



## READING SCHOOL

### CHILD-FRIENDLY COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

#### Feeling Safe and Happy at Reading School and in Boarding.

At Reading School, and in Boarding, we promise to listen to our students' concerns and complaints. We want to make sure any problem is solved as quickly as possible, so students and boarders can be happy and feel safe at School.

This policy has been created to show how you can make a complaint if you need to, who you can talk to and what will happen once you have complained. It is important to remember that you will not get told off if you complain and we will take your complaint seriously. If you need to make a complaint, read this policy, and talk to a member of staff as soon as possible.

#### 1 What does it mean?

- A complaint is something you make when you are unhappy about something or someone.
- A concern is when you have a worry or a doubt about something or someone.
- Both a complaint and a concern can be told to anyone. If you tell a member of staff about a complaint it will be taken seriously and we will listen to what you have to say.
- In this child-friendly complaint policy, complaint has been used to mean both a complaint and a concern.

#### 2 What do I have to do?

You might be thinking 'what sort of thing would I complain about?' If you are unsure whether you need to complain about something, talk to a member of staff.

You may need to complain about:

- The behaviour of an individual
- Something that affects you as a pupil
- Something that has happened outside school but is connected to the school, such as behaviour of students on transport or in the street.

As a result of your help, we will:

- Ensure you are involved in fixing the problem you are complaining about
- Talk to you about the progress of the complaints process
- Ensure your confidentiality is protected, where possible
- Treat you with fairness throughout
- Tell you information you need to know about what you have said or what will happen

#### 3 When should I complain?

Any student can complain if they need to. We will consider all complaints made. When making a complaint, we ask that you make it as soon as possible so we can properly investigate it and resolve any problems you have.

If you make a complaint 3 months after a problem happens, we may not be able to look into your complaint. If this timescale changes, we will let you know.

When you make a complaint, you will be asked to complete a Complaints form. It can be found at the end of this policy (appendix 1) or you can ask a member of staff.

If you are making a complaint about the Head of House/Housemaster/Headmaster this will be dealt with by the governing body of the School.

#### **4 What will happen when I complain?**

##### Stage 1 Meeting with a staff member to explain the problem

In this stage you will meet with a member of staff e.g. Head of House/Housemaster and complete the complaint form. During this meeting, the member of staff will take notes about the complaint.

Within 5 days of first telling an adult about a complaint you and the adult dealing with the complaint will meet and discuss what will happen next. You will be asked your opinion on the resolution/outcome.

##### Stage 2 Formal Complaint made to House of House/Head of Boarding/Headmaster

If the complaint is too complicated to be sorted out in 5 days, then Stage 2 will begin.

It will take another 10 days to try and resolve the complaint. You will be told by the Head of House/Headmaster if this needs to happen.

You will meet the Head of House/Housemaster/Headmaster, or, if the complaint is about the Head of House/Housemaster/Headmaster, a designated investigatory officer from the Governing Body. This meeting will be used to talk about the problem and you will be told what has happened so far to help fix the problem.

During the meeting, notes will be taken of what has been talked about. If, after an additional 10 days, the problem has not been sorted out Stage 3 will begin.

##### Stage 3 A meeting with the Governing Body

If the issue has not been resolved after Stages 1 and 2, the complaint will be given to the Governing Body. The Governing Body will think about the complaint, talk about what has already been done to try and fix the problem and try and find a solution.

The problem will be looked at thoroughly and a solution will be found within 15 school days, whenever possible.

If a solution has not been found in 15 school days, or the solution found does not fix the problem, a parent/carer can appeal the decision. You will not be involved in this process but you will be told about the outcome of the appeal.

#### **5 Who will talk to me about my complaint?**

Once you have made a complaint, the member of staff you told will think of the best way to deal with it. This may include telling a more senior member of staff, such as a Housemaster or the Headmaster. If it is really serious, someone from the police or Local Authority might ask to talk to you.

You do not have to worry if somebody else is told about your complaint, you are not in trouble, it just means that the person you told thinks it is best to tell them to keep you safe and happy in School.

If one of the adults mentioned above wants to talk to you, you will have another adult with you at all times. This can be a parent or someone else if you wish. You will be told what will happen during the interview before it starts and what you are allowed to do, for example, have a parent there. When the interview has finished, a transcript will be made. A transcript is a record of key things that were said. You will be asked to read it, and if you are happy that it reflects what you have said, you will be asked to sign it.

#### **6 What will the School ask or tell me?**

When you make a complaint, the adult you will tell will talk to you about:

- The main problems you have, your options and how it might be dealt with.
- If the complaint will be resolved informally or by using the school's official complaint procedure.

- If any actions will be taken by the School, as a result of the complaint, even if the complaint was followed through or not.

When you make a complaint, the adult(s) you talk to may record the conversations using a microphone so that the full details of the complaint can be listened to at a later date. You will be told before being recorded.

### **7 What if someone is complaining about me?**

If a complaint is being made about you, you will be asked to talk to the adult responsible for the complaint, so you have the chance to tell your side of the problem.

You will be treated fairly by the School when looking in to the seriousness of the complaint. If the School finds that you are responsible for the problem being complained about, you will be disciplined as part of the Management of Student Behaviour policy.

If you think you have been treated unfairly you can talk to the School's Governing Body.

### **8 Serious Complaints**

If you have been physically or emotionally hurt by a peer or adult, it is important that you tell a responsible adult. They will ask you what has happened and if they think that your safety is at risk, they might tell other agencies who will help.

### **9 Complaining about the same thing**

Because we want to take every complaint seriously, it is important that you only tell us things you have not complained about before, unless the problem has not been resolved. If we have found a solution to your complaint and told you what would happen to fix your problem, then the complaint is closed.

If you complain about the same thing over and over again after we have fixed the problem, we do not have to discuss the issue anymore. We do not want this to happen. So, to avoid any repeated requests we will:

- Make sure we have done all we can to fix the problem.
- Make sure we have told you what we have done to fix the problem.
- Tell you when you are repeating a complaint and why we won't be responding to you.

If you feel that you have not been listened to by Reading School, you and your parents can contact Education Funding Agency, who handle complaints about academies and free schools on behalf of the DFE. The complaints form is available at:

[www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/school-complaints-form](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/school-complaints-form).

## Complaints Form for students and/or boarders

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your year and tutor group: \_\_\_\_\_

Your boarding House (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

What date did your complaint occur? \_\_\_\_\_

The nature of your complaint:

(What is the main reason you are filling in this form? What do you feel you need to complain about?)

\_\_\_\_\_

Please give full factual details of your complaint:

(Think about including the following: what, where, when, why, who, how)

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