33a. Complaints Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 The school aims to ensure that any concern or complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently, quickly and at the appropriate level and resolved as soon as possible. We will try to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, we will review our systems and procedures considering the circumstances of the complaint.

1.2 The school recognise that a difficulty which is not resolved quickly and fairly can soon become a cause of resentment and so we need to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. Parents and pupils should never feel that making a complaint will adversely affect a pupil or his / her opportunities at the school.

1.3 **"Parent(s)" / "You"** includes a current or legal guardian or education guardian and may at our discretion include a parent whose child has recently left the school.

1.4 The school aims to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. When a reference to **working days** is made, it means Monday to Friday, when the school is open during term time. The dates of terms are published on the school's website.

2 Management of complaints

2.1 The School's complaints procedure has three stages:

2.1.1 **Stage 1:** informal raising of a concern or difficulty with a member of staff orally or in writing as set out in - further details of this procedure are set out in Appendix 1.

2.1.2 **Stage 2:** a formal complaint in writing to the headmaster - further details of how to make a formal complaint and the relevant procedures are set out in Appendix 2.

2.1.3 **Stage 3:** a reference to the Complaints Panel - further details of how to request a

Panel Hearing and the procedures to be followed are set out in Appendix 3.

2.2 A summary of the school's complaints procedure is set out in Appendix 4.

2.3 Separate procedures apply in the event of a child protection issue, or if the headmaster expels or requires the removal of a pupil from the school and the parents seek a review of that decision.

3 Confidentiality

3.1 The Headmaster will retain a log of all complaints, and

3.1.1 of whether they were resolved at Stage 1, Stage 2 or proceeded to a Panel hearing.

3.1.2 Of action taken by the school because of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)

3.2 The number of formal stage 2 or stage 3 complaints registered during the preceding school year from 1st September 2025 – 31st August 2026 is **10**

3.3 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required during a school's inspection or under other legal authority.

3.4 In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be kept only for as long as is reasonably necessary in the circumstances.

4 Complaints to Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate

4.1 Although the School is inspected by ISI, an independent organisation which reports to the Government on schools, parents of children in the Nursery have the right to contact Ofsted if they have any concerns over the Nursery fulfilling the EYFS learning and development requirements of a child and that has not been concluded to their satisfaction through the school's procedure. Such parents can report their concerns to Ofsted on 08456 404040 or they can email the appropriate Ofsted Regional Office on enquries@ofsted.gov.uk.

North	**Midlands**	**South**	**London**
Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD	Ofsted Building C Cumberland Place Park Row Nottingham NG1 6HJ	Ofsted Freshford House Redcliffe Way Bristol BS1 6NL	Ofsted Aviation House 125 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE

4.2 All other parents have the right to contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) if they have a complaint that has not been concluded to their satisfaction through the school's complaints procedure. ISI can be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or at the following address:

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

4.3 It is expected that complaints will go through the school's complaints procedure before Ofsted or ISI are contacted.

5. EYFS

5.1 Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirement must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted and the ISI on request.

Effective date of the policy:	1st September 2026 Approved by Governing Board September 2025 Next review by MS August 2027

Number of Stage 2 complaints: 2025 – 2026: 10

Number of Stage 3 complaints: 2025 – 2026: 1

Appendix 1 Stage 1

Dealing with concerns and difficulties informally

Informal resolution of a concern

1.1 The school expects that most concerns can be resolved informally. For example, dissatisfaction about some aspect of teaching or pastoral care or a billing error should be able to be resolved by the relevant member of staff. Complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are taken very seriously and may need to be dealt with at **Stage 2** without action at **Stage 1**.

2 Who to contact

1 Where appropriate, concerns should initially be raised as follows:

1.1 **Educational issues:** if the matter relates to the classroom, the curriculum, or special educational needs, please speak or write initially to the relevant teacher. Your concern may be passed to a more senior member of staff if appropriate.

1.2 **Pastoral care:** for concerns relating to matters outside the classroom, please speak to or contact to the Deputy Head, Mrs Taggart - staggart@lyceumschool.co.uk

1.3 **Disciplinary matters:** a problem over any disciplinary action taken or a sanction imposed should be raised first with the member of staff who imposed it.

1.4 **Financial matters:** a query relating to fees or extras should be stated in writing to the Natalie Wray, the Bursar of The Lyceum nwray@lyceumschool.co.uk

2 A complaint against the headmaster of the school should be put in writing addressed to Mr. Aatif Hassan, the Chair of Governors at Dukes Education, Dukes House, 58 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6AJ who will follow the procedure set out in Stage 2.

3 A concern provided in writing will be acknowledged by telephone, e-mail, or letter within two working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays. A matter raised orally will not necessarily be acknowledged in writing, but a record of the matter will be made.

4 A concern which has not been resolved by informal means within 15 working days should be notified in writing as a formal Stage 2 complaint using the procedure set out in Appendix 2.

3. Records

All concerns or informal complaints will be recorded on the complaints log including any actions taken by the school following the concern.

Appendix 2: Formal complaint Stage 2

How to make a formal complaint stage 2

1.1 If a parent is dissatisfied with the response to the complaint under **Stage 1**, or the complaint requires investigation or involves dissatisfaction with some aspect of the school's policies or management, the complaint should be made under **Stage 2**.

1.2 The full details of the complaint should be set out in writing and sent with all relevant documents and full contact details to the headmaster.

1.3 The complaint will be acknowledged by telephone, e-mail or letter within two working days during term time, and as soon as practicable during the holidays, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely time scale.

