PARENTS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND POLICY

Scope

This policy applies to John Lyon School, which comprises the 'Senior School' and the 'Prep School'. All references to 'the School' refer to John Lyon School except where otherwise specified.

John Lyon School is committed to providing the best education possible for all pupils. It is normal for parents to have occasional concerns about how their child is progressing at School. Parents with minor concerns should contact their child's form tutor, who will typically be able to address them informally or arrange for another member of staff to assist if they are better placed to do so.

We also recognise the right of parents to make complaint. We understand the value to all concerned of dealing fairly and effectively with any such complaint. If parents do make a complaint, the following procedure will be followed.

A complaint is any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the School.

We wish to ensure that:

- Parents wishing to raise a concern or make a complaint know how to do so;
- We respond to a concern or a complaint within a reasonable time and in an efficient way;
- Parents realise that we listen and take their concerns and complaints seriously; and
- We take action where appropriate.

This complaints procedure is for genuine complaints and should not be used simply to obtain information from the School. Your rights as parents to information are governed by the parents' standard terms and conditions and by law.

For the purposes of this policy, 'Head' means the 'Head of John Lyon School', Mrs Rose Hardy

"I don't want to complain but there is something bothering me."

The School is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Please feel able to contact a member of staff, as described below.

"I am not sure whether to complain or not."

Parents are entitled to raise complaints with the School. If in doubt, you should contact the School as we are here to help.

"How should I complain?"

You should speak directly to a member of staff, or write a letter, send an email, or call by telephone. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you.

"To whom should I complain and how will my complaint be resolved?"

Any member of staff will be happy to help.

It is probably best to start with your child's **Form Tutor** or you may choose to take the matter instead to the **Subject Teacher**.

If you make a complaint to either the Form Tutor or the Subject Teacher, then the Head of Department or Head of Year may be consulted if appropriate, and the complaint may be referred to a senior member of staff.

If you believe your complaint is of a more serious nature, you may choose instead to take the matter directly to the Head of Year, Head of Section (Senior School), the Head of Department, Assistant Heads or a Deputy Head.

At this stage, the complaint will be treated as an '**informal complaint**'. The School will try to take appropriate action such that the complaint is resolved.

"When will my complaint be resolved?"

In each case, the complaint may be dealt with easily and quickly but, in any event, you should expect a response within **5 working days** explaining how the School proposes to proceed (which may include inviting you to a meeting to discuss the complaint further) and giving a date by which time to expect a full response, which should be no longer than a further **15 working days** (or if a meeting is arranged, **15 working days** from the meeting, or such other date as agreed with you).

If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, you should expect this timetable to apply from the start of the next term and, therefore, to receive a response within **5 working days of the start of the next term**.

"What if I am not satisfied with the response to my complaint?"

In the event that you are not satisfied with the response (as referred to above) you should write to the Head about the complaint and the reasons why you are not satisfied with the response. In doing this, the complaint will become a '**formal complaint**'. In most circumstances, parents will be asked to complete a Parent Formal Complaint Form, which will be made available by the Head's office.

You should expect a response within **5 working days**. If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, you should expect a response within **5 working days of the start of the next term**.

i. In most cases, the Head will speak to you or arrange to meet you. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
ii. It may be necessary, however, for another member of the School's Senior Leadership Team to carry out further investigations and submit a report to the Head.
iii. The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the formal complaint.

Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made with a full response to you, informing you of their decision in writing giving reasons for their decision and, if appropriate, describing any action taken or proposed.

Parents will be given 10 working days from the date the complaint form is sent to complete and return it to the School. This timeframe ensures that concerns are clearly outlined and allows the School to proceed with the appropriate steps in a timely manner.

If the completed complaint form is not received within 20 working days from the date it was originally sent, the School will consider the matter closed and no further action will be taken.

You should expect the full response within a further **15 working days** from the initial response or conversation or meeting with you (or as otherwise agreed with you).

"What if I still feel that the matter has not been resolved?"

Should the matter not be resolved through contacting the Head, they will offer to refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors. You will have **three months** in which to take up this offer (by writing to the Chairman of Governors c/o the School).

If you decide to refer the matter, the Chairman of Governors will ask for a full report from the Head and will examine matters thoroughly before responding and will normally do so within **15 working days**. If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, you should expect a response within **15 working days from the start of the next term**.

This may result in a positive solution but, if it does not, the Chairman will invite you to an informal meeting. You may wish to be supported by a relative or a friend (but not legally represented). Once the Chairman is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and you will be informed of their decision in writing within a further **15 working days** of the meeting. The Chairman will also give reasons for their decision and, if appropriate, describe any action taken or proposed.

