The Phoenix Collegiate

School complaints procedure

<table>
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Approval requirement agreed at FGB on 13/11/17: this policy needs to be approved by Chair of Governors
**Introduction**

At Phoenix, we always strive to maintain good relations between school, students, teachers, parents/carers and the local community – based on mutual respect and a desire for understanding. If there are concerns and complaints on either side, we will deal with these in accordance with this Procedure.

We are always keen to discuss matters with Stakeholders. If, at any time, you have concerns about your child or the School, please do not hesitate to contact us and, if necessary, make an appointment to see relevant staff members to discuss any issues.

It is important that all Stakeholders support Phoenix in our constant drive to achieve and maintain excellent standards and we would much rather discuss a concern with you than it be discussed in other forums. Therefore, we would recommend and request that any concerns or issues are not discussed on social media sites as any breach of confidentiality could potentially be very damaging to the School and students, as well as undermining the process of ensuring a fair hearing for all parties.

The following Procedure applies to anyone who raises a concern with Phoenix and is not limited to parents/carers of our current students. If your complaint relates to the Headteacher then you should contact the Chair of Governors in the first instance. If your complaint relates to the Chair of Governors, or any individual Governor, you should write to the Clerk to the Governing Body, Mrs Julie Whitehouse c/o the School address. Your complaint will then follow the Procedure set out below.

**The Procedure**

**Stage One – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped and expected that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents/carers have a concern or complaint, they should normally contact their child’s Form Tutor in the first instance. In most cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means. If the Form Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to consult a Head of House, Assistant Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate to contact a Head of House or member of the Senior Leadership Team directly.
- If a complainant is not a parent/carer then they should contact the School and a Head of House or member of Senior Leadership Team with a community liaison role will be the point of contact.
• Whenever a concern is raised under this Procedure, the recipient will make a written note of the substance of that concern, the date it was received and any action taken accordingly.

• If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant on this informal basis, then the concern/complaint should be put in writing to the Headteacher using the complaints form available on the School’s website. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the School will not progress a complaint to the formal stage unless and until this form is completed.

Stage Two – Formal Resolution

• After receiving a written complaint the Headteacher will follow the procedures in Stage Two.

• In most cases, the Headteacher will endeavour to speak to everyone concerned within five School days of receiving the complaint, in order to discuss the matter. Should the complaint be received in the week prior to a school holiday or during public examinations in May and June, it is possible that there may be a slight delay in the timetable for complaint handling. In the case of a delay, the complainant will be advised by letter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

• It may be necessary for the Headteacher to ask another member of the Senior Leadership Team to carry out further investigations.

• Written notes will be made of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint and the Headteacher will inform complainants in writing of his decision.

• Should the matter not be resolved satisfactorily at this stage in the procedure, the concern or complaint should be submitted in writing to the Chair of Governors c/o the School address.

Stage Three – Complaints Panel

• Having reviewed all actions taken at Stages one and two of the Procedure, and once satisfied that both Stages have been exhausted, the Chair of Governors will arrange a meeting of the Governor’s Complaints Appeal Panel.

• The Panel will consist of three Governors who have had no prior knowledge of, or involvement in, the case. If the whole Governing Body is aware of the substance of the complaint, the School will arrange for an independent panel to be convened. Panel members may be sought from local schools or through the Local Authority. Ultimately, decisions regarding the composition of the Panel rests with Governors.

• Individuals who attend a formal complaints interview or meeting may be accompanied by a relative, teacher or friend.
Wherever possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately. Where this is not possible, the Panel will specify the area(s) of additional investigation required to enable them to consider the matter further.

Any decision or recommendation made by the Panel will be given in writing to concerned parties within 10 school days. The decision of the Panel is final.

The decision of the Governor’s Complaints Appeal Panel will not be investigated. However, if the complainant believes that the school and/or the Governors have not followed the complaints procedure correctly, they are entitled to contact the Secretary of State for Education who will examine whether a complaint has been dealt with properly. Grounds for complaint to the Secretary of State are:

- Where there has been undue delay or the School failed to comply with its own procedure
- Where it is believed the School is acting, or proposing to act, unreasonably
- Where it is believed that the School has failed to discharge its legal duties.

The Secretary of State will not overturn the Panel’s decision, but if they find that the School did not deal correctly with a complaint, may request that the matter is reconsidered from an appropriate stage in the procedure.

There may be occasions when, despite all stages of the Complaints Procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant contacts the School again on the same issue then the School may view that complaint as ‘serial’ or ‘persistent’, and choose not to respond. Similarly, the School will not process complaints where the behaviour of the complainant, or the manner in which the complaint is brought, is unreasonable - for example, because of threatening or abusive behaviour towards a member of staff.

Phoenix has a separate policy outlining our procedure for complaints that are deemed ‘serial’ or ‘persistent’ or where the complainant’s behaviour is unreasonable.

In order to ensure that complaints can be investigated properly and fairly, they must be lodged with the School within 3 months of the incident which forms the basis of the complaint. However, at Phoenix we do recognise that occasionally and as an exception, there may be circumstances that prevent adherence to this timescale. The Governing Body will determine whether to allow such complaints to be considered on an individual basis, dependant on the facts of each case.

In carrying out our duty to deal with complaints, the School ensures that we comply with the Equality Act 2010. This procedure should be read in conjunction with Phoenix procedures relating to unreasonable complaints.