



Complaints Procedure

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Staff member responsible:	Mark Loveday
Role:	Headmaster
Revised On:	Sept 2026
Ratified by governing board:	
Review Due:	Sept 2027

Introduction

Frewen College prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to all of its pupils. Parents are encouraged to communicate any request for information or any concern using the School's communication pathways (attached as appendices). However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure.

The Complaints Process

It is expected that a majority of concerns can be managed and resolved swiftly and effectively through the School's communication pathways. However, if you experience dissatisfaction about actions taken by the School, or about a lack of action, at a level that cannot be resolved in the manner described above, you are encouraged to refer the matter to the School in accordance with the School's Complaints procedure, as detailed below.

The School encourages and expects complaints to be communicated as soon as possible after an incident arises, and certainly within three months. The School will not normally consider complaints made outside of this time-frame. However, the School will consider exceptions, and the School will always investigate any concern or complaint relating to the safeguarding of children, regardless of the time elapsed.

The School will normally only investigate complaints made by parents or legal guardians of current pupils. An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

This Complaints Procedure does not apply to appeals in respect of the Admissions process and associated decision-making. The Admissions Policy provides detail of the Admissions appeals process.

Neither does this Complaints Procedure apply to appeals in respect of School exclusions, especially permanent exclusion. The Exclusions Policy provides detail of the Exclusions appeals process.

At all stages in the complaints process a written record is to be kept. Notes (the minutes of meetings, written outcomes and investigation write up) will be kept by the member of staff investigating, and these notes will be stored securely by the headmaster at the end of the investigation. The notes will include the date a resolution was reached and the agreed nature of this. The parents will then be informed in writing.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution (Who should you contact?)

(References to the number of working days refer to term-time only)

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- Any person with a complaint, should normally raise it in person with the member of staff/individual concerned.
- The member of staff/individual involved will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Our ideal is that no concern should ever become a formal complaint, as through open dialogue, a resolution should always be accomplished. If the member of staff/individual cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to consult with colleagues.
- For matters on the curriculum, subject related issues or general academic concern, please follow the Academic Communication Pathway.
- For pastoral matters please follow the Pastoral Communication Pathway.
- For boarding matters please follow the Boarding Communication Pathway.
- For matters concerning finance, fees and non-academic services, please contact the Bursar.
- Should the matter not be resolved parents should escalate the matter to the next level on the appropriate communication pathway (Academic, Pastoral, Boarding). Should the matter remain unresolved, parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (What to do if you remain dissatisfied?)

(References to the number of working days refer to term-time only)

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing, with any relevant documents, to the Headmaster who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will either meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within seven (7) school working days of receiving the complaint at Stage 2, to discuss the matter. The Headmaster will establish what has happened so far and who has been involved; clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved and what the parents feels would resolve the issue. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations that may delay a resolution. The Headmaster may ask one of the Deputy Heads, or another appropriate member of the SLT, to act as investigating officer.
- The investigating officer will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, along with an investigation report to be shared with the Headmaster.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing within twenty (20) school working days of receiving the complaint at Stage 2, if possible. The Headmaster will give reasons for the decision. A written record will also be kept of when a final outcome was reached.

Stage 3 – Complaints Panel Hearing

- If the parents remain unhappy with the response from the Headmaster, they must inform him within 5 school working days. He will then refer the complaint to the Chairman of Governors, who will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel.
- Parents will be asked to provide the specifics of the complaint in writing.
- The panel will consist of at least three (3) people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The panel members are appointed by the Chairman of Governors. The Chairman of Governors will normally be a member of the panel. At least one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school. The Department for Education has given the following guidance on the identity of an independent panel member. *“Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, Headmasters or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered.”*
- The Chairman of Governors, or the Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Governors, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen (14) school working days of referral to the panel. A secretary will be present to take notes.
- If the Complaints Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five (5) school working days prior to the hearing where practicable.
- The complainant(s) may be accompanied to the hearing. This may be a relative or friend; a legal representative is not appropriate. The school should be informed in advance of the identity and role of the accompanying person, and no later than five working school days prior to the hearing.
- If possible, the Complaints Panel will resolve the parents complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Complaints Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Complaints Panel will reach a

decision and may make findings and recommendations, which it shall complete as soon as practicable (normally within 10 working school days).