"If I still feel that the matter has not been resolved, how do I appeal?"

Should you feel that the matter has not been resolved by the Chairman of Governors, you may wish to invoke an appeal within **10 working days**, by notice in writing to the Clerk to the Governors at the following address:

Mr Andrew Millett
The Clerk to the Governors of The John Lyon School
The Bursary
5 High Street
Harrow-on-the-Hill
Middlesex
HA1 3HP
email: milletta@johnlyonsfoundation.org.uk

An appeal request will typically be responded to within **5 working days**. If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, you should expect a response within 5 working days of the start of the next term.

The Clerk to the Governors will refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors who will refer the matter to a Complaints Committee (the "Committee") who shall be selected by the Chairman of Governors from the School's Appeal Panel (set out in the Schedule). The Committee shall comprise

at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, who shall be independent of the management and running of the School, one of whom shall be appointed by the Chairman of Governors as its chairman. The composition of the Committee and its chairman will largely depend on availability of members of the Appeal Panel and the chairman of the Committee in consultation with the Chairman of Governors reserves the right to substitute members of the Committee with other members of the School's Appeal Panel.

A '**Panel Hearing**' before the Committee will take place as soon as practicable, and normally within a further **20 working days** of receipt of the notice by the Clerk (this may be longer if the complaint is received during holiday periods).

You will be asked if there are any papers you would like to have circulated beforehand. If the Committee deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related information be supplied in advance of the Panel Hearing. Copies of all papers shall be supplied to all parties not later than **5 working days** prior to the Panel Hearing.

You may be accompanied to the Panel Hearing by one other person. This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate and will only be allowed at the discretion of the chairman of the Committee.

The Panel Hearing will not be conducted in an adversarial way and the primary concern of the Committee will be to deal with matters fairly and, therefore, the chairman of the Committee has discretion to conduct the Panel Hearing (including deciding on who may attend) in any way which will achieve this. The chairman of the Committee can give directions, which may include adjourning the Panel Hearing in order to request further information (from either the parents or the School or third parties) or otherwise carry out further investigations or call witnesses.

After due consideration of all the facts the Committee considers relevant, the Committee will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within **8 working days** of the Panel Hearing.

The decision of the Committee will be final.
The Committee's findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to you, the Head, the Chairman of Governors and, where relevant, the person(s) to whom the complaint refers.

"To whom do I complain if it concerns the Head?"

In the event that the complaint refers specifically to the Head, you should refer the matter in the first instance in writing to the Clerk to the Governors (at the address set out above). The Clerk will then refer the complaint to the Chairman of Governors.

"Will my complaint be kept confidential?"

You can be assured that all complaints will be treated in confidence (and all correspondence, statements and records kept confidentially) with knowledge limited to the Head and those directly involved, subject always to any legal requirements regarding disclosure, including 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.

Action which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints would be handled confidentially by the School (subject to any legal requirements regarding disclosure).

"How do you respond to anonymous complaints?"

The School does not commit to pursue anonymous complaints.

"My child is in the EYFS, does the same procedure apply?"

The Prep School will follow the procedure as set out above for children in the EYFS. Additionally, parents and carers can choose to contact the Department for Education (DfE) using the process outlined here: Complain about a school: Private schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Additionally, parents or can raise a complaint relating to EYFS via Ofsted following the guidance here: Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

"May I still complain even if my child has left the School?"

If you wish to complain about something affecting your child after they have left the School, this must take the form of a letter to the Head or Chairman of Governors **within three months** of leaving; the School will only respond to complaints that are initially raised when the pupil was still registered with the School.

Retention of Records

Written records of formal complaints will be retained by the School and will detail whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing, and the action taken by the school as result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). A copy of the findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the governors and the head.

Records of complaints which do not have safeguarding implications will be retained for a minimum of 7 years. Records of complaints which have safeguarding implications, will be preserved for the term recommended by the Government Department for Education at the time the complaint is concluded.

Academic Year 2025-26
In the previous academic year, there was two formal complaints registered in the Senior School and no formal complaint registered in the Prep School.

Schedule
Appeal Panel as at September 2026
Prof Jagjit Chadha
John Dunston
Sarbani Jollyman
Richard Fox
George Stavrinidis
Andrew Smith
John Graham
Ian Kendrick
David Tidmarsh
Anup Vyas
Giles Goodfellow

Reviewed by: Head
Implemented: September 2026
Next Review: September 2027