

Earlscliffe (Earlscliffe Ltd)

Policy: COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS POLICY

Member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) responsible: Head Teacher

Date of review: June 2025

Date of next review: June 2026

This policy is applicable to all students and parents or guardians thereof attending the School and can also be used by any other party.

Concerns

A concern may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’. Concerns may include but are not exclusively, any aspect of school life e.g. homework, marking and assessment, teaching in a lesson, behaviour, support and guidance, health and safety. Most concerns are resolved informally.

Our aim is to resolve concerns at the earliest possible opportunity. We see our close links and direct communication as a distinctive strength. Staff are positively encouraged to resolve concerns at their level whilst keeping a record for future reference and ensuring that their line manager and the Deputy Head (Academic) and Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding) are kept informed and updated.

Staff are welcome to speak with their line manager and the Deputy Head (Academic) and Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding) at any stage to seek assistance with dealing with a concern.

Raising a 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 if they need more time than that an indicative timescale for a response will be provided. If they cannot resolve the concern, they will contact their line manager who will investigate and report back. The Line Manager will respond within 72 hours of being informed of the issue. The concern and answer of the line manager will be recorded in writing and filed. We aim to reach a final resolution to the concern within 7 working days of the issue being raised with the relevant line manager.

If a concern is not resolved by staff it becomes a complaint.

Complaints

A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

Where an issue has not been resolved within the process of Concerns as described above or is of a nature as described immediately above, it leads to a complaint.

The following process is applied when dealing with complaints.

Raising a Complaint

Stage 1: Contact either the Deputy Head (Academic) or Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding). Explain the nature of and reason for the complaint. The Deputy Head concerned will investigate and report back within 72 hours of being informed of the issue. The vast majority of matters will finally be resolved by this stage. The complaint and response will be recorded in writing and filed and shared with the Head Teacher. We aim to reach a final resolution within 7 working days of the issue being raised to this level.

Stage 2: 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. The complaint and response of the Head Teacher will be recorded in writing and filed. We aim to reach a final resolution within 7 working days of the issue being raised with the Head Teacher.

Stage 3: If you disagree with the Head Teacher's decision you have the right of appeal to the School's governors. Contact details of the relevant governor will be made available to you by the Head Teacher upon you providing notification of your disagreement with the resolution proposed. The Governing body will make provision for a hearing within 10 working days of you informing them of your wish to submit an appeal.

Your appeal will be heard 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 will be independent of the management and running of the School. In addition to the complainant if not a parent of a student at the School, parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied if they wish.

The panel will make a decision upon the complaint and ensure the complainant, governing body and where relevant the person complained about, is given a copy of their findings. This will be within 7 working days of the meeting.

The decision of the panel is final and cannot be subject to appeal.

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.

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 inspection 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.

If a complaint is sensitive in nature or particularly confidential, do not hesitate to contact the 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 School and the complainant.

Contact for Complaints

Deputy Head (Academic) nialljohnson@earlscliffe.co.uk

Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding) and Designated Safeguarding Lead
peterscargill@earlscliffe.co.uk

School Telephone: 01303 253 951

In the academic year 2024/25, the School received two complaints at Stage 2 of the Complaints process and zero complaints at Stage 3 of the Complaints process

Approved by Chair of Governors: Aatif Hassan

Signed on his behalf by Managing Director: Jonathan Cuff

Date: 20.05.2025

Signature:

