



MYDDELTON COLLEGE, DENBIGH

**COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY
AND PROCEDURES
(FOR PUPILS, PARENTS AND GUARDIANS)**

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MYDDELTON COLLEGE

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURES (FOR PUPILS, PARENTS AND GUARDIANS)

This policy is based upon the guidance:

A. Complaints Procedures for School Governing Bodies in Wales

Welsh Government circular no: 011/2012

Date of issue: October 2012 B.

National Minimum Standards for Boarding.

From Sept 2022

Standard 14 – Complaints

1. This is a whole-School Policy.

2. Urgent or Emergency Concerns or Complaints:

If you have a Safeguarding or an urgent or emergency concern about any aspect of your child's life or welfare at Myddelton College, please contact:

Safeguarding Concerns: Mr Mike Pearson, Deputy Headmaster, Safeguarding Lead

All Other Urgent or Emergency Concerns: Mr Andrew Allman, Headmaster

3. The Policy:

a. We welcome comments and suggestions and take seriously concerns and complaints whenever these arise. Our policy, which is available on the web-site or as a hard copy from Reception, or the School Secretary and Headmaster's PA, allows those who have concerns or complaints to raise them informally with staff at a local level and, if this does not or cannot result in a satisfactory outcome or resolution, to raise the matter formally with those who have responsibility for the management and governance of the School.

b. An expression of worry or doubt, with reassurances sought, would be a '**concern**'.

A '**complaint**' may be generally defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about either actions taken or a lack of action.

Any current pupil or parent / guardian of a pupil enrolled into the School or Prep School may make a complaint in good faith. Equally, this policy can be used by pupils should other routes to expressing a concern or making a complaint are not preferred or chosen.

c. In addition, the School has clear and easily accessible processes for boarders to raise their own or group complaints about boarding provision; such information is available via House Parents, resident tutors and members of the senior leadership; concerns or complaints can also be raised in any of the pupil representative group meetings. Boarders are not penalised for raising a complaint in good faith.

d. The School aims to ensure that:

- all those wishing to raise concerns know how to do so,
- we respond to complaints promptly and in a courteous and efficient way,
- we listen and take any complaints seriously,
- we take action where appropriate, and ensure we work in partnership with parents and guardians,

- a complaint will not lead to repercussions for the complainant; complaints made by parents will never adversely affect School staff's care or concern for their children,
- your complaint will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect.

e. This Policy is reviewed annually and its effectiveness is considered by the School's Governors.

When doing this, the School's written record of complaints will identify for Governors:

- all complaints and the Stage at which they were considered,
- those complaints relating to boarding provision, and action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld),
- complaints made but later withdrawn,
- implementation of recommendations of Panels,
- the review of any emerging patterns arising from complaints.

4. Informal Complaint, to include more serious concerns: (STAGE 1)

- a. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. The School believes that a problem which is resolved quickly and efficiently with the person immediately responsible is the best method of ensuring its successful resolution.

However, it is very important that complainants recognise the responsibility of staff and others to investigate matters fully and in detail to establish facts before committing to a response.

- b. **Where appropriate, complaints should initially be raised as follows:**

Educational issues: if the matter relates to the classroom, the curriculum or special educational needs, please speak or write initially to the pupil's subject teacher (Senior School) or the class teacher (Prep School). Your complaint may be passed to a more senior member of staff if appropriate. Senior Deputy Headmaster: Mr Ian Lloyd; Head of Prep School: Mrs Katie Gresley-Jones.

Pastoral care: for complaints relating to matters outside the classroom, to include allegations of bullying or dangerous behaviour, please speak or write to the pupil's tutor or Head of House (Senior School) or the class teacher (Prep School).

Disciplinary matters: a problem over any disciplinary action taken or a sanction imposed on pupils should be raised first of all with the member of staff who imposed it. Deputy Head Pastoral: Mr Mike Pearson; Head of Prep School: Katie Gresley-Jones.

Financial matters: a query relating to fees, non-academic services or extras should be addressed in writing to Mrs Sue Downes, Finance Assistant

If this person cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Year, Head of Department or a Deputy Head. You might wish to refer to the Staff List published on the web site for names and positions of responsibility.

- c. Complaints made directly to a senior leader will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff unless the senior leader considers it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

d. An informal complaint provided in writing, either as a letter or as an email, will be acknowledged by telephone, email or letter **within three working days** of receipt, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely timescales.

