D'OVERBROECK'S
OXFORD
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS

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

1. Introduction

This policy is written for students at d'Overbroeck's so that if a student has cause for complaint that relates to any aspect of school life, every effort can be made to address this complaint in accordance with a fair procedure.

This policy 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 available from the school website or on request from the school office.

This procedure has been developed with reference to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition);
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, particularly Part 3 (Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils) and Part 8 (Quality of Leadership and Management);
- Equality Act 2010;
- Relevant guidance issued by the Department for Education

2. Scope

For the purposes of the Complaints Procedure for Students, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by a student about the standard of service that they have received from d'Overbroeck's, or about the school's action or lack of action in addressing a particular matter.

A complaint might relate to concerns about the delivery of a programme of study, or to the facilities, or services provided by d'Overbroeck's. A complaint might also concern the behaviour or conduct of a member of staff or somebody otherwise employed or engaged by the school.

3. Timescales

This procedure must be applied with common sense and judgement; we recognise the utmost importance to address students' complaints in a timely manner. However, due to limitations on personnel during the school holidays, it is only natural that complaints raised in term time will be dealt with more quickly than those raised in the school holidays. We are aware that students' concerns can be particularly upsetting to their studies and may have an impact on their time out of school, so it is important to the school to deal with these matters swiftly.

However, we ask students to be tolerant of the limitations imposed by the working week and to understand that only the most serious of complaints will be dealt with in special meetings after working hours or over the weekend.

The school takes any threat to the safety and welfare of students very seriously and will respond urgently to any student complaint that is indicative of a health and safety concern, a threat to a student's welfare inside or outside of the school, or a situation that may place or have placed a child or vulnerable adult in danger.

During term time, all complaints will be acknowledged within 24 hours. The school aims to give you a more detailed response (following the steps outlined below) within a week (during term time).

4. Matters Covered by Other Procedures

The following matters will normally be managed under separate school policies:

- safeguarding and child protection concerns;
- allegations against staff;
- whistleblowing concerns;
- staff grievances;
- admissions decisions;
- data protection requests and complaints.

Where a complaint includes elements covered by another procedure, the school will determine the most appropriate process to follow.

5. Confidentiality

A written record will be kept of all student complaints and their resolution. Correspondence, statements, and records relating to grievance matters will be kept confidential. No student should feel afraid that their complaint will harm their standing at the school by influencing members of staff, or feel afraid that registering a complaint might unduly influence their applications to other educational institutions. We would like to reassure students that confidentiality is taken very seriously.

Nothing in this procedure prevents a concern being dealt with under the school's safeguarding procedures. Where a student's concern indicates that they, or another person, may be at risk of harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation or significant welfare concerns, the matter will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Complaints made under this procedure will not delay appropriate safeguarding action.

6. Complaints step by step procedure

The following steps should be followed by any student who has a complaint:

a) Share your concern

If you have a concern, it is best to share it as soon as possible. Problems should be resolved promptly, fairly and as directly as possible. Any member of staff will be happy to see you to discuss any concerns you would like to raise. They will also be able to pass on the concern to a member of the Senior Leadership Team on your behalf.

b) Raise a formal complaint

It may be the case that your concern is of such a serious, detailed or delicate nature that you would prefer to write out an explanation of your concern. In many cases, writing down the nature of your concern, including details and the resolution you want, can be very helpful toward the process of resolving it. After writing down your concern please give it to whichever member of staff you trust so they can pass it to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Please note that it is not necessary to formally raise a concern in writing for it to be taken seriously; concerns raised in other ways (eg, in a conversation, MS Teams message, email, etc) will be given due attention.

The school aims to:

- Acknowledge formal complaints within one school day;
- Complete investigations within ten school days wherever possible;
- Communicate any delays and revised timescales to the student;
- Receive appeals within five school days of the outcome being communicated;
- Respond to appeals within ten school days where reasonably practicable.

7. Investigation

The Principal will ask an appropriate senior member of staff to investigate the facts and potential solutions to your concern.

8. Meeting

If your complaint is investigated and not resolved informally to your satisfaction, you will be invited to a meeting with the Principal or one of the Vice Principals to discuss the matter. You will be informed in advance of the date, time and location of the meeting. The school will make sure that, unless the complaint is about a very serious matter, the meeting does not conflict with your classes.

The purpose of this meeting is to listen to your concerns. If you feel you would be more comfortable discussing how you feel with another person present, it will be possible for someone (eg, parent or guardian) to accompany you to support you. You may be asked to write down some of your specific concerns if you have not already done so. Any minutes or notes taken will be shared with you, and the copy kept by the school will remain confidential.

The meeting is intended to be a sympathetic environment and not confrontational. Students should not worry about preparing for this meeting.

9. Decision

In the meeting, the Principal or Vice Principal will work with you to make decisions and plans of action to make sure that your complaint is addressed. Solutions discussed in this meeting will need to not only satisfy your complaint, but also meet the needs of the school, especially in respect of safeguarding the rights of other students and respecting the needs of staff. In the meeting, an action plan with dates and times to follow up on the outcome of the meeting will be agreed. The Principal or Vice Principal may also want to schedule a follow up meeting to check that your complaint is being successfully addressed.

You should expect to know:

- what steps the school will take to address your complaint; and
- an estimated timescale to review those steps.

10. Appeal

Should you be dissatisfied with the outcome of the meeting, you may appeal the decision by notifying the Principal or Chair of the Board of Governors. Appeals will be considered by an individual who has had no previous involvement in the matter wherever reasonably possible. Where the Principal has already considered the complaint, the appeal will be reviewed by a Governor or other suitably independent person nominated by the school.

For an appeal, you will need to write down the nature of your complaint, and the reasons why you would like to appeal the outcome of your meeting. The email addresses for these staff members can be found at the end of this policy.

11. Appeal procedure

The Principal or a Member of the Board of Governors will investigate your complaint and invite you to attend a further meeting. If your complaint is about the Principal, this will be considered by the Chair of Governors. As at the earlier meeting, you may be accompanied by one person for support. At this point, the school may also wish to invite your parents or guardians to the meeting.

NB: If the matter remains unresolved, the student's appeal will be independent. Therefore, if the Principal has been involved at an earlier stage, at the point of appeal, an independent person will become involved, such as a member of the Board of Governors.

After the appeal meeting you will be notified in writing of the decision.

12. Record keeping

It is in the interest of all parties involved that students' complaints are resolved in a timely manner and in such a way that the resolution is perceived to be fair and productive for improving the learning environment at d'Overbroeck's. Records of formal complaints, investigations, decisions and appeals will be maintained securely in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule.

Complaint records will include:

- the nature of the complaint;
- actions taken;
- outcomes reached;
- whether the complaint was upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

Access to records will be restricted to those with a legitimate professional need to know.

13. The school's Independent Person

The school has an Independent Person whom students may call in confidence to discuss concerns of any nature. Details of how to contact the Independent Person are displayed on notice boards around the school and boarding houses.

14. Further information

For further information about complaints at d'Overbroeck's please speak with the Principal or Vice Principal - Pastoral.

15. Contact details

Principal, Chris Bromham principal@doverbroecks.com
Vice Principal-Pastoral, Joanne Croft joanne.croft@doverbroecks.com
Chair of Governors, Richard Davies c/o Principal's PA jo.smith@doverbroecks.com

16. Related policies and legal references

Related policies available from the school website:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Anti-bullying policy
- Behaviour, rules, rewards and sanctions policy
- SEND policy
- Data Protection policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Equal opportunities for students policy

Legal and Regulatory References:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

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