- The Complaints Panel's findings, and, if any recommendations and the reasons for them will be sent by electronic mail or in writing to the parents and, where relevant, the person complained about. These findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises and kept by the Headmaster at least until the next full inspection. The decision of the panel will be final.
- Our school will take the Complaints Panel findings seriously and will make appropriate changes to policies, procedures and practices as a result.

Summary of Time Scales

During School Time:

- *Stage 1 Informal resolution:*
Resolved in seven (7) school working days or progress to Stage 2
- *Stage 2 Formal resolution:* Response to parents within seven (7) school working days for meeting, if appropriate, to resolve. If still unresolved or a further investigation needed, a letter from the Headmaster will be received by the parents within twenty (20) school working days of the initial meeting where possible.
- *Stage 3 Panel Hearing:*
Complaint sent to the Complaints Panel within seven (5) school working days. The date of the hearing is to be set normally fourteen (14) school working days. Copies of the particulars of the complaint are supplied to all parties not later than five (5) school working days prior to the hearing. If possible the parent's complaint will be resolved immediately. If further investigation is required, a decision will be sent within ten (10) school working days of the hearing.

During Holiday Periods

The complaint will normally be resolved as soon as practicably possible. This will depend upon the availability of relevant personnel, who may be unavailable during holiday periods. In this case the parents will be kept informed.

Confidentiality

Parents and Guardians can be assured that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept 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 where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Record keeping for the Whole School

A written record of all complaints (Stage 2 or higher) is kept by the Headmaster for a minimum of three years. We also keep a record of informal complaints. The record includes, at least: the person making the complaint, the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, any action taken and the outcome of the complaint (regardless of whether they are upheld). A written record will also be kept of when a final outcome was reached. The Headmaster examines this written record on an annual basis. The school will provide, on request to the inspecting body, a written record of all complaints made during a specified period and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint.

Expiration time-frame

Where a complainant ceases to respond to communications from the School in respect of the complaint or procedure for managing the complaint, for a continuous period of three months from the date of the complainant's last communication to the School regarding the complaint, the senior officer

managing the complaint will determine the process to have expired and deem the complaint resolved. This will be recorded as such in the central record of complaints maintained by the School

The senior officer will consider whether exceptional circumstances merit the extension of this time-frame. Such exceptional circumstance might include the complainant's being unable to engage in communication for a significant period owing to ill-health necessitating hospitalisation, or a family-emergency necessitating their extended absence from the country.

Complaints from External Bodies

Complaints from the public about the behaviour of a group of pupils will be dealt with on a general basis by the Headmaster or one of the Deputy Heads.

Grievance, Disciplinary and Capability Procedures with reminders to all about the school's expectations

This Complaints Procedure is totally separate from any Disciplinary or Capability Procedures. Should a complaint lead to concerns on the part of the Headmaster or Governors about the capability or conduct of a member of staff, these would not be discussed or dealt with within this procedure. This procedure does not apply to members of staff who wish to make a complaint as this would need to follow the school's Grievance Procedure.

Serial and persistent complainants

In accordance with advice from the Department for Education, Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020, the School recognises the potential detrimental impact on staff wellbeing, and on its time and resources caused by serial and persistent complainants.

Where all stages of the Complaints Procedure have been followed and a complainant remains dissatisfied such that they attempt to reopen the same issue, the Chair of the Board of Governors will inform them that the procedure has been completed and the matter closed. Further communication from the complainant regarding the same issue may then be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and the School may choose not to respond. This should not happen prior to all three stages of the Complaints Procedure being completed. A 'serial' or 'persistent' marking will only be applied against the subject or complaint itself rather than against the individual complainant.

The decision to stop responding will be taken where:

- the School has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs;
- the complainant has been given a clear statement of the School's position and their options (if any); and
- the complainant is contacting the School repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time.

Additionally, the following factors are relevant in supporting further a decision to stop responding:

- if the School has reason to believe the individual is contacting the School with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience;

- if the complainant's letters, electronic mailings or telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive;
- if the complainant makes insulting personal comments about, or threats towards, any member of the School community, including pupils, pupils' parents or carers, members of the staff or the Board of Governors.

Ultimately, if a complainant persists to the point that the School considers it to constitute harassment, legal advice will be sought as to the next steps.

Parents may also make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish to. The relevant contact details are:

- Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD.
Telephone: General Helpline 03001234666 Textphone number 0161 618 8524
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Complaints received during 2025/26 Academic Year

Stage	Number
2	0 (zero)
3	0 (zero)

