



Harrogate Ladies' College

Parents' Complaints Policy

Aims and Ethos

Our aim is to educate professional women of the future. Education is more than examination success, important though that is. It is the girls' futures in every sense that matter.

- Girls are expected to conduct themselves around the College in a polite and civilised manner.
- Respect should be shown for others by working sensibly in lessons and so not disrupt the learning of others.
- Consideration should be shown for others by moving around the building quietly and carefully.
- All students should be punctual and well prepared for their lessons. They should come equipped for the day wearing the correct clothing and with everything they will need for lessons.

Our promise

The College is committed to providing quality teaching and achieving the highest standards of conduct (and has adopted these commitments as College values). One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our provision of these is by listening and responding to the views of the parents/guardians.

Therefore we aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- we treat a complaint as clear expression of dissatisfaction, which calls for a response;
- we treat it seriously whether it is made in person, by telephone, by letter, by fax, or by e-mail;
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, where appropriate, informally (for example, by telephone);
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc;
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our school.

Complaints Procedure

- Complaints are to be made and considered initially on an informal basis (by telephone, e-mail or visit for example) with the member of staff or Head of Department (HOD) involved.
- Where parents are not satisfied with the response to the initial/informal complaint made, the complaint should be put in writing to the Headmistress.
- Where parents are not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in writing to the Headmistress, a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the governing body and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint will be arranged.
Correspondence to the Governors should be made in writing, addressed to the Chair of Governors, marked clearly on a sealed envelope and either handed or posted to the school office. This will be forwarded to him/her.

- i) Where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one person will be independent of the management and running of the school
 - ii) Parents may attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing - if they wish
 - iii) The panel is to make findings and recommendations and these are to be passed in writing to the complainant, governor(s) and Headmistress and where relevant the person complained about.
- A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the informal, preliminary written stage or proceed to a panel hearing. Details of all complaints are to be passed to the Headmistress's office. All 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 163 of the 2002 Act requests access to them. These records must also comply with Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools
- The over all time scale for the management of a complaint is aimed to be:
 - i) 2 days to acknowledge receipt of complaint (which may also serve as the initial informal approach) (Member of staff or HOD)
 - ii) 3 days to arrange an informal exploration of the complaint (member of staff or HOD)
 - iii) 7 days for an answer from the Headmistress in response to a written complaint
 - iv) panel to be convened within 21 days of receiving written complaint

This time scale may need to adapt, with all parties' agreement, if the school holidays are underway.