Such action may include an investigation and / or a meeting with the parent in which case the time taken might need to increase to a total of **five working days**. The member of staff to whom the initial complaint was directed will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which these were received.

Should the parent not receive a response to the original complaint within **ten working days**, the matter should be referred immediately to the Senior Deputy Head (Senior School) or the Head of the Prep School.

Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days, or in the event that the member of staff and the complainant fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then the complainant should proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Whilst every effort will be made to deal with concerns and complaints quickly, it may take longer to conduct an enquiry, involving conversations and interviews, if it covers periods during school holidays.

5. Formal Resolution of a Complaint: (STAGE 2)

a. If you remain unhappy, and consider the informal route (Stage 1) has not satisfactorily resolved the concern or complaint, please contact Mr Alun Brown, Deputy Head. This should be done in writing, either by letter or email. The Deputy Head will conduct an investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved.

The Deputy Head may ask to meet you at a mutually convenient time, normally **within 5 working days** of receiving the complaint, to discover further information and to discuss of the problem.

The Deputy Head may ask another member of the Senior Leadership, or a middle manager to carry out the investigation on their behalf if they have not already been involved in the informal resolution above to ensure a full perspective of the complaint, with all its aspects, is received.

The Deputy Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the Stage 2 complaint, and of the final recommendations and action taken. Once the Deputy Head is satisfied that, as far as practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the Deputy Head will make a decision and communicate this in writing to the complainant.

Formal complaints will normally be dealt with **within 15 working days** from notification in writing. This may be longer during school holidays.

6. Appeals

a. If you are not satisfied with the outcome from the Stage 2 process, you have the right to appeal to the Deputy Head within **10 working days**. Appeals will not be considered after this period; the College will deem the matter to have been fully resolved and no further action will be taken.

b. For appeals received within this timescale, the Deputy Head will pass the matter, with all existing information, to the Headmaster. He may well become fully involved at this point in negotiation.

Equally, he could refer the matter directly to the Chair of Governors, Mr David Ewart (for contact details, please contact the School) who will establish a Complaints Panel to consider the Appeal.

c. This Appeal Complaints' Panel will consist of two persons not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint. The Panel will also include one independent person, who is independent of the management and running of the School, and to whom you can write in confidence, c/o the Chair of Governors.

An Appeal hearing, either in person or held virtually, will usually be scheduled **within 15 working days** although this could be longer if the complaint period spans a holiday period.

The Appeal Panel will be charged with carrying out a full investigation and may require further particulars of the complaint, to be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied by all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the Appeal hearing.

The complainant may be accompanied to the Appeal hearing by one other person who may be a relative, teacher or friend; legal representatives will not normally be appropriate.

If possible, the Appeal Panel will resolve the complaint immediately. If further investigation is needed, the Panel will respond **within 5 working days**. The Panel will write to the complainant informing them of their decision and the reasons for it. The decision will be final as far as the School is concerned.

Should complainants be dissatisfied by the School's Appeals' Process, they might consider Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

d. The Panel's findings and decision, with any recommendations, will be sent in writing to the complainant; the Headmaster, members of the Governing Body in confidence and, where relevant, the person to whom the complaint refers.

e. A record of the findings and recommendations will be made available on the School's premises if required for inspection.

7. Complaints against the Headmaster:

If the complaint is against the Headmaster, it will be referred immediately and directly to the Chair of Governors and the Appeals procedure above will be followed.

8. Further information:

A written record of all complaints, recommendations and actions taken is kept for 3 years as well as an indication of whether they were resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2, or if they proceeded to the Headmaster, Chair of Governors, an Appeal Panel Hearing, or beyond.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints and outcomes will be kept confidential except where required by the Secretary of State to the National Assembly, or an Estyn Inspection Team.

9. Contact points (all via the School office):

Deputy Head Academic Mr Alun Brown

Senior Deputy Headmaster, Mr Ian Lloyd

Deputy Head Pastoral, Mr Mike Pearson

Headmaster, Mr Andrew Allman

Chair of Governors, Mr David Ewart

Finance Assistant, Mrs Downes

School Secretary and HM's PA, Nikki Evans

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR): further details of this process can be found on the UK Gov.uk website.