2 Investigation

2.1 The headmaster will ask a senior member of staff or a Dukes Governor to act as the investigator(s).

The investigator(s) may request additional information from you and may wish to speak to you personally and to others who have knowledge of the circumstances. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. The investigator(s) will prepare a report on the investigation which will be considered by the headmaster.

3 Decision

3.1 The headmaster will then notify the complainant by telephone, e-mail or letter of his Stage 2 decision and the reasons for it within 10 working days from the receipt of the formal complaint. Where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in a delay, the parents will be notified of this and informed of the new timescales as soon as possible.

3.2 Please note that any complaint received within one month of the end of a term or half term is likely to take longer to resolve owing to the presence of school holidays and the unavailability of personnel required for the investigation to be undertaken properly.

3.3 The headmaster will record the complaint in the complaints log along with any actions taken by the school because of the complaint regardless of the outcome decision.

3.4 If a parent is dissatisfied with the headmaster's decision, the parent can request that the complaint be referred to the Complaints Panel under Stage 3 using the procedure set out set out in Appendix 3.

Appendix 3 Stage 3

1

Complaints Panel

What is a Complaints Panel hearing?

1.1 A Complaints Panel hearing is a review of the decisions taken at Stage 2 by the headmaster (or in circumstances where the formal complaint concerns the headmaster, a director is appointed to act in his place). The Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint which have not been previously raised as part of the complaints procedure.

1.2 The role of the Panel is to establish the facts surrounding the complaints that have been made by considering:

1.2.1 the documents provided by both parties and

1.2.2 any representations made by the Parents and the headmaster

1.3 It is not within the powers of the Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, pupils or parents. The Panel may make recommendations to the school on these matters or any other issues as appropriate.

2 How to request a Complaints Panel hearing

2.1 A request for a hearing before the Complaints Panel must be put in writing to Mr Aatif Hassan, the Chair of Governors of the school using the school address within five working days of the decision complained of. The request will usually only be considered if the procedures at Stages 1 and 2 have been completed.

2.2 The written request should include:

2.2.1 a copy of all relevant documents and full contact details

2.2.2 details of all the grounds of the complaint and the outcome desired

2.2.3 a list of the documents which the parents believe to be in the school's possession and wish the Panel to see and

2.2.4 whether you propose to be accompanied to the hearing by someone who is legally qualified (see paragraph 3.3 below).

2.3 If assistance with the request is required, for example because of a disability, please inform the school who will be happy to make appropriate arrangements.

2.4 The school will acknowledge the request for a hearing in writing within two working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays.

2.5 Every effort will be made to enable the hearing to take place within 15 working days of receipt of the request. However, note that the Panel will not normally sit during half terms or school holidays.

3 Planning the hearing

3.1 As soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event at least ten working days before the hearing, we will send written notification to each party of the date, time and place of the hearing.

3.2 Copies of any additional documents you wish the Panel to consider should be sent to the Chair of Governors at the school address to be received at least five working days prior to the hearing.

3.3 You may be accompanied to the hearing by another person, for example a relative, teacher or friend. The Panel hearing is not legal proceedings and so legal representation is not necessary. If you do wish to be accompanied by someone who is legally qualified, you should have notified us of this in your initial request for a Panel hearing. If you did not do so and you wish to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, you must inform the use of this at least five working days prior to the hearing and the parents should note that the Panel will wish to speak to them directly and this person will not be permitted to act as an advocate.

3.4 The school will circulate a copy of the bundle of documents to be considered by the Panel to all parties at least three working days prior to the hearing.

4 Composition of the Panel

4.1 The Panel will comprise of at least three individuals who have no detailed prior knowledge of the circumstances on the complaint, including at least one panel member who is independent of the management and running of The Lyceum School.

4.2 The parents may ask who has been appointed to sit on the Panel ahead of the hearing.

4.3 The Panel members will choose one of themselves to be the Chair of the Panel throughout the proceedings.

5 The Panel hearing

5.1 The hearing will be conducted in an informal manner.

5.2 All those present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments in an appropriate manner. The hearing is not a legal proceeding, and the Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and / or may take written statements into account.

5.3 All statements made at the hearing will be unsworn. All present will be entitled, should they wish, to write their own notes for reference purposes. A clerk appointed by the Panel will take handwritten minutes of the proceedings.

5.4 All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint, and good manners or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chair. If terminated, the original decision will stand. Any person who is dissatisfied with any

aspect of the way the hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and his / her comment will be minuted.

5.5 The Chair may, at his / her discretion, adjourn the hearing for further investigation of any relevant issue. This may include an adjournment to take legal advice.

5.6 A hearing before the Complaints Panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media.

6 The decision

6.1 The Panel will reach a decision on a balance of probabilities unless there is an agreed position.

6.2 The decision, findings and any recommendations will be confirmed in writing to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; by electronic mail, normally within five working days of the hearing. If the parents do not wish to receive the decision by electronic mail, they should inform us of this so that a copy may be given or posted to them.

6.3 The decisions, findings and any recommendations will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the headmaster.

6.4 Actions taken by the school because of the complaint regardless of the findings will also be recorded in the complaints log.

6.5 The completion of Stage 3 represents the conclusion of the school's complaints procedure.

Number of Stage 2 complaints: 1st September 2024 – 31st August 2025: 4

Number of Stage 3 complaints: 1st September 2024 – 31st August 2025: 0

Number of Stage 2 complaints: 1st September 2025 – 31st August 2026: 5

Number of Stage 3 complaints: 1st September 2025 – 31st August 2026: 1

Appendix 4 Procedural flowchart

