

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

This policy applies to the whole school

The Policy is available to the school staff on the 'Staff Shared'

We have a whole school approach to safeguarding, which is the golden thread that runs throughout every aspect of Landon school. All our school policies support our approach to safeguarding (pupil protection). Our fundamental priority is our pupils and their wellbeing; this is first and foremost.

Scope: All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours, including activities away from school. All new employees and volunteers are required to state that they have read, understood and will abide by this policy and its procedural documents and confirm this via the signing of their employment contract.

Legal Status: Complies with Part 7 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as currently in force.

Monitoring and Review: These arrangements are subject to continuous monitoring, refinement, and audit by the Headteacher. The Proprietor and Advisory Board will undertake a full annual review of this document, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been implemented. This review will be formally documented in writing. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay. All staff will be informed of the updated/reviewed arrangements and it will be made available to them in writing or electronically.

Oversight of implementation of this policy rests with the Chair of the Advisory Board, Mr Andrew Thompson, who can be contacted at Lynwood House, Crofton Road, Orpington, Kent, BR6 8QE or through the school office.

Policy Agreed: October 2026
Date Published: October 2026
Next Review: October 2027

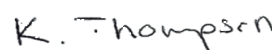
Signed:

Handwritten signature of Mr Jody Tranter in black ink.

Mr Jody Tranter
Headteacher

Handwritten signature of Mr Andy Thompson in blue ink.

Mr Andy Thompson
Proprietor who is the Chair of the Advisory
Board

Handwritten signature of Katie Thompson in black ink.

Katie Thompson
Proprietor's agent

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This procedure sets out how Landon School deals with complaints from parents of pupils at the school. It is written to meet Part 7 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 1.2 We want parents to raise concerns early. Most concerns are resolved quickly through ordinary conversation with staff. A concern becomes a formal complaint when a parent puts it in writing under Stage 2.
- 1.3 Complaints will be dealt with fairly, proportionately and within the timescales in this procedure. Parents will be kept informed of progress and told the outcome, but will not always be entitled to see all of the information gathered, for example where it concerns other pupils or members of staff.

- 1.4 In this procedure, **parent** means a person with parental responsibility for, or day-to-day care of, a pupil on the school roll. **School days** means days on which the school is open to pupils. Timescales do not run during school holidays. A complaint received at a weekend or during a school holiday is treated as received on the next school day.

2. Who can use this procedure and what it covers

- 2.1 This procedure is for parents of pupils currently on roll. If a pupil leaves the school after a complaint has been made, the complaint will be completed. The procedure does not apply to prospective parents in relation to admissions, or to complaints from pupils or staff, which are dealt with under separate policies.
- 2.2 A parent may ask a relative, friend, advocate or other person to help them prepare a complaint. The complaint must be made by the parent, or by another person with the parent's written authority. The school will correspond with the parent unless the parent asks in writing for correspondence to be copied to the person helping them.
- 2.3 Complaints should be raised within three months of the matter complained about or, where the complaint concerns a series of related incidents, within three months of the last of them. A complaint made after this will still be considered where there is a good reason for the delay, for example where the matter has only recently come to the parent's attention, or because of illness.
- 2.4 The following matters have their own procedures and are not dealt with under this procedure:
- concerns about a child's safety or welfare, which must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead straight away and are dealt with under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
 - allegations that a member of staff has harmed, or may pose a risk to, a child, which are dealt with under the school's procedure for managing allegations against staff, including referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer where required;
 - decisions made by a local authority about a pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan, placement, transport or funding, which are subject to the local authority's own processes and the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability). Complaints about how the school delivers the provision in a pupil's plan are covered by this procedure;
 - data protection complaints, which are dealt with under section 10;
 - anonymous concerns, which will be looked into where possible but not under this procedure.
- 2.5 Once a safeguarding or allegations process has concluded, any remaining complaint about how the school handled the matter can be considered under this procedure. The three-month period in paragraph 2.3 will run from the date the parent is told that process has concluded.

