THE PERSE
SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE

Parental Complaints Policy and Procedures

The Perse School

September 2026

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1 Aims

1.1 This is the complaints policy of The Perse School (**School**). The School comprises the **Relevant Schools** (the Perse Pelican Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School including the EYFS setting (**Pelican School**), the Perse Preparatory School (**Prep School**) and the Perse Upper School (**Upper School**)).

1.2 The aims of this policy and related procedures are to provide a framework for the resolution of concerns raised and/or complaints which:

1.2.1 allows for their resolution informally and sets out the School's formal procedures where this is not achievable;

1.2.2 is easily accessible and publicised, simple to understand and use and impartial and non-adversarial;

1.2.3 enables a full and fair investigation where appropriate;

1.2.4 respects people's desire for confidentiality;

1.2.5 addresses all the points at issue and provides an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;

1.2.6 provides information to the School's senior leadership / management team so that if appropriate, services can be improved, and any systemic issues can be identified and addressed; and

1.2.7 helps to promote a culture of safety, equality, and protection.

2 Scope and application

2.1 This policy applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (**EYFS**).

2.2 This policy applies to written expressions of dissatisfaction about actions taken, or a lack of action, by the School where the parent seeks action by the School.

2.3 This policy applies only to concerns raised and/or complaints from each of the following:

2.3.1 a Parent or Parents of current pupils;

2.3.2 a Parent or Parents of former pupils if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was registered at the School.

2.4 This policy will continue to apply to a complaint which is ongoing when a pupil leaves the School.

2.5 Requests for financial awards, such as claims for compensation, damages, or fee refunds, are beyond the scope of the School's complaints procedures.

2.6 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, pupils, or parents, for reasons of data protection and confidentiality.

2.6.1 The School has separate grievance and whistleblowing policies and procedures for staff concerns.

2.6.2 Complaints from others (such as members of the public) should be addressed in the first instance to the Head.

2.7 There may be occasions where it is necessary or reasonable to deviate from this complaints procedure if this is reasonable and justified. Complainants will be notified of the changes.

2.8 The School will not normally investigate anonymous complaints.

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

2.9.1 an explanation;

2.9.2 an admission that it could have been handled differently or better;

2.9.3 an assurance that the School will try to ensure that the event complained of will not happen again and an explanation of the steps taken in this respect;

2.9.4 to review policies and/or procedures;

2.9.5 an apology.

2.10 There are also separate policies and procedures relating to the following. This policy does not apply to:

2.10.1 admissions decisions – please refer to the School's *Admissions Policy*;

2.10.2 exclusions, to which the School's *Permanent Exclusion and Removal: Review Procedure* applies;

2.10.3 subject access requests – see the School's *Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices*; and

2.10.4 safeguarding and welfare issues – please refer to the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*.

3 Regulatory framework

3.1 This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

3.1.1 Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (**ISSR**);

3.1.2 EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, September 2025);

3.1.3 Education and Skills Act 2008;

3.1.4 Childcare Act 2006;

3.1.5 Equality Act 2010; and

3.1.6 Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR)

3.2 The parent contract will be relevant to the operation of this policy. Dependent upon the nature of the complaint being made, other School policies, procedures and resource materials may also prove relevant and helpful.

4 Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

4.1 The Governors have overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy.

4.2 To ensure the efficient discharge of their responsibilities under this policy, the Governors have allocated the following tasks:

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	Head – Upper, Prep and Pelican Schools	As required, and at least annually
Monitoring the implementation of the policy	Head – Upper, Prep and Pelican Schools	As required, and at least termly
Maintaining up to date records of all information created in relation to the policy and its implementation as required by the UK GDPR and the ISSR	Head – Upper, Prep and Pelican Schools	As required, and at least termly
Seeking input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, Parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy	Head – Upper, Prep and Pelican Schools	As required, and at least annually
Formal annual review of complaints and implementation of any recommendation to identify trends and recommend further improvement to policies and procedures	Governors	Annually

5 Publication and availability

5.1 This policy is published on the School website.

5.2 This policy is available in hard copy on request.

5.3 A copy of the policy is available for inspection from the School office during a working day.

5.4 This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required and the School will make other reasonable adjustments required to enable complainants to access and complete this procedure, such as holding meetings in accessible locations.

