



**HARROW**  
SCHOOL  

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ONLINE

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**



Harrow School Online welcomes suggestions and comments from pupils and parents, and takes seriously complaints and concerns wherever they may raise.

**A complaint is any matter about which a pupil or parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School. It will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response.**

The School wishes to ensure that:

- Pupils and parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- The School responds to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- Pupils and parents realise that the School will listen and take complaints seriously; and
- The School will take action where appropriate.

### **COMPLAINTS BY PUPILS**

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Every pupil has a right to complain if they are not happy about some aspect of their education at Harrow School Online.

#### **HOW DO I MAKE A COMPLAINT AND WILL IT BE CONFIDENTIAL?**

If you are a pupil and want to make a complaint you can either talk about it or send a message if you find that easier. You can make the complaint individually or as part of a group or through your parents, whichever you find easier. You can make your complaint to any member of staff. This includes any of the following:

- House Tutor
- Success Coach
- Teacher
- Head of Admissions
- The Principal

If you are worried about confidentiality, tell the member of staff to whom you first talk. Even if you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, do not worry. It will only be discussed by staff at the School who can help you.

#### **WHAT CAN I COMPLAIN ABOUT AND WHEN SHOULD I COMPLAIN?**

You can complain about anything that is making you unhappy. It does not matter if it is a big problem or a small one. By discussing it, you may come up with some positive ideas.

You should always complain at an early stage as delay often makes problems worse.

#### **HOW WILL MY COMPLAINT BE DEALT WITH?**

If possible, the staff member will deal with it in person. If not, he or she will go on your behalf to someone who can help.

## **COMPLAINTS BY PARENTS**

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The School recognises and acknowledges parents' entitlement to complain and wishes to work with them in the best interests of the young people enrolled at the School.

It is hoped that complaints and concerns will be addressed quickly and informally. If parents raise something minor, including issues with materials or curriculum delivery, minor billing issues, or a first attempt at redress of other minor issues, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to their satisfaction.

References herein to complaints include any matters of more serious concern.

Reference to "**Working Days**" means days other than Saturdays and Sundays, public holidays in the UK, and days falling in the School holidays. In calculating the number of days, the day of receipt of the complaint and the day of despatch of the response shall not be counted.

This complaints procedure can be found on the School's website and is thereby made available to parents of pupils, and parents of prospective pupils. Information on the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure is available to parents of pupils and can be obtained by contacting your Success Coach or the School office:

[info@harrowschoolonline.org](mailto:info@harrowschoolonline.org)

This procedure applies to parents of current registered pupils. It does not apply to parents of prospective pupils or to parents of past pupils (unless in the case of past pupils the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered as a pupil, or as set out below).

### **STAGE 1 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

#### *To the House Tutor or Success Coach*

If you are the parent of a current registered pupil and have a complaint, you should normally contact your child's House Tutor or Success Coach who will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received.

In many cases, the complaint will be resolved immediately by this means to your satisfaction. If the complaint is of an academic nature, it is likely that the House Tutor or Success Coach will discuss it with, or refer the complaint to, the relevant teacher. If the House Tutor or Success Coach cannot resolve the complaint alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Principal.

You should expect a response within **5 working days** explaining how the School proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a further **10 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** explaining how the School proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a **further 10 working days from the start of the next term**.

The response will provide an outcome of the complaint, explain the conclusion, the reasons for it and, if appropriate, describe any action taken or proposed.

You may prefer to take the complaint directly to a more senior member of staff, for example, the Principal. The provisions of this Stage 1 – Informal Resolution – shall still apply.

## **STAGE 2 – FORMAL RESOLUTION**

In the event that you are not satisfied with the response (whether from the House Tutor, Success Coach or other senior member of staff) under Stage 1 above, you should put the complaint and the reasons why you are not satisfied with the response in writing either to the Principal or, if the complaint is about or implicates the Principal, to the Director of Harrow School Online.

### ***EITHER***

#### ***To the Principal***

You should expect a response within **3 working days** explaining how the School proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a further **10 working days**. If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, you should expect a response within **3 working days of the start of the next term** explaining how the School proposes to proceed and be given a date by which time to expect a written response, which should be no longer than a further **10 working days from the start of the next term**.

Within the time periods set out above:

- (i) In most cases, the Principal will speak to you. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary, however, for the Principal to ask another appropriate member of staff to carry out investigations.
- (ii) The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Once they are satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made with a written response to you, informing you of their decision, giving reasons for their decision and, if appropriate, describe any action taken or proposed.

### ***OR***

#### ***To the Director of Harrow School Online (if the complaint is about or implicates the Principal)***

If the complaint is about or implicates the Principal, you may contact the Director of Harrow School Online with your complaint at [mickey.revenaugh@harrowschoolonline.org](mailto:mickey.revenaugh@harrowschoolonline.org).

The Director of Harrow School Online will ask for a report from the Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding and will normally do so within **10 working days, from the date of their nomination**. If the complaint is received in the week the term ends or in the holidays, you should expect a response within **10 working days from the start of the next term**.

Before responding, the Director of Harrow School Online will normally speak to you, although if there is a meeting, the time limits set out above may extend the timeframe within which the Director of Harrow School Online would respond but this should be no longer than **10 working days from the date of the meeting**. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

The Director of Harrow School Online will keep written records of all meetings held in relation to the complaint. Once they are satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made with a written response to you, informing you of their decision, giving reasons for their decision and, if appropriate, describe any action taken or proposed.

### **STAGE 3 - APPEAL**

Should the matter not be resolved at Stage 2, you may wish to invoke an appeal within **10 working days**, by notice in writing to the Clerk to the Harrow School Online Board at the following address: [alicia.fabregamiralbell@pearson.com](mailto:alicia.fabregamiralbell@pearson.com)

The Clerk will refer the matter to the Chair of the Board who will refer the matter to a Complaints Panel (the “Panel”) who shall be selected by the Chair of the Board. The Panel shall comprise at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, at least one of whom shall be from Harrow School, one of whom shall be from Pearson and one of whom shall be appointed the Chair of the Panel. The Chair of the Panel, in consultation with the Chair of the Board, reserves the right to substitute members of the Panel with other members of the Board.

A hearing before the Panel (“Hearing”) will take place as soon as practicable, and normally within **15 working days** (this may be longer if the complaint is received during holiday periods) of receipt of the notice by the Clerk.

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

You may be joined at the Hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, Teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate and is only allowed in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Chair of the Panel.

The Hearing will be conducted via video conference.

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

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

The decision of the Panel will be final.

The Panel’s findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to you, the Principal, the Chair of the Board and, where relevant, the person(s) complained about.

The Panel’s findings and recommendations will be available for inspection by the Harrow School Online Board and the Principal.

## **RECORDS**

A written record of all formal complaints shall be kept for 6 months after your child has left the School and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure (i.e. Stage 2) or proceed to Appeal (i.e. Stage 3) and action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

You can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially, although the Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection, as referred to above.

It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential.

Furthermore, knowledge of the complaint (and any relevant papers) will usually be limited to the person to whom the complaint is addressed, the Principal, the Chair of the Board, the Clerk to the Board and those directly involved.

Action which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints will be handled confidentially within the School.

## **ANONYMITY**

Anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

## **LEAVERS**

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 Principal or Chair of the Board **within three months** of leaving.

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW**

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This procedure is designed to set good practice standards. However, the School recognises that best practice develops over time and, as such, will update it regularly in the light of experience and as a result of changes in legislation or its own internal organisation and policies. The procedure will be subject to a comprehensive review on a biennial basis.

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Policy Authors:	Heather Rhodes



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