

STOCKPORT GRAMMAR SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

(Approved by Governors 27.03.07)
(Revisions approved by Governors 06.10.09)

Introduction

Stockport Grammar School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- In the Senior School if parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Head of Year. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Head of Year cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department, the Director of Studies or the Proctor. In the Junior School, parents should contact the Junior School Headmaster, who will determine how best to address the issue.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, the Director of Studies, the Proctor or the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Head of Year unless the Head of Department, the Director of Studies, the Proctor or the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Head of Year (or Head of the Junior School) will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved **within fourteen working days** or in the event that the Head of Year (or Head of the Junior School) and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster of Stockport Grammar School who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally **within seven working days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep a written record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 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 give written reasons for the decision within seven working days and explain the right to proceed to Stage 3 and what that entails.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision of the Headmaster, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Appeals Committee Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they must give notice in writing to the Bursar of their intention to appeal setting out their grounds. This notice must be given within five working days of receiving the decision at stage 2 above.
- A tribunal of the Appeals Committee will normally hear the appeal within ten working days of the Bursar receiving the notice in writing.
- The tribunal will be convened in accordance with the Appeal Committee's terms of reference.
- The appeal will take the form of a review.
- The Headmaster or person whose decision is being reviewed is entitled to be present and may be accompanied.
- Whilst legal representation is not permitted, parents may be accompanied at the hearing by a friend, representative or companion.
- The tribunal may give its decision orally. The decision and reasons will be sent in writing to the parent(s) and to the school, normally within ten working days.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails

NOTES

1. "Working day" is defined as "any day during which the School is in session and excludes staff in-service (inset) days".
2. Where a notice has to be given "within" a specified time from some event, the day on which the event occurred is excluded but the day on which the notice is served is included.
3. If the time limits specified are affected by a day or days when the School is not in session the timetable will be determined by the Chairman of the Appeals Committee or by a Vice Chairman of the Governing Body.
4. There is a presumption that time limits will be adhered to. In exceptional circumstances application to extend may be made in writing with supporting reasons when submitting a late appeal.
5. All supporting documentation in relation to an appeal (including the School's response, if any) must be exchanged so as to allow a minimum of two clear working days before the date set for the hearing.
6. Remit of friend, representative or companion – before the hearing takes place the party shall inform the Bursar whom they have chosen. Such person is allowed to put the case for the party, sum it up and respond on the party's behalf to any view expressed at the hearing. Such person may also confer with the party during the hearing. It is considered good practice to allow such person to participate as fully as the party wishes. Such person has no right to answer questions on the party's behalf, or to address the hearing if the party does not want this. NB the tribunal can regulate its own proceedings.
7. A review will concentrate upon whether the decision taken is in accordance with the policy and whether the outcome is reasonable in all the circumstances. NB the tribunal can regulate its own proceedings.