5.5 Information regarding the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure of this policy during the preceding school year is available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State, or an independent inspectorate. **The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure of this policy during the 2025-2026 school year was 1.**

6 Definitions and interpretation

6.1 Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

6.1.1 References to **Parent**, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility, or has care of the child. This policy applies to any expression of dissatisfaction however made about actions taken, or a lack of action, by the School where a Parent seeks action by the School.

6.1.2 References to the **Head** are references to the Head of the Relevant School.

6.1.3 References to the **Governors** are references to the Board of Governors.

6.1.4 References to **working days** mean Monday to Friday when the School is open during term time. The dates of terms are published on the School's website. In the event that the application of this definition is likely to introduce excessive delays, due to intervening School holidays, the School's approach is to take sensible and reasonable steps so as to minimise any hardship or unfairness arising from such delays.

7 Timescales

7.1.1 The School aims to resolve all complaints efficiently and promptly and Parents are encouraged to bring any matter causing concern to the School's attention as soon as possible. Whenever possible, in the interests of a prompt resolution of issues a complaint should be raised within three months of the incident, or where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. The School may consider complaints made after three months but Parents should be aware that most complaints will require the School to conduct an investigation and the ability to carry out a full and fair investigation, particularly where pupils may need to be interviewed, becomes increasingly difficult as time elapses. A complaint raised outside this timescale should therefore include details of the issues which led to a delay.

7.1.2 Timescales for each stage of the complaints procedure are set out below in the relevant paragraphs.

7.1.3 It is expected that the management of every complaint will progress in a timely manner.

7.1.4 Complaints that are raised in the School holidays will usually be deemed to have been received on the first working day after receipt.

7.1.5 Where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in a delay to the timescales for a stage of the complaints procedure (such as other bodies investigating aspects of the complaint, the School will notify the Parents and inform them of the new timescales as soon as possible.

7.1.6 If a Parent commences legal action against the School in relation to their complaint, the Head or Chair of Governors will consider whether or not to suspend the complaints procedure until those proceedings have been concluded.

8 Management of concerns and complaints

8.1 The School's policy allows for complaints to be considered at three stages:

Stage 1: Informal raising of a concern or complaint. Further details of this procedure are set out in Appendix 1.

Stage 2: A formal complaint in writing. Further details of this procedure are set out in Appendix 2.

Stage 3: Reference to a complaints panel. Further details of this procedure are set out in Appendix 3.

8.2 Parents requiring assistance with making a complaint at any stage of the procedure, for example because of a disability, should contact the person identified in Appendix 4 who will be happy to make appropriate arrangements.

9 Expected standards of behaviour

9.1 It is the intention of the School to deal with concerns and complaints fairly and work constructively with Parents towards resolving them.

As concerns and complaints will be dealt with confidentially, complaints are not to be discussed publicly, including via social media.

While the School will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the School attention is drawn to the information included in Appendix 5 which is drawn from:

9.1.1 the Department for Education's Best practice advice for school complaints procedures 2020 (updated January 2021); and

9.1.2 The Department for Education guidance Controlling access to school premises 2018.

10 Record keeping and confidentiality

10.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

10.2 The School keeps a written record of all formal complaints, including the following:

10.2.1 whether they were resolved at Stage 2 or Stage 3.

10.2.2 the action taken by the School as a result of the complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

10.3 In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be kept only for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary in the circumstances.[1]

10.4 Correspondence, statements, and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of an inspection or under other legal authority or court order.

10.5 A complaint about the fulfilment of the School's EYFS requirements will be made available to Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (**ISI**) on request.

10.6 The information created in accordance with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the School will use personal data about pupils and parents. In addition, School staff must ensure that they follow the School's data protection policy and procedures when handling personal data created in connection with this policy. This includes the School's data protection policy and information security and sharing data guidance. Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications will be retained for a minimum of seven years (a period determined by the six-year inspection cycle with allowance for unforeseen circumstances).

11 Complaints to Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate

11.1 Parents of children in the School's Early Years Foundation Stage have the right to contact Ofsted and/or ISI if they believe the School is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

11.2 Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 4666 or at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

11.3 ISI can be contacted at concerns@isi.net or on 020 7600 0100.

12 Training

12.1 The School ensures that regular guidance and training is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.

12.2 The level and frequency of training depends on role of the individual member of staff.

12.3 The School maintains written records of all staff training.

[1] In accordance with the terms of reference of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse all schools are required to retain information which relates to allegations (substantiated or not) of organisations and individuals who may have been involved in, or have knowledge of child sexual abuse or child sexual exploitation; allegations (substantiated or not) of individuals having engaged in sexual activity with, or having a sexual interest in, children; institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse or other exploitation. Details of any complaints made about such matters will be retained.

