



SEDBERGH INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL

Complaints Procedure	
Extent of policy	Sedbergh International Summer School
Policy owner	Gemma Newton
Frequency	Annual
Publication	Parent & Pupil Handbook Website

Introduction

Sedbergh International Summer School strives to provide an excellent academic, activity and pastoral programme for its students. However, should any parents whose children attend the Summer School have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the Summer School with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. The Summer School makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the website.

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required and the Summer School will make other reasonable adjustments required to enable complainants to access and complete this procedure, such as holding online meetings or – where possible – providing translations.

Address for making a complaint:
Sedbergh School, Station Road, Sedbergh LA10 5HG
Email: coo@sedberghschool.org

Scope and Application

- This policy applies only to the Summer School.
- This policy applies only to complaints made by parents. The Summer School has separate Grievance and Whistleblowing Policies to cover concerns that a member of staff may have.
- This policy does not apply to exclusions, to which the School's Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy applies.

This policy applies to complaints from each of the following:

- a parent or parents of students currently attending the Summer School;

- a parent or parents of former students, if the complaint was initially raised when the student was in attendance on the Summer School, or within 6 weeks of their return home.

Please note that, for the purposes of this Complaints Procedure, the term "parent(s)" includes all those who have signed the Summer School's registration form, as well as those who hold parental responsibility for or have care of a student about whom the complaint relates. Where an agent represents a parent, they may make the complaint on the parents' behalf, especially where the parent themselves does not speak English as their first language.

The Summer School will be mindful of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in the application of this policy.

The Summer School will not normally investigate anonymous complaints.

If appropriate, the Summer School will acknowledge that a complaint is upheld, wholly or in part. In addition, it may offer:

- an explanation;
- an admission that it could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the Summer School will try to ensure that the event complained of will not happen again and an explanation of the steps taken in this respect;
- an undertaking to review policies and / or procedures;
- an apology.

Requests for financial awards, such as claims for compensation, damages or fee refunds, are beyond the scope of the Summer School's Complaints Procedure.

All parents should be aware that regardless of the nature of a complaint and whether or not it is upheld, parents are not entitled to details of any related sanctions imposed on staff, students or parents, for reasons of data protection and confidentiality.

There may be occasions when it is necessary or reasonable to deviate from this Complaints Procedure if this is reasonable and justified. Complainants will be notified of the changes.

What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the Summer School as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the Summer School has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done, or has acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The Summer School is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you [or your child] raises in good faith.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously. The Summer School is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.

The three-stage Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

- If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their son/daughter's House Parent, or the Welfare Manager. They may also go directly to the Course Director. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction.
- The Course Director will refer to the relevant staff unless they feel it is appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- A written record will be made of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved **within seven working days** or in the event that a satisfactory resolution is not made, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Complaints Procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the COO of Sedbergh School. He will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the COO will meet or speak to the parents concerned, **within five working days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the COO to carry out further investigations.
- The COO will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the COO is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The COO will also give reasons for his decision.
- If the complaint is against the COO, the Chairman of Governors will call for a full report from the COO and for all the relevant documents. The Chairman may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chairman is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chairman will give reasons for his decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel (the Convenor).
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within 10/ten working days.
- If the 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 5/five working days prior to the hearing.

- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 5/five working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chairman of Governors and the Principal. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Chairman of Governors and the COO.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the Summer School's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within fourteen working days. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, working days refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) if during term time, excluding bank holidays. During the summer school, every effort will be made to seek a panel, however this may not be possible during the summer break.

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the Summer School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the Summer School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the Summer School's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of student
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be 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.

The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.