3. Making a complaint

- 3.1 Parents may raise a concern in person, by telephone or in writing. A parent who finds it difficult to put a formal complaint in writing may make it verbally to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, who will write it down and ask the parent to confirm that it is accurate.

- 3.2 Before making a complaint, parents may find it helpful to read the Parent Guide to School Complaints published by the Department for Education, Parentkind and Ofsted.
- 3.3 Parents may use any help they choose to prepare a complaint, including artificial intelligence (AI) tools. AI tools can produce inaccurate or out-of-date references to law, guidance and procedures, so parents should check anything produced in this way before sending it. The parent is responsible for the accuracy of what is submitted. We ask parents not to enter information about their child or any other pupil into public AI tools. The school will respond to the substance of each complaint point identified under paragraph 5.3. It will not respond separately to every statement, argument or legal reference where doing so would not change that response.
- 3.4 Parents should not raise complaints with individual members of the Advisory Board, other than the Proprietor where paragraph 5.1 provides for this. A member who has discussed a complaint may be unable to sit on a panel that later hears it.
- 3.5 We ask parents not to discuss a complaint on social media while it is being dealt with. This rarely helps to resolve it and can affect the staff and pupils involved.
- 3.6 The timescales for each stage are summarised below.

Stage	Step	Timescale
Any stage	Raise the complaint	Within three months of the matter (paragraph 2.3)
Stage 1	Response from member of staff	Within 5 school days
Stage 2	Acknowledgement of written complaint	Within 3 school days of receipt
Stage 2	Written summary of complaint points sent to parent	Within 5 school days of receipt
Stage 2	Parent confirms or corrects the summary	Within 5 school days of the summary
Stage 2	Written outcome	Within 20 school days of receipt
Stage 3	Parent requests a panel hearing	Within 10 school days of the Stage 2 outcome
Stage 3	Acknowledgement of request	Within 3 school days of receipt
Stage 3	Panel hearing held	Within 20 school days of receipt of request
Stage 3	Panel findings and recommendations sent	Within 5 school days of the hearing

- 3.7 If the school cannot meet a timescale, for example because a key member of staff is absent or an investigation is complex, it will tell the parent in writing before the deadline, giving the reason and a revised date. Any extension at Stage 2 will not exceed 10 school days.

4. Stage 1: Informal resolution

- 4.1 Parents should first raise a concern with the most appropriate member of staff, usually their child's class teacher, or with the Deputy Headteacher.
- 4.2 The member of staff will respond within 5 school days and keep a brief written record of the concern, the response and any agreed action. Where the concern is discussed in a meeting or telephone call, they will send the parent a short email within 5 school days summarising what was agreed. They may ask the Deputy Headteacher for advice.
- 4.3 Where a parent raises a concern directly with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, they may refer it to the relevant member of staff or deal with it personally. Either way, it remains at Stage 1.
- 4.4 If the concern is not resolved, the parent may make a formal complaint under Stage 2. A complaint will normally go through Stage 1 first. The Headteacher may accept a complaint directly at Stage 2 where it is serious, or where Stage 1 is not appropriate, for example because the complaint concerns the member of staff who would otherwise deal with it.