13 Version control

Date of adoption of this policy	3 September 2026
Date of last review of this policy	June 2026
Date for next review of this policy	June 2027
Policy owner (SMT)	Head (Upper, Prep and Pelican Schools)
Authorised by	Jonathan Scott On behalf of the Board of Governors

Appendix 1 Stage 1 - Informal resolution procedure

1 Informal resolution of a concern or complaint

1.1 The School hopes and expects that most concerns and complaints can be resolved informally and without the need to use the formal stage of the complaints procedure. For example, dissatisfaction about some aspect of teaching or pastoral care or a billing error should be able to be resolved by the relevant member of staff.

Who to contact

1.2 Concerns and complaints should initially be raised in writing (email will suffice) with the most appropriate person at the School, who will work constructively with Parents to resolve them. Concerns/complaints should be raised as follows:

1.2.1 **educational issues**: if the matter relates to the classroom, the curriculum, or special educational needs, please write initially to:

Upper School: the Tutor, Head of Department or Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning).

Prep School: the Form Teacher or Assistant Head (Academic).

Pelican School: the Class Teacher.

1.2.2 **pastoral care**: for concerns and complaints relating to matters outside the classroom, please write to:

Upper School: the Tutor, Head of Year, Head of Section, or the Deputy Head (Pupil development and welfare).

Prep School: the Form Teacher or the Head of Year or the Assistant Head (Pastoral).

Pelican School: the Class Teacher.

1.2.3 **staff issues:** for concerns and complaints relating to members of staff, please write to:

Upper School: the Tutor, Head of Department, or the Deputy Head (Staffing & Operations).

Prep School: the Head.

Pelican School: the Head.

1.2.4 **disciplinary matters**: a concern over any disciplinary action taken should be raised in writing with:

Upper School; the Head of Year, Head of Section or Deputy Head (Pupil development and welfare).

Prep School: the Deputy Head or the Head.

Pelican School: the Deputy Head or the Head.

1.2.5 **financial matters**: a query relating to fees or extras should be addressed in writing to the Chief Financial Officer.

1.3 The complaint may be passed to a more senior member of staff if appropriate.

1.4 An informal complaint will be acknowledged by 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.

1.5 Wherever appropriate, the School will ask the Parent at an early stage what they think might resolve the issue.

1.6 The Parent will usually receive a response to the complaint within 15 working days.

1.7 If the Parent is dissatisfied with the response to the informal complaint or in the event that the complaint cannot be resolved by informal means, the Parent may make a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure as set out in Appendix 2.

Complaints about the Head

1.8 The procedure for dealing with an informal complaint about the Head of the Relevant School is set out below:

1.8.1 Parents may choose to raise complaints directly with the Head in writing if they feel that the matter is capable of resolution informally. The School will not automatically treat the complaint as a formal (Stage 2) complaint and the Head will endeavour to resolve the complaint informally under Stage 1;

1.8.2 the Head will acknowledge informal complaints within three working days and will seek to resolve the matter under Stage 1 by means of direct conversation or a meeting with the Parents, to be held within 15 working days of the initial complaint;

1.8.3 if the Parent is dissatisfied with the Head's response to the informal complaint or in the event that the complaint cannot be resolved by informal means, the Parent may make a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure as set out in Appendix 2.

1.9 Alternatively, Parents may choose to make their complaint about the Head in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure as set out in Appendix 2.

Complaints about the Governors

1.10 Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governors via the School office. Please mark the same as Private and Confidential. Different procedures may apply.

Appendix 2 Stage 2 - Formal complaint in writing

1 How to make a formal complaint

1.1 Complaints will usually only progress to Stage 2 after first being considered at the informal stage and only then if the Parent indicates that they wish to escalate a matter to the formal stage.

1.2 The formal complaint in writing must be made on the Complaints Form which can be requested from the Head's office or downloaded from the policy area of the School website. The Stage 2 Complaints Form is also available at Appendix 6. The Complaints Form should be returned in an envelope or sent via email, addressed to the Head of the Relevant School and should include:

1.2.1 a copy of all relevant documents, the complainant's name and full contact details;

1.2.2 details of all the grounds of the complaint and who it has previously been raised with; and

1.2.3 the outcome desired.

