

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

### INTRODUCTION

Glenalmond welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and others and always takes seriously any complaints or concerns that they may raise. This document is intended to act as a guide to assist both parents and pupils in making a complaint if they wish to do so.

The process is intended to be open and transparent in the interests of the quick resolution of problems when they arise and, of course, of the well being and education of the pupils.

It is to be hoped that serious complaints will be few and far between. In many, perhaps even in most cases a complaint could be better described as a concern and parents should always feel able to raise concerns directly with the appropriate member of staff.

**Nevertheless the College recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care. A complaint will be treated as a serious expression of dissatisfaction which needs a response.**

We wish to ensure that:

- Parents or pupils wishing to make a complaint know how to do so.
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way.
- Parents know that we listen and that we take complaints seriously
- We take action where appropriate.
- Parents and pupils are confident that they can complain without there being adverse effects on the pupil/themselves as a consequence.

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem and may arise if a Parent thinks that the College has, for example:

- Done something wrong.
- Failed to do something it should have done.
- Acted unfairly or impolitely.
- Been impolite.
- Not given due consideration to a matter.

### The Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Parents who feel they have concerns are encouraged in the first instance to contact their son's or daughter's Housemaster or Housemistress. He or she will always take what they consider to be the appropriate action and this may involve consulting the Warden or Sub-Warden. Complaints can be made by talking directly to a member of staff, over the telephone or in writing via email or letter and they will always be taken seriously. The school will reply to your complaint within three days and every effort will be made to address the issue. It is to be hoped that an open and balanced

approach by Parents at the appropriate level, often to Housestaff, and a prompt and sympathetic response by College staff will result in the majority of complaints being easily resolved. We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least feel that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

Stage 2: If you are not satisfied, the Warden will offer to refer the matter to the Chairman of Council. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chairman via the Bursar who will forward mail to the Chairman unopened (see end of document for contact details). The Chairman will call for a full report from the Warden, and will examine matters thoroughly. Whilst investigating, the Chairman will advise the parents of the action being taken and when a full response can be expected. The Chairman may be able to offer a new approach or a positive solution. If not, the Chairman will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend, although legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.

Stage 3: If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter would be referred to the College's Conciliation Committee<sup>1</sup>. It is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Committee Convener will invite you to a meeting at which the Warden will attend if appropriate. You will be asked if there is any further information you would like the Committee to consider beforehand. As with the Chairman's meeting, you will be invited to bring a friend with you. The Conciliation Committee will report its findings to the Chairman of Council.

We hope that we shall be able to satisfy your concerns. If we are unable to do so, you may wish to contact the Registrar of Independent Schools in the Scottish Government, the Care Inspectorate or seek legal advice. Contact details can be found at the end of this document.

### **Action taken by staff**

Staff should receive complaints in a positive, professional manner and they should be taken seriously. The member of staff may have to seek advice from the relevant Head of Department or Sub Warden. All complaints, written or verbal, should be dealt with promptly with an initial response within three days.

In some circumstances, the staff member you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and investigate matters further before responding fully. In order to reduce uncertainty, staff will advise parents what is happening and by what date a more detailed response can be expected. As soon as possible after the investigation is completed but normally within ten working days, a letter or report will be sent giving the outcome of the complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any appropriate action taken or proposed.

All complaints should be recorded by the member of staff receiving the complaint and this will include details of the concern and the action taken. It is important that notes of meetings, discussions and telephone conversations are also included. Formal complaints should also be recorded in the Complaints file held by the Warden's Office.

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<sup>1</sup> The Conciliation Committee is composed of three members appointed by the Chairman of Council, at least two of whom will be Council members, none of whom have been previously involved in the matter.

## **Confidentiality**

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential and respectful manner. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Warden and to those directly involved or who need to be involved in an investigation. The Chairman of Council may also need to be informed. It is the College's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also of the identity of those involved. This would happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. You would normally be fully informed but the College has a statutory duty to inform outside agencies in certain cases irrespective of parental wishes.

Complaints about members of staff need sensitive handling and may need to be dealt with by the College's disciplinary or other internal procedures. This means that in some cases the College's actions following a complaint may be in itself subject to confidentiality; where this is necessary parents will however be informed that the matter is being dealt with.

## **Complaints made by Pupils**

All pupils should feel entitled to complain if they feel aggrieved, they should feel confident that they will be listened to and they should know how to proceed. In the first instance, the Housemaster or Housemistress should be the first point of contact. Alternatively College Prefects can often be helpful and the Tutor, Chaplain and Medical Staff are also suitable adults to approach. In addition, any pupil may approach the Warden or Sub-Wardens with a complaint or problem at any time. There is a summary of the Complaints Procedure in the Pupils' Prep Diary.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Author/Reviewer</b>
0.1	1/9/2018	Reviewed	C Henderson
0.2	27/01/20	reviewed	S Sinclair
0.3	26/8/22	Reviewed	S Sinclair

**Useful Contacts:**

**Sub Warden Pastoral**

Mrs Sarah Sinclair

[sarahsinclair@glenalmondcollege.co.uk](mailto:sarahsinclair@glenalmondcollege.co.uk)

**The Chairman of Council**

c/o Bursar

Glenalmond College

Perth

PH1 3RY

**The Registrar of  
Independent Schools**

The Scottish Government  
Schools Directorate

Area 2D South

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

0131 244 0941

[indeschools@scotland.gov.gsi.uk](mailto:indeschools@scotland.gov.gsi.uk)

**The Care Inspectorate**

Compass House

11 Riverside Drive

Dundee

DD1 4NY

0845 600 9527

Email:

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)