



Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation

Pupil Complaint Policy

1 Policy Aim

- 1.1 The Foundation takes the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils very seriously. If you as a pupil have a complaint about something that has happened in school you can expect to be treated in accordance with this policy.
- 1.2 The Foundation will make the procedure for making complaints available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the Foundation's website and in reception at each site during the day, and the Foundation will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available, and the form in which it is published or available.
- 1.3 The Foundation commits in this policy to observing the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate on any grounds.

2 Policy Statement

Despite everyone's best intentions, life has its ups and downs; for those times when life is difficult, there are a number of ways in which help may be sought. Even when you are aware of how you might receive help, it is quite another matter to make the decision to do so. We hope that you will make the decision to find help so that your concerns or difficulties can be resolved or minimised.

3 Procedure

There are many different reasons why you, as a pupil, might feel upset or disappointed; for example, you may not feel able to manage alone in the following situations:

- there are pressures or difficulties at or from home;
- you feel you are unable to cope owing to problems with work or for social reasons (e.g., pressure or difficulties with friendships);
- you or your friends are being bullied; possibly through unfriendly or incessant teasing, being physically pushed around or being excluded;
- you receive upsetting e-mails or text messages, or discover that rumours are being spread about you in person or online through social media;
- you feel low, depressed or ill;
- you feel that another pupil is not eating properly or may be harming themselves;
- someone has hurt your feelings or made suggestions you think are not right;
- you feel that there are intrusions into your space or privacy;

- you think you are being unfairly treated;
- you feel you have been treated unreasonably by a member of staff.

Everyone has worries, problems and difficulties from time to time, which may be major or minor, and which may affect either an individual or a group. They almost certainly cause anxiety. At Durham School and the Chorister School, matters can usually be resolved if you talk openly to the right person. You may or may not be able to sense who is the right person, but you should go to someone with whom you feel comfortable. You may wish to telephone home but in the first instance it may be better to talk to a friend or seek out one of your teachers, your Tutor, Matron or SHM. They will always be prepared to listen. On the other hand, you may wish to speak directly to a Deputy Head, a Medical Centre Nurse, the Chaplain or the Headmistress/Principal.

Some new problems are best dealt with by individual contact with one person, but others may need to be dealt with by several people. It is important to emphasise that you may choose the people with whom you would like to speak.

Your choice may depend on the circumstances and your feelings at the time and you do not have to tell anyone else what you are doing. Some useful details are below:

Chorister School			
Head of Pre-Prep		Dr J Wilson	j.wilson@dcfsf.org.uk
Pastoral Lead		Mr G Brown	g.brown@dcfsf.org.uk
Pastoral Lead		Mrs J Balfour	j.balfour@dcfsf.org.uk
Housemistress		Mrs R Faulkner-Walford	r.faulkner-walford@dcfsf.org.uk
Director of Studies		Mr I Campbell	i.campbell@dcfsf.org.uk
Deputy Head		Mr A Chandler	a.chandler@dcfsf.org.uk
Headmistress		Mrs S Harrod	s.harrod@dcfsf.org.uk
Durham School			
SHM	The Caffinites	Mr A McMillan	a.mcmillan@dcfsf.org.uk
	MacLeod	Mrs L Myers-Bruin	l.myers-bruin@dcfsf.org.uk
	Pimlico	Miss L Hinde	l.hinde@dcfsf.org.uk
	Poole	Mr J Jenkinson	j.jenkinson@dcfsf.org.uk
	The School House	Mr M Younger	m.younger@dcfsf.org.uk
Deputy Head (Pastoral)		Ms H Thompson	h.thompson@dcfsf.org.uk
Deputy Head (Academic)		Mr A Pearson	a.pearson@dcfsf.org.uk
Chaplain		Rev'd S McMurtary	s.mcmurtary@dcfsf.org.uk
Senior Mental Health Lead		Mrs P Abbott	p.abbott@dcfsf.org.uk
School Medical Centre		Mrs C Hodge	c.hodge@dcfsf.org.uk
		Mrs L Taylor	l.taylor@dcfsf.org.uk
External support			
NHS		Tel: 111	
Childline		Tel: 0800 1111	

The important thing is to speak to a trusted and responsible adult if you are worried or upset.

4 Support if you are in trouble

It is important for you to bear in mind that, if you are in trouble over some matter, you may have your Tutor or a member of staff with you when you are talking with your SHM, the Deputy Head or the Headmistress/Principal.

5 Complaints

Sometimes you may feel that you would like to complain about something that is worrying you. The first thing you should do is speak to any member of staff (e.g., your SHM or Tutor). If you wish, you can take a friend, an older pupil or a member of staff with you. If the matter is not settled to your reasonable satisfaction then you can make a formal complaint.

6 Making a formal complaint

- a. Write to your SHM, Tutor, Deputy Head (Pastoral) or a Pastoral Lead and say that you wish to make a formal complaint.
- b. Your complaint will then be registered in a Complaints File held by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) at Durham School.
- c. You will receive a reply from the Deputy Head (Pastoral) at Durham School saying that your complaint has been seen and that it is being attended to within two school days of your making the complaint.
- d. You will then be asked to talk the matter through with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) at Durham School. You may invite a friend, a pupil or a member of staff of your choice to come to this meeting with you. You will then receive a written answer explaining what the Deputy Head (Pastoral) at Durham School has decided to do about the complaint.
- e. If at any stage you are dissatisfied with this procedure you may want to contact Mrs Sue Spence, the Foundation's Independent Listener, to whom you can speak at any of the Foundation's sites. Mrs Spence can be contacted via email at susanspence1@sky.com.
- f. Your parents can also use the Foundation's formal complaints procedure which is available on the Foundation's website [here](#).
- g. You do not have to inform an individual or anyone else that you are making a complaint.

7 Confidentiality

The Foundation understands that you may wish to talk about a problem only if it is kept secret. In many cases this is possible, but there are two exceptions you should be aware of:

- a. The Foundation may not offer any absolute grant of confidentiality; in any instances where a safeguarding risk may exist, the Foundation has a legal responsibility to report these to the appropriate authority.
- b. The Foundation has a legal duty to keep your parents/guardians informed about your welfare and progress at school. However, if you do not wish them to be informed, please say so, so that the options can be discussed with you.

However, please do not let this stop you from raising complaints or saying when you are worried or upset. Most pupils, who find the courage to speak up, subsequently say that they were helped and relieved, and that the problem was eased by talking it through with someone experienced and helpful.

8 Links to other policies and documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedure (Parents) Policy
- Independent Listener Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

9 Oversight

This policy is overseen by Audit Committee of the Governing Body and is reviewed at least once in every three-year period.

Policy written and reviewed by

Jennifer M Burns, Deputy Head [Pastoral]

17/11/2014

01/09/2015

01/03/2019

Policy reviewed by

Debbie Leigh, Bursar 06/03/2020

Harriet Thompson, Pastoral Lead 15/01/2022

Harriet Thompson, Deputy Head (Pastoral) 04/03/2025