5. Stage 2: Formal complaint

- 5.1 A formal complaint should be made in writing to the Headteacher, by email or letter to the school office. It should explain what the complaint is about, what has already been done to resolve it, and what outcome the parent is seeking. A complaint about the Headteacher should be sent to the Proprietor at the address on page 1 or through the school office, and the Proprietor will appoint a suitable person, from within or outside the school, to consider it. A complaint about the Proprietor should be sent to the Headteacher, who will arrange for it to be considered by a person independent of the management and running of the school.
- 5.2 The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 3 school days of receipt.
- 5.3 Within 5 school days of receipt, the person handling the complaint will send the parent a written summary of the complaint, set out as a numbered list of the points to be investigated. The parent will be asked to say within 5 school days of the summary if anything has been missed or misstated. The confirmed summary sets the scope of the investigation, the Stage 2 outcome and any panel hearing. If the parent does not reply, the investigation will proceed on the summary as sent.
- 5.4 A new matter raised after the summary has been confirmed will be treated as a separate complaint, unless the person handling the complaint decides that it is closely connected and can be included without delaying the outcome.
- 5.5 The complaint will be investigated by the Headteacher, or by a senior member of staff appointed by the Headteacher who was not directly involved in the matters complained about. The investigation may include speaking to staff, reviewing records and meeting the parent. The parent will be offered a meeting or telephone conversation during the investigation. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews.
- 5.6 The parent will receive a written outcome within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint. For each numbered point, the outcome will state whether it is upheld, partly upheld or not upheld, the reasons, and any action the school will take. It will also explain how to request a panel hearing. The school will not disclose any disciplinary action taken in relation to a member of staff.

- 5.7 A parent who disagrees with the Stage 2 outcome, including the way the decision was reached, should request a panel hearing under Stage 3. This will not be treated as a new complaint about the Headteacher or the person who made the decision. The Panel can consider any concern about how the Stage 2 decision was reached.

6. Stage 3: Panel hearing

- 6.1 A parent who is not satisfied with the Stage 2 outcome may request a hearing before the Complaints Panel. The request should be made in writing to the Panel Convenor, through the school office, within 10 school days of the date of the Stage 2 outcome. It should state which numbered findings the parent disagrees with and why, the outcome the parent is seeking, and any documents the parent wishes the Panel to see.
- 6.2 A request received after this deadline will be accepted where there is a good reason for the delay, such as illness or a family emergency. The Convenor will decide and give reasons in writing.
- 6.3 The Convenor is appointed by the Proprietor to arrange and clerk hearings and is not a member of the Panel. The Convenor will acknowledge the request within 3 school days and confirm the points the Panel will consider, which are the points in the Stage 2 summary with which the parent remains dissatisfied. A matter that was not raised at Stage 2 will be referred for consideration under Stage 2 rather than heard by the Panel, unless the Panel Chair decides it can fairly be heard with the rest of the complaint.
- 6.4 When acknowledging the request, the Convenor will offer the parent a meeting with the Proprietor, or a person nominated by the Proprietor who was not involved at Stage 2, to see whether the complaint can be resolved without a hearing. The meeting is optional. Declining it does not affect the parent's right to a hearing, and it does not change the timescale for the hearing unless the parent agrees in writing to a pause. Anyone who holds this meeting will not sit on the Panel.
- 6.5 The Panel will consist of at least three people appointed by the Proprietor, none of whom was directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one member will be independent of the management and running of the school. The other members will usually be members of the Advisory Board. One member will act as Chair.
- 6.6 The hearing will take place within 20 school days of receipt of the request. With the acknowledgement, the Convenor will offer the parent three dates, each giving at least 10 school days' notice. The parent may attend in person or online. If none of the dates is suitable, the parent should say why, and the Convenor will make reasonable efforts to agree another date, which may fall outside the 20 school days. If the parent declines all the dates offered without good reason, the Convenor will fix the date. If the parent does not attend, the Panel will consider the complaint on the papers and reach its decision.
- 6.7 Any further documents the parent wishes the Panel to see must reach the Convenor at least 7 school days before the hearing. The Convenor will send all parties a bundle of papers at least 5 school days before the hearing. Material received after the deadline will be considered only at the Panel's discretion, and the Panel may adjourn if another party needs time to respond. Some information may be summarised or redacted to protect other pupils or staff.
- 6.8 The parent may be accompanied by one person, such as a relative, friend or advocate, whose name should be given to the Convenor at least 2 school days before the hearing. The companion is there to support the parent and may speak with the Chair's

permission, but may not answer questions on the parent's behalf. The hearing is an internal school process, so neither the parent nor the school will be legally represented. The Stage 2 decision-maker will attend and may also be accompanied. Pupils do not normally attend; the Panel may obtain a pupil's views in another way where that is appropriate.