1.3 The complaint will be acknowledged by email or letter within five working days, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely timescales.

2 Investigation

2.1 The subject matter of the complaint will be investigated in the most appropriate manner, which may include some or all of the following steps:

2.1.1 delegation of the investigation to a senior member of staff or third party;

2.1.2 involvement of one or more Governors;

2.1.3 request for additional information from the Parent, including what they think might resolve the issue (if not already requested under Stage 1); and

2.1.4 request for a conversation and/or a meeting with the Parent personally and/or others with relevant knowledge of the circumstances to define the scope of the complaint and / or assist in the investigation;

2.1.5 The Chair of Governors will be made aware of all stage 2 formal complaints.

2.2 Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Where the investigation has been delegated to a senior member of staff or third party, they will prepare a report on the investigation which will usually then be considered by the Head. Personal data may be redacted, and names anonymised or cyphered in line with data protection principles.

3 Decision

3.1 The Head will notify the Parent by email or letter of their Stage 2 decision and the reasons for it, usually within 30 working days from the receipt of the Stage 2 Complaints Form.

3.2 If the Parent is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response to the complaint, the Parent can request that the complaint be referred to a Complaints Panel under Stage 3 using the procedure set out in Appendix 3.

3.3 Early Years Foundation Stage (**EYFS**): Parents of pupils in the EYFS setting will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 calendar days of the complaint being received.

4 Complaints about the Head

4.1 The procedure for dealing with a formal complaint (using the Complaints Form) about the Head of the Relevant School is set out below:

4.1.1 Any formal complaint should be made using the Complaints Form and include a copy of all relevant documents, the complainant's name and full contact details and details of all the grounds of the complaint and the outcome desired.

4.1.2 Formal complaints about the Head should be directed as follows:

(a) A formal complaint form about the Head of the Pelican School should be directed to the Head of the Prep School.

(b) A formal complaint form about the Head of the Prep School should be directed to the Head of the Upper School.

(c) A formal complaint form about the Head of the Upper School should be directed to the Chair of Governors (via the Clerk to the Governors).

4.1.3 The Head of the Prep or Upper School or Chair of Governors (via the Clerk to the Governors) will acknowledge the formal complaint form by email or letter within five working days of receipt and indicate the action that is being taken and the likely timescale. Such action may include an investigation (in which the investigation of the complaint may be delegated to a third party or one or more governors) and/or a meeting with the Parent. The Parent will usually receive a response to the complaint within 30 working days (28 calendar days for EYFS complaints)

4.1.4 If the Parent is dissatisfied with the response to the formal complaint, the Parent can request that the complaint be referred to a Complaints Panel under Stage 3 using the procedure set out in Appendix 3.

Appendix 3 Stage 3 - Complaints Panel

1 **Complaints Panel hearing**

1.1 If a Parent is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response to the formal complaint, the Parent can request a Complaints Panel hearing.

1.2 A Complaints Panel Hearing (**Hearing**) is a Hearing to consider those elements of the Stage 2 response to the Parent's formal complaint with which the Parent remains dissatisfied. The Complaints Panel (**Panel**) is not obliged to consider any new complaints which have not been previously raised.

2 **How to request a Hearing**

2.1 A request for a Hearing must be put in writing to the Clerk to the Governors and will usually only be considered if the procedure at Stage 2 has been completed. It is expected that the complaints procedure will progress in a timely manner.

2.2 The written request should usually be made within 10 working days from receipt of the Stage 2 decision and should include:

2.2.1 the complainant's name and full contact details;

2.2.2 details of those aspects of the complaint about which the Parents remain dissatisfied and the outcome desired;

2.2.3 copies of any relevant documents which the Parents would like the Panel to consider;

2.2.4 whether the Parent wishes to attend the Hearing in person or remotely; and

2.2.5 whether the Parent proposes to be accompanied to the Hearing by someone who is legally qualified (see paragraph 3.5 below).

2.3 The Clerk to the Governors will acknowledge the request for a Hearing in writing within three working days of receipt.

2.4 Every effort will be made to enable the Hearing to take place within 20 working days of receipt of the request.

2.5 Parents may withdraw their request for a Hearing at any point up to and including the intended date of the Hearing.

2.6 The chair of Governors will be made aware of all stage 3 complaints.

3 **Planning the Hearing**

3.1 The Clerk to the Governors will send written notification to each party of the date, time, and place of the Hearing at least ten working days before the date of the Hearing.

