.co.uk

The School will accept complaints in any written form.

Halliford School
SHEPPERTON

Complaint Form

Basic Details	
Student Name	
Complainant's Name	
Relationship to the Student	
Address	
E-mail	
Telephone number(s)	

What is your complaint regarding? *(please mark with a x all relevant areas below)*			
Safeguarding		SEN/D	
Health and Safety		Catering	
Curriculum		Uniform	
Student Behaviour		Communication	
Staff Behaviour		Other (please state)	

Please give a brief description of your complaint
How have you already expressed your concern to the School? *We cannot investigate your complaint if you have not taken the opportunity to address your concern informally at an early stage.*
What has the School done to address your initial complaint / concern so far? (Who, What, Where, How, When)

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Name of the person who originally considered your initial concern / complaint
What actions will resolve the problem for you now?

Signature	
Name	
Date	