

M2 Complaints Policy

It is hoped that the School will continue to maintain excellent relationships with the parents and guardians of students attending the Purcell School. Nonetheless, there may be occasions during a student's time at The Purcell School when parents may feel they wish to make a complaint. If so, please follow this procedure.

Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem which has happened some time ago. Please state your problem or concern courteously: it does not help staff to resolve issues if intemperate or aggressive language is used, either in writing or in person.

We will normally try to resolve any complaints within 10 working days of them being raised, except where they are raised in school holidays, in which case we will try to resolve them within 10 working days of the start of the new school term.

Child Protection: Concerns regarding Child Protection are outside the scope of this procedure. If you have a concern regarding Child Protection, please contact the school's Designated Senior Person for Child Protection, Mrs Elizabeth Searle (Principal of Pastoral and Safeguarding) directly by telephoning the School Office (01923 331100).

Appeals against expulsion: These are heard under a different procedure, details of which are available in appendix I

Stage 1 (Informal)

1. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns can be resolved quickly and informally. Often there is a misunderstanding which can be easily resolved. If not, we will give you a chance to explain your concerns and will try to resolve them. Of course, this does not mean that in every case we will come round to your point of view but it will help both you and the school to understand both sides of the question. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.
2. The person best placed to deal with any concern and complaint will depend on the subject of your complaint, as follows:

Subject of complaint	Person to contact
General academic or pastoral matters	Tutor
Other academic matters, including the curriculum and special educational needs	Deputy Principal or Head of Sixth Form
Specialist music teaching or the music curriculum	Director of Music
Pastoral care, including boarding	Houseparents or Head of Pastoral & Safeguarding
Financial matters	The Bursar

If you are not sure who to contact, please contact the [School Office](#)

3. If you wish to discuss the problem face to face, the relevant member of staff will usually be able to see you on a school day before or after school. Please contact them by email in advance to make an appointment. Please do not simply turn up at school and expect to see someone, as they may not be available.
4. If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, or has not been resolved within 10 days, or if you have a serious complaint which you feel cannot be dealt with by the person above, you should then proceed to Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 (Formal)

1. If you believe that your complaint is sufficiently serious, or if the matter has not been resolved at Stage 1 above, you can make a formal complaint directly to the Principal. **This must be made courteously in writing, stating that you are making a formal complaint.** The Principal will acknowledge receipt of your complaint.
2. The Principal will usually delegate responsibility for undertaking investigation of the complaint to one of the Deputy Principal or another senior member of staff as appropriate. The designated person may ask to meet you for a discussion of the problem. You can take a friend or relation to this appointment with you if you wish, who should not be legally qualified, and legal representation will not normally be permitted. The designated person will then conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or students involved. A written record will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
3. Following the investigation, the Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. You will be informed of this decision in writing within 10 working days (school term-time) unless an extension is mutually agreed. The Principal may also ask to meet with you to explain the decision.
4. If your complaint is about an action of the Principal personally, then you can refer it in confidence to the Chairman of Governors. You can contact him by writing to him c/o the Deputy Bursar or by [email to the Deputy Bursar](#), **stating clearly that you are making a formal complaint.**

Stage 3 (Appeal)

1. If the matter is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you may wish to proceed to Stage 3, and ask for your complaint to be referred to a hearing panel. **The appeal must be made in writing, stating that you are making an Appeal.**
2. Your appeal should be addressed in confidence to the Chairman of Governors and sent to him c/o the [Deputy Bursar](#). The Deputy Bursar will acknowledge receipt of your complaint.
3. You must lodge your appeal within 10 working days of the date of the School's decision made in accordance with the Stage 2 Procedure. You should provide a list of your complaint(s) made against the school and which you believe not to have been resolved satisfactorily by the Stage 2 Procedure, along with the remedies sought in respect of each. You should also state whether you wish to attend the hearing, or whether the panel may deal with the matter based only on written submissions.
4. The Chairman of Governors will then convene a panel consisting of three individuals, two governors and one member who is independent of the management and running of the school, none of whom will have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and so will be able to give it a fresh assessment. The panel will convene as soon

as possible, normally within 10 working days (school term-time) of the receipt of your appeal.

5. If you have requested to attend the hearing, you will be invited to attend and speak to the panel; you may bring a friend or relative with you, who should not be legally qualified, and legal representation will not normally be permitted. The Principal will normally also attend the hearing, and may bring a colleague (normally the person who has investigated the matter under Stage 2 above).
6. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision, and may make recommendations, which it will endeavour to complete within 10 working days of the hearing. The decision reached by the Complaints Panel is final. The panel's findings will be sent in writing or email to the parents, the Principal, the Chairman of Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about. The letter will state any reasons for the decision reached and recommendations (if any) made by the Complaints Panel. The record of the the outcome of the hearing is kept in school in confidence, available to the Principal and the Chair of Governors.

Welfare of boarders (in accordance with National Minimum Boarding Standard 5.8)

Boarders or their parents who have a complaint about their welfare, which they feel has not been answered by the School's normal procedures can write to the Independent Schools' Inspectorate at:

ISI, First Floor, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA, or to info@isi.net

Alternatively, they may contact the Local Authority Designated Officer on 0300 123 4043.

Record Keeping

Confidential written records of all formal (Stage 2) complaints, actions taken by the school (whether or not the complaint is upheld) and their outcome (including whether they were resolved at Stage 2 or proceeded to a panel hearing) will be kept in a secure file by the Principal. The records can be read only by the Principal and the Chair of Governors.

Parents can be assured that all complaints and expressions of concern, whether raised informally or formally, will be treated seriously and confidentially. A written record will be kept of all complaints including:

- Whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing ii) Action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them

Policy author/reviewer:	Policy date/review date:	Next review due:
Paul Bambrough	December 2019	December 2020

Number of complaints at Stage 2 or above received in the academic year 2018-19: 3