3.2 Copies of any documents (additional to those specified in 2.2.1and 2.2.3) that the Parent wishes the complaints panel to consider should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors to be received at least seven working days prior to the Hearing.

3.3 The Clerk to the Governors will circulate a copy of the bundle of documents to be considered by the complaints panel to all parties at least three working days prior to the Hearing.

3.4 The Parent may be accompanied at the Hearing, for example by a relative or friend. The Hearing is an internal proceeding, not legal proceedings. Legal representation is not necessary, and will not normally be appropriate, and the role to be played by any legal representative will be at the discretion of the Panel Chair. The Clerk to the Governors must be given five working days' notice if the Parents wish to be accompanied by a person who is legally qualified.

3.5 As set out in 2.2.5 above, the Parent is required to notify the Clerk to the Governors if they wish to be accompanied by someone who is legally qualified in their initial request for a Hearing. The Parent should note that the Panel will wish to speak to them directly. The legally qualified person will not be permitted to act as an advocate or to address the Panel unless invited to do so by the Chair of the Panel.

3.6 A person will be appointed to take a minute of the Hearing.

4 Composition of the Complaints Panel

4.1 The Panel will comprise at least three individuals, selected by the Clerk to the Governors who have no detailed prior knowledge of the circumstances of the complaint and will include School Governors and at least one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the School.

4.2 The Parent may ask the Clerk to the Governors to inform them who has been appointed to sit on the Panel ahead of the Hearing. Fair consideration will be given to any reasonable objection to a particular member of the Panel.

4.3 The Chair of Governors will usually appoint one of the panel members to be the chair of the panel throughout the proceedings.

5 Role of the Complaints Panel

5.1 The role of the Panel is to establish the facts surrounding the complaints that remain in issue by considering:

5.1.1 the documents provided by both parties; and

5.1.2 any representations made by the parties.

to review the process and the decision reached at Stage 2, and to consider on the balance of probabilities, whether or not to uphold each complaint.

6 The Hearing

6.1 Unless prior to the commencement of the Hearing, a Parent confirms that they are satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, the Hearing will proceed notwithstanding that the Parent may decide not to attend. In these circumstances, the Panel should consider the Parent's complaint in their absence and make findings on the substance of the complaint.

6.2 The Panel will usually hear representations form the Stage 2 decision-maker and the Parent(s). During the Hearing, the parties shall have the opportunity to ask

questions and make comments in an appropriate manner. The Hearing is not a legal proceeding, and the Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses to the issues complained of but may do so and/or may take written statements into account at its discretion.

6.3 All statements made at the Hearing will be unsworn. The parties will be entitled to write their own notes for reference purposes.

6.4 All those present during the Hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint, and good manners. If they fail to do so and after due warning, the Hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chair of the Panel. Any person who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the Hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and their comment will be minuted.

6.5 The Chair of the Panel may, at their discretion, adjourn the Hearing if they consider it appropriate to do so. This may include an adjournment for welfare reasons, to enable information to be obtained and/or considered or for the parties to take legal advice on a specific issue arising.

6.6 A Hearing before the Panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements relating to the complaint or any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be published or otherwise made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media.

6.7 When the Chair of the Panel is satisfied that sufficient consideration has been given to the documentation provided and any representations made by the parties, they will conclude the Hearing.

7 Decision

7.1 The Panel will make findings about each complaint on the balance of probabilities and may make recommendations to the School. The recommendations will be properly considered and actioned as appropriate.

7.2 It is not within the powers of the Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, pupils, or parents, although the complaints panel may make recommendations about these issues.

7.3 The minutes of the Hearing, together with the Panel's findings and any recommendations will usually be provided in writing to the Parents and, where relevant, the person complained about, within seven working days of the Hearing. The Panel's findings and any recommendations will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Governors and the Head.

8 Next steps

8.1 The decision of the Panel is final. There will be no further opportunity with the School for consideration of the complaint. The completion of Stage 3 represents the conclusion of the School's complaints procedure.

8.2 The School will however ensure that the Panel decision is recorded appropriately and that any recommendations including any actions taken to implement them will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Governors and the Head.

Appendix 4 Assistance with making a complaint

The following members of staff can assist with making of a complaint if required:

The Perse Pelican Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School:

Francesca Heftman (Head), Tel 01223 403940, (e-mail) pelican@perse.co.uk

If she is unavailable or is the subject of the complaint, please contact the Deputy Head of the Pelican School for assistance.

