



Complaints Procedure

Parents: Complaints' Procedure (PH Group)

The Peterhouse Group takes all complaints seriously. Complaints of all types are dealt with in accordance with this procedure:

Complainants can be assured that:

- i. their complaint will be addressed courteously and efficiently and within a reasonable time
- ii. as far as is possible their complaint will be treated as confidential
- iii. if and when necessary appropriate action will be taken to address their complaint

Parents can, in particular, be reassured that their child will not be discriminated against because they have made a complaint.

Parents are encouraged, in the first instance, to raise a complaint of a general nature with their son's Housemaster (PHB), daughter's Housemistress (PHG) or the Head (SVH). If the complaint is of an academic nature parents are encouraged, in the first instance, to raise the matter with the Director of Studies (PHB and PHG) or the Head (SVH).

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

It is normally the case that a complaint can be satisfactorily resolved informally i.e. by sensible liaison between the parties involved or by the matter being addressed by the relevant member of staff and unless the matter is of a serious nature the complainant should in the first instance raise the complaint informally (either orally or on paper). The school reserves the right to insist that, in the first instance, the complaint is dealt with under Stage 1 (Informal Resolution) of this process; if under these circumstances the complainant refuses to comply the school will take no further action.

The complaint will, under normal circumstances, be resolved within 5 working days and may or may not merit a written response.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis or if the complaint is of a serious nature the complaint should be submitted in writing to the Rector (PHB) or Head (PHG/SVH). This letter must outline the nature of the complaint and why the complainant believes that the complaint cannot be resolved informally. The school reserves the right to insist that the complaint is dealt with under Stage 1 (Informal Resolution) of the process if the complainant in the first instance, raises the matter under Stage 2 of this process.

Under Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) of this process:

- i. The Rector/HMPHG/HMSVH will meet, or speak to, the complainant, within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.
- ii. The Rector/HMPHG/HMSVH will under normal circumstances instruct the appropriate member of staff to investigate the complaint (e.g. if the complaint is of an academic nature the Director of Studies and/or the relevant Head of Department will be asked to investigate the matter).
- iii. In exceptional circumstances the Rector/HMPHG/HMSVH will conduct the investigation.
- iv. Within 10 working days, following contact with the complainant, the investigation will be completed and the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation by the Rector/HMPHG/HMSVH

Stage 3 - Rector's Hearing

If the complaint has been dealt with by the HMPHG/HMSVH under Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) of this procedure and the complainant is still not satisfied with the manner in which the complaint has been addressed or the outcome of the investigation under Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) of this process, he/she should proceed to Stage 3 (Rector's Hearing).

The complainant should write to the Rector within 5 working days of receiving the outcome of Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) of the process. This letter must outline both the original complaint and why the complainant believes that the complaint has not been resolved formally to his/her satisfaction under Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) of this procedure. The Rector reserves the right to insist that the complaint is dealt with under Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) of the process if the complainant in the first instance, raises the matter under Stage 3 (Rector's Hearing) of this process.

Under these circumstances:

- i. The Rector will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practical and normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.
- ii. The complainant will be invited to attend a meeting with the Rector together with the HMPHG/HMSVH.
- iii. After the meeting the rector will reach a decision concerning the complaint.

The decision will be communicated to the complainant by the Rector within 5 working days of the hearing. A copy of the findings will be sent to the complainant and the HMPHG/HMSVH

Stage 3 Panel Hearing

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the manner in which the complaint has been addressed or the outcome of the investigation under Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) of this process or Stage 3 (Rector's Hearing), he/she should proceed to Stage 3 (Panel Hearing).

The complainant should write to the Chairman of EXCO, c/o Peterhouse, within 5 working days of receiving the outcome of Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) or Stage 3 (Rector's Hearing) of the process. This letter must outline both the original complaint and why the complainant believes that the complaint has not been resolved formally to his/her satisfaction under Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) or Stage 3 (Rector's Hearing) of this procedure. The Chairman of EXCO reserves the right to insist that the complaint is dealt with under Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) or Stage 3 (Rector's Hearing) of the process if the complainant in the first instance, raises the matter under Stage 3 (Panel Hearing) of this process.

Under these circumstances:

- iv. The Chairman of EXCO will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practical and normally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint.
 - v. The Chairman of EXCO will refer the matter for consideration to a Complaints Panel.
 - vi. The Complaints Panel appointed by the Chairman of EXCO will consist of three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.
 - vii. The Complainant will be invited to attend the Panel Hearing and may be accompanied at the hearing by one other person (a 'friend'). Legal representation will not normally be appropriate and will only be permitted at the discretion of the Complaints Panel.
 - viii. The Rector/HMPHG/HMSVH will also be invited to attend the Panel Hearing.
 - ix. After the hearing, the Complaints Panel will reach a decision concerning the complaint; this decision may include recommendations.
 - x. The decision/recommendations will be communicated to the complainant by the Chairman of EXCO within 5 working days of the hearing. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be sent to the Rector/HMPHG/HMSVH
- The decision of the Panel shall be final.

Action which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints will be handled confidentially.

In all cases a record of the complaint will be kept for one year from the resolution of the complaint.