Marymount
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL LONDON

Complaints Procedure

This policy is made available to current parents/guardians of all girls, day and boarding, on the School website, in the Student/Parent Handbook and on request from the School Office. It is available to the Staff at the School from the School website, in the Staff Handbook and on request from the School Office. Content of this policy is directly discussed with new staff upon induction into the School. This policy is written with reference to parents of current registered students (i.e. those students on the current school roll), and parents of past students if the complaint was initially raised when the student was still registered. Complaints should normally be raised within three months of the incident giving rise to the complaint or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of those incidents. Complaints submitted outside this timeframe will only be considered where exceptional circumstances apply. All timescales referred to in this procedure relate to periods when the School is open. Complaints received outside term time will be deemed to have been received on the first school day following the holiday period.

If parents have a complaint, the School will respond in accordance with the following:

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

In the event of a complaint, parents should contact their daughter's Advisor in person or by letter to outline the specific details. In most cases, it is hoped that the matter will be resolved by this means to the parents' satisfaction. However, if the Advisor cannot resolve the matter, it may be necessary to bring it to:

1. The Head of Year
2. The Head of Boarding for boarding complaints
3. Relevant Deputy Head:
   - Deputy Head Academic for matters pertaining to learning and teaching;
   - Deputy Head Pastoral for pastoral and safeguarding concerns;
   - Deputy Head Operations and Co-Curricular for matters relating to the organisational running of the School and Co-curricular programmes
4. Bursar for complaints relating to business and finance

The member of staff who is dealing with the matter 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 ten working days during term time, or within ten working days following the recommencement of term where a complaint is received during a holiday period, parents will be advised to proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

The headmistress will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days during term time. In most cases, the Headmistress will meet or speak to the parents concerned within five working days

during term time of acknowledging the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Headmistress to carry out further investigations.

The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Once the Headmistress 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 within ten working days of the meeting or conversation to discuss the complaint. The Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision. Where further investigation is required, parents will be informed of revised timescales.

If parents wish to proceed to Stage 3 they should notify the School in writing within five working days of receipt of the Stage 2 outcome.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Convenor, who will be appointed by the Board of Governors, to call hearings of the Complaints' Panel. The formal complaint will need to be put in writing by the complainant in order to commence to this Stage 3 Procedure.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints' Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. The other two Panel members will be appointed by the Board of Governors. All panel members shall have no prior involvement in the matters giving rise to the complaint.

Legal representation will not normally be appropriate and may be excluded at the discretion of the chair of the Panel. The Panel will normally provide its written finding and recommendations within five working days of the Hearing. Where further investigation is required, parents will be advised of any revised timescale.

The Panel Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and either:

i. confirm that the panel will initially determine the complaint by written determination having received relevant papers in the mail.

or

ii. schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable with parents or guardians and within 21 days of term time.

- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any relevant matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five days prior to the hearing.

- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate or permitted.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within five working days of term time of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmistress, the Board of Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. It will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the Board and the Headmistress or a body conducting an inspection.
- A written record will be kept of all formal complaints, and of whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing. Additionally, a written record will be kept of any action taken by the school as a result of those complaints regardless of whether they are upheld or not. The record will include details of the complaint, its outcome, the stage at which it was resolved and any actions taken by the School as a result of the complaint, whether or not the complaint is upheld.

Confidentiality

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 Part 7, paragraph 33 (k) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations (2014); where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails. Maintenance of records and disclosure of them will also apply to any other action taken by the School as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). Records will be retained for 7 years unless they are of a safeguarding nature with complaints categorised clearly as related to day or boarding. Records concerning allegations of abuse must be preserved for the term of the Independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy. The School hopes that all complaints can be reasonably resolved at the School through the Complaints Procedure.

2025/2026 Academic Year: One formal complaint

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Reviewed	September 2026
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