- 6.9 The Chair will decide how the hearing is conducted. The hearing is held in private. The Panel is not bound by strict rules of evidence and will reach its findings on the balance of probabilities. The Convenor will take minutes, which will be the record of the hearing and will be shared with the parent. The hearing may not be recorded by any party unless the Chair agrees, for example as a reasonable adjustment.
- 6.10 The Panel will consider the merits of the complaint, not only whether the procedure was followed. It may ask for further information. It will not order further investigation that is disproportionate or unlikely to assist its decision.
- 6.11 The Panel will make findings on each point it considers and may make recommendations. It cannot award compensation. Within 5 school days of the hearing, a copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations will be sent by email or otherwise to the parent and, where relevant, to the person complained about. A copy will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Headteacher. If the Panel needs more time, the parent will be told in writing with a revised date.
- 6.12 The Panel's decision concludes the school's complaints procedure for that complaint.

7. Unreasonable and persistent complaints

- 7.1 Most complaints are made reasonably. Occasionally, the volume, frequency or manner of contact places unreasonable demands on staff or prevents the school from dealing with a complaint properly. Examples include repeatedly raising matters that have already been answered, changing the basis of a complaint as the investigation proceeds, refusing to accept a concluded outcome, sending large volumes of correspondence about the same issues, making personal attacks on individual members of staff, publicising a complaint on social media in a way that identifies staff or pupils, and abusive, threatening or discriminatory language or behaviour towards staff.
- 7.2 In these circumstances the Headteacher, or the Proprietor where the matter concerns the Headteacher, may, after a written warning, limit contact to a named member of staff and a single email address, set how often the school will respond, decline to respond to correspondence that repeats matters already answered, or require that meetings take place with a second member of staff present. The decision and reasons will be given in writing and reviewed at least once each term.
- 7.3 A complaint that has completed Stage 3, or that was not taken to the next stage within the time allowed, will not be reopened. Rewording a complaint, presenting it differently or adding further argument does not make it a new complaint. A genuinely new complaint will always be considered under this procedure.
- 7.4 Nothing in this section affects the school's duty to respond to any concern about a child's safety or welfare.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Complaints are treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are 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, or where another legal obligation applies.

9. Records

- 9.1 A written record is kept of all complaints made under Stage 2, whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or proceed to a panel hearing, any that are withdrawn, the action taken by the school as a result (whether or not the complaint is upheld), and the date of the final outcome.
- 9.2 Complaint records are kept for at least seven years. Records with safeguarding implications are kept in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 9.3 The school will provide on request to the Secretary of State or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) a written record of complaints made during a specified period and the action taken as a result. Parents may ask the Headteacher for the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.
- 9.4 In the 2025–26 school year, 3 complaints were registered under the formal procedure.

10. Data protection complaints

- 10.1 Separately from the procedure above, any individual (including a parent, pupil, member of staff or other person) who considers that the school has handled their personal data in a way that breaches data protection law may make a data protection complaint to the school under section 164A of the Data Protection Act 2018. Such a complaint may be made by email to the school office or by any other means, including in writing to the school office. The school will acknowledge receipt within 30 days, make appropriate enquiries, keep the complainant informed of progress and, without undue delay, respond and inform the complainant of the outcome. This does not affect the complainant's right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at any time.

11. Concerns to the Department for Education

- 11.1 The Department for Education does not investigate or intervene in individual complaints about independent schools. A parent who believes the school is not meeting the Independent School Standards, including the requirements for handling complaints, may raise a concern with the Department for Education, which may ask ISI to take it into account.

12. Complaints in progress

- 12.1 This version of the procedure applies to complaints received at Stage 2 on or after the date it is published. A complaint already in progress on that date will be completed under the version of the procedure that applied when it was made.