

Earlscliffe (Earlscliffe Ltd)

Policy: COMPLAINTS POLICY

Member of SLT responsible: Head Teacher (Title not name)

Date of review: November 2023

Date of next review: November 2024 (November of following school year)

CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS/FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This policy is applicable to all students / parents in the college, and to external parties such as neighbours or visitors

Our aim is to resolve concerns at the earliest possible opportunity. We see our close links and direct communication as a distinctive strength. Most concerns are resolved informally but the procedure clarifies the referral system and ensures that concerns are dealt with quickly and objectively. Staff are positively encouraged to resolve concerns at their level whilst keeping a record for future reference and ensuring that senior staff are kept informed and updated. You are welcome to speak to the Deputy Head or Assistant Head (Pastoral) at any stage.

If a concern is not resolved by the Deputy Head or Assistant Head (Pastoral) or the complainant is unhappy with the decision there is a right of appeal to the Head Teacher. The concern then becomes a Complaint.

Concerns

A concern may be about any aspect of college life e.g. homework, marking and assessment, teaching in a lesson, behaviour, support and guidance, safety.

Stage 1 concern: Contact a staff member on an informal basis. Explain the concern and ask for an explanation. The staff member will try to respond immediately or within 24 hours at most, but they may need more time than that and will indicate a time scale if that is the case. If they cannot resolve the concern, contact the staff member's line manager e.g. Deputy Head, Assistant Head (Pastoral), depending on the issue, who will investigate and report back. The concern and answer will be recorded in writing and filed and shared with the Head Teacher. The Line Manager will respond within 72 hours of being informed of the issue. We aim to reach a final resolution within 7 working days of the issue being raised to this level.

Stage 2 complaint: If the matter is unable to be resolved at Stage 1 it will be referred to the Head Teacher who will investigate and answer the matter directly within 72 hours of being informed of the issue. At this stage, the matter is classified as a complaint. The vast majority of matters will finally be resolved by this stage. We aim to reach a final resolution within 7 working days of the issue being raised to Stage 2. At this level a complaints form will be created and logged.

Reviewed and updated November 2023

Stage 3: Formal Complaint: If you are unhappy with the Head Teacher's decision or the complaint is not resolved you have the right of appeal to the Managing Director. The Managing Director will make provision for a hearing, within 7 working days, before a panel consisting of at least three people who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the formal complaint. One member of the panel is independent of the management and running of the school. Parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied if they wish. The panel will make findings and recommendations and ensure the complainant, Managing Director and where relevant the person complained about is given a copy of them. This will be within 7 working days of the meeting. Formal complaints will be confidential and written records will be kept of whether they were resolved at a preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.


Concerns about Fees

Contact the college and register your concern with the bursar, helensimmonds@earlscliffe.co.uk, who will respond within 72 hours. Most concerns will be resolved at this level. If you are not satisfied with the outcome you should contact the Head Teacher, josswilliams@earlscliffe.co.uk.

Important

All complaints and formal complaints will be collated; written records kept and will be confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. Although replies to concerns/complaints/formal complaints will be prompt there may be a delay in the outcome while the complaint is investigated and information gathered. All records of complaint are reviewed regularly by the SLT and reported to Governors termly, and may be acted upon as necessary, whether or not the complaint is upheld. All records are available for inspections on the premises, including any findings and recommendations made by Governors. All records will state if the complaint has been resolved, and if so, at what stage. In general a record of the complaint will be kept for three years, including whether those complaints have been resolved, or proceeded to a panel hearing.

You may contact ISI for advice about complaints. If a complaint is sensitive in nature or particularly confidential, do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Head, Assistant Head (Pastoral) or Head Teacher directly. Nobody will be penalised for making a complaint in good faith. All complaints will be resolved with an outcome that balances the rights and duties of the students.

 **Complaints Form - MASTER COPY**