D'OVERBROECK'S
OXFORD
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS

Last reviewed:	October 2026
Next review due:	September 2027
Reviewed by:	Principal
Approved by Board of Governors:	October 2026

1. Introduction

Frequent, open and constructive communication with parents has always been an important hallmark of life at d'Overbroeck's, and it is fully our intention to do all we can to ensure that this continues to be the case at every level. We welcome, and indeed regularly invite, comments and suggestions from parents; and we take equally seriously any complaints or concerns that a parent may wish to raise. We treat a complaint as an expression of genuine concern or unhappiness which needs careful consideration followed by a prompt and reasoned response.

This Complaints Procedure takes into account the regulatory requirements currently in force and is underpinned by a genuine desire to maintain within the school a flexible and responsive culture that recognises the need for a fair, objective and open-minded approach to dealing with complaints and concerns.

The school is happy to make this policy available in larger print or in a more accessible format if required.

2. Scope

The DfE defines a complaint as any matter about which a parent of a student at the school is unhappy and seeks action by the school. For the purposes of this policy, 'parent' includes a person with parental responsibility and any individual who has care of a child attending the school. This Complaints Procedure applies to parents of students currently registered at d'Overbroeck's. It applies to former students only if the complaint was initially raised when the student was still registered at d'Overbroeck's.

This policy does not apply to parents of prospective students, nor does it cover exclusions, ie, instances where a student has been asked to leave the school. Exclusions are addressed in the school's policy on 'Behaviour, Rules, Rewards and Sanctions', which is available from the policies page of the school website or on request from the school office.

This policy also does not cover complaints about how the school handles personal data. Any complaints of this nature must follow the procedure set out in the school's Data Protection Policy, which is also available from the school website.

3. What you should do if you have a complaint

If you have a complaint or a concern, please let us know at the earliest opportunity. This document sets out the procedure to follow if you wish to make a complaint and what you can expect from the school by way of a response.

The procedure is staged. Obviously our hope is that most issues can be resolved quickly and informally, but the policy sets out a clear procedure to follow in situations where a parent may feel that an informal resolution has not been possible.

3.1 STAGE 1: Informal Resolution

If there is anything, in any aspect of your child's life at d'Overbroeck's, that is troubling you, then we would urge you to let us know immediately, no matter how minor you may feel the matter to be. We will do our best to listen, to try to understand your concern, and to arrive at a resolution that meets with the satisfaction of all concerned.

It is best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue. The following guidelines should, in most cases, help you to identify the appropriate person to contact – but if in doubt please ask. You are welcome to contact the relevant staff members by telephone, by email, by letter or by calling in person.

- If your complaint relates to a boarding issue, then your first point of contact should be the Head of House.

For any other issue, please contact:

- in the Senior School: your child's Personal Tutor
- in the International Programme: your child's Personal Tutor
- in the Sixth Form: your child's Director of Studies

In the great majority of cases, it is likely that the appropriate member of staff will be able to address your concern effectively and straightforwardly. If they cannot resolve the matter alone, then it may be necessary for them to consult a more senior colleague.

You may yourself wish to address your concern directly to a more senior member of staff – in particular to the Head of Boarding, the Head of the Senior School, the Head of Sixth Form or the Head of the International School, either in the first place or if you feel that the person to whom you first addressed your complaint has not dealt with it to your satisfaction.

In all cases, members of staff who receive a complaint will make a record of the issue(s) involved and of the date on which the complaint was received.

Should the matter not be resolved within 10 normal school days, then you may wish to proceed with your complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Where additional time is required due to the complexity of the matter or the unavailability of key individuals, the school will keep parents informed of revised timescales and reasons for the delay.

In the event of a formal complaint about the Principal, this should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Governors, c/o the Principal's PA Joanna Smith, at the school's main address: 333 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7PL or by email joanna.smith@doverbroecks.com. The Chair will consider the complaint in accordance with the policy at Stage 1.

3.2 STAGE 2: Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then we would ask you to put your complaint in writing to the Principal.

Where the complaint concerns the Principal, Stage 2 will be undertaken by the Chair of Governors or another suitably independent Governor nominated by the Chair.

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Principal or nominated Governor will usually contact you within 7 normal school days to gather more detailed information where necessary, and to set out how they propose to proceed, including letting you know when he expects to be able to send a response.

Following this initial communication, the Principal or nominated Governor will need to discuss the matter with the relevant colleagues and / or students, to carry out any necessary investigations and, with the help of senior colleagues, to give the matter full and detailed consideration. As part of this process, the investigator may wish to have more communication with you along the way, by telephone, email or face to face, to clarify issues or to seek more information. Any person involved in investigating or determining a complaint will have had no material involvement in the matters complained about and any potential conflicts of interest will be identified and managed appropriately.