The Perse Preparatory School:

James Piper (Head), Tel 01223 403992, (e-mail) prep@perse.co.uk

If the Head is unavailable or is the subject of the complaint, please contact the Deputy Head of the Prep School for assistance.

The Perse Upper School:

Ed Wiseman (Deputy Head, Pupil development and welfare), Tel 01223 403800, (e-mail) ewwiseman@perse.co.uk

If he is unavailable or is the subject of the complaint, please contact the Deputy Head (Staffing & Operations) for assistance.

Appendix 5 Unreasonable complaints

The School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. It will not normally limit the contact complainants have with it. However, it does not expect its staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening.

The School adopts the Department for Education definition of unreasonable complainants as those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the School, hinder consideration of their or other people's complaints.

Where repeated attempts are made by a Parent to raise the same complaint after it was been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of this policy.

Unreasonable complaints are taken seriously by the School as they put a strain on valuable resources and hinder the progress of proper investigations. The School may judge that a complaint is unreasonable by assessing a number of factors, including those that are outlined below.

1 **A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint**:

1.1 refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;

1.2 refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;

1.3 refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;

1.4 insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;

1.5 introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;

1.6 makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;

1.7 changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;

1.8 repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);

1.9 refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the School's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed;

1.10 seeks an unrealistic outcome;

1.11 makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated, and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

2 **A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically**:

2.1 maliciously;

2.2 aggressively;

2.3 using threats, intimidation, or violence;

2.4 using abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language;

2.5 knowing it to be false;

2.6 using falsified information;

2.7 publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers or other public forums.

3 **A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if it is manifestly unjustified, inappropriate, or an improper use of formal procedure**.

In assessing this, the School shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case and the nature of the complaint itself rather than the nature of the complainant. In assessing all of the circumstances of the case the School will consider a range of factors including:

3.1 whether a complaint has reasonable foundation;

3.2 the history and context of the complaint (and any evidence where relevant);

3.3 whether the time and cost of investigating the complaint is proportionate to the issue(s) complained of;

3.4 whether an investigation of the complaint is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation, or distress;

3.5 unexplained delay in raising a complaint or issue;

3.6 if the purpose of the complaint is to obtain an outcome which is unavailable via the complaints procedure, such as a claim for compensation, damages or a refund of fees paid;

3.7 any evidence of a complaint being brought for an improper purpose.

Whenever possible, the Head will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before dismissing a complaint as unreasonable. The Head will normally only do so after consultation with the Chair of Governors.

If the behaviour continues, the School will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it.

For complainants who excessively contact the School causing a significant level of disruption, the School may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after 3 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence the School will immediately inform the police and communicate its actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the School.

It is open to a complainant to request that a Stage 3 panel be convened to determine the single issue of whether the School's dismissal of the complainant's original complaint(s) was justified.

Appendix 6 Stage 2 formal Complaints Form

THE PERSE SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE

Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 8QF (Telephone: 01223 403800)

STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS FORM

When completed the form should be returned to the Head of the relevant school. If the complaint is about the Head of the Pelican, the form should be returned to the Head of the Prep School. If the complaint is about the Head of the Prep School, the form should be returned to the Head of the Upper School. If the complaint is about the Head of the Upper School, the form should be returned to the Clerk to Governors, c/o The Perse Upper School. When completing this form please refer to the School Complaints Policy.

Name of pupil: ……

Year Group of pupil: ……

School of pupil: ……

Name of complainant: ……

Date of complaint: __ __/__ __/__ __ __ __

Address of complainant: ……

……

Email address: ……

Telephone: ……

1. What is the nature of the complaint? (Please tick)

☐ Staff Conduct ☐ Pastoral Care

☐ Teaching Standards ☐ Time Tabling

☐ Condition of Premises ☐ Extra Curricular Activities

☐ Safeguarding

☐ Other (please give details)

2. Please give details of your complaint including a summary of the incident/issue with dates/times and supporting evidence. Please give the name and role of who the complaint has been raised with, if any:
(please continue the details on a separate sheet if necessary)

3. If you are complaining about someone's behaviour, please give the names of any witnesses to the incident/s:

4. Please indicate what outcome you are seeking:

Name:	**Date:**
Signed:	
The information included in this complaint form is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I agree to cooperate fully with the complaints procedures and acknowledge my ongoing obligation to treat the school and its staff in a reasonable manner at all times.	