



## **Complaints Policy**

Albemarle College is committed to a complaints policy which is free from discrimination, fair and transparent. Separate procedures apply in the event of a child protection issue or if the Principals expel a student or ask a student to leave and that student's parents or guardians seek a review of that decision. Concerns about the safety of a student should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Management Team or to the college's Child Protection Officer. The procedures set out below are guidelines only and the College reserves the right to adapt as appropriate to meet policy aims and circumstance in each case.

### **Aim**

The aim of our Complaints Policy is to ensure that a concern or complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level in order to affect a swift resolution. This is good practice and comes from our aim to promote confidence in staff, parents and students with regard to the provision of safeguarding and welfare. We aim to resolve matters fairly and to undertake to review our procedures and systems on a regular basis to ensure efficient and positive practice.

### **Timings**

We aim to resolve complaints in a timely manner but may be constrained by dates of academic term times and the statutory holiday periods. Initial complaints will be addressed within 48 hours. Subsequent to this we aim to resolve all complaints within a period of two weeks. All reasonable efforts will be made to resolve issues during term time and between Monday and Friday. Those complaints which are made or received out of term time will be addressed within all reason, common sense and judgement.

In order to implement an efficient system there must be a distinction made between a concern or problem which can be resolved informally and quickly (see 1 below), and a formal complaint which may require investigation (see 2 below). The former concerns can often be dealt with without a student having to involve parents or guardians. However, a parent or guardian is free at any time to participate in the resolution of informal complaints. The latter, more formal complaints will necessarily take more time to resolve and must be dealt with along procedural lines as set out below.

## **1. Informal Complaints**

Students and parents are encouraged to use the systems in place at the College to make informal complaints, starting with the student's Personal Tutor and, in the absence of a resolution, the Director of Studies, Vice Principal or Principals, as appropriate. Written records of all proceedings will be kept in the student correspondence file in the front office. These sorts of issues may include: dissatisfaction about some aspect of the course or pastoral care, timetable clashes, concerns about performance and so on. A persistent problem, or the failure to resolve an informal issue automatically results in a Stage 2 procedure.

## **2. Formal Complaints**

Parents and students who have tried unsuccessfully to resolve an issue have the right to ask for a formal meeting with one of the Principals or the Vice Principal. This will be scheduled as quickly as is reasonably possible. Full, written confidential notes will be taken during the meeting and a copy given to the parents, if requested. All reasonable and sensible efforts will be made to resolve the issues at this meeting or at subsequent meetings if deemed necessary. A formal letter stating the resolution of the issue will be sent to the parent or guardian shortly after the meeting.

## **Further Steps**

Should an issue or complaint fail to be resolved after all reasonable effort and discussion between all parties, students and parents are invited to address their concerns to Albemarle's Independent Complaints Adjudicator Charles Lacey, former Head of Cranbrook College and Ibstock School. This ensures complete confidentiality, fairness and impartiality. Our Independent Complaints Adjudicator aims to address and resolve outstanding complaints within two weeks and can be reached at the following email address:

**[charleslacey@gmail.com](mailto:charleslacey@gmail.com)**

Or postal address:

69 Notting Hill Gate  
London  
W113JS