Once a conclusion has been reached, the Principal or nominated Governor will communicate the outcome to you in writing, setting out the reasons for it as well as any action taken or proposed. You should generally receive a response within 10 normal school days of the Principal or Chair of Governors receiving the written complaint.

The Principal or nominated Governor will keep written records of all meetings and interviews relating to the complaint.

3.3 STAGE 3: Panel Hearing

If, following the completion of the procedures set out in Stage 2, you are still unhappy with the outcome and wish to take your complaint further, you may invoke Stage 3, which means that the matter will be referred to a Complaints Panel for consideration.

To initiate this process, you will need to contact the Chair of the Board of Governors within 14 working days of the Principal's decision under Stage 2. Please write to the Chair c/o the Principal's PA Joanna Smith, at the school's main address: 333 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7PL or by email joanna.smith@doverbroecks.com.

The Chair will acknowledge the complaint as soon as possible, usually within 7 normal school working days and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable, normally within 15 normal school working days, or as soon as practically possible in the holiday period.

The Panel will consist of three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. As stipulated by the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 the Panel members will be appointed by the school. One of the Panel members will be independent of the management and running of the school. The independent member of the Panel, who will be chosen and appointed by the school, will be someone who has held a position of responsibility and who, by dint of their professional experience, has had experience of analysing situations and evaluating complex information and putting forward balanced arguments.

The complainant may attend the hearing and be accompanied by one other person.. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matters be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars will need to be supplied to all parties not later than 4 working days prior to the hearing.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out and keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation.

After due consideration of all facts it considers relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 15 normal school working days or as soon as practically possible in the holiday periods. 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 any recommendations will be sent in writing to the complainant(s), to the Principal and, where relevant, to the person(s) complained about. They will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Principal.

3.4 **Timescales**

We will do our very best to keep to the timescales set out in this Procedure. These are expressed as a number of working days, which means Monday to Friday (excluding weekends). Normal school working days refers to term time.

We aim to deal with complaints received during school holidays as soon as reasonably practicable, and normally within the timescales set out in this policy. Where there are delays, caused for example by staff absence, parents will be informed and given an indication of the next steps and likely timescale for a response.

The aim will always be to deal with all complaints as promptly as possible; and, as a backstop deadline, a complaint received outside of term time will always be dealt with, at the latest, within the timescales set out above for term-time once term has started again.

4. Record keeping

Detailed written records will be made of all complaints made under Stages 2 and 3 above, including those relating to boarding. The records will indicate whether the complaint was resolved following a formal procedure or whether it proceeded to a panel hearing. They will also contain an account of the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints regardless of whether or not they were upheld.

These records will be retained and disposed of in accordance with the school's Records Retention Schedule, Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation.

5. Persistent correspondence

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 unreasonable, persistent or serial and outside the scope of the policy.

6. Confidentiality

You may be assured that your complaint or concern will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

It is important to stress that it is school policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

Information will be processed in accordance with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's Data Protection Policy.

7. Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures.'

The following members of staff have designated responsibility for issues relating to safeguarding and child protection at d'Overbroeck's:

- Chris Bromham – Principal
- Joanne Croft – Vice Principal-Pastoral, DSL
- Mikaela Parker –Director of Wellbeing, Senior DDSL
- Stephen Creamer – Vice Principal-Staff and Curriculum
- Nick Haines – Head of Senior School
- Emily Nicholls – Deputy Head, Senior School
- Andrew Colclough – Head of Sixth Form
- Fatima Safi – Deputy Head, Sixth Form
- Michelle Barrett – Assistant Head, Sixth Form
- Marilou Polymeropoulou – Assistant Head, Sixth Form
- Hannah Mungall – Head of Boarding
- Emma Jenkins – Deputy Head of Boarding
- Freya Paterson – Lead School Nurse

Concerns over safeguarding and child protection issues may be communicated to any of the above members of staff who will deal with them according to the school's policy on 'Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children', which is available from the policies page of the school website or on request from the school office.

If you feel the need to address a complaint relating to a child protection issue to someone outside the school, then you may get in touch directly with the Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01865 519800, or by email: mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk. Out of office hours, you may contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0800 833 408.

8. School integrity

We hope this policy document will make clear that, whenever parents have a complaint or a concern, we are anxious to be told about it and to be able to work with the parents to address such concerns in the best interests of the student(s) concerned.

The number of parental complaints registered in the past academic year under the procedure set out (stage 2 and 3) above is available from the Principal's PA, Jo Smith (tel: 01865 688601 or email: joanna.smith@doverbroecks.com).

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