

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **Guidance for Parents and other members of the Public**

#### **Parent/School Partnership**

Lancaster Girls' Grammar School aims to work in partnership with parents to maintain open and positive relationships. It is recognised that there is a difference between an expression of concern and a complaint. Concerns are often handled, if at all possible, without the need for the use of this procedure. In many cases the class teacher or head of year will receive the approach and will deal with the issue, as quickly as possible without the use of this procedure. From time to time, however, a parent or member of the public may feel that they need to make a complaint. The school will ensure that these complaints are dealt with effectively and with fairness to all parties.

#### **Definition of a Complaint**

For the purpose of this procedure, a complaint is defined as a serious expression of dissatisfaction about the conduct/operation of the school, the conduct of, actions or lack of action by a member of staff or by the Governing Body/an individual governor, unacceptable delay in dealing with a matter or unreasonable treatment of a pupil or other person.

#### **How do I make a complaint?**

A serious complaint should be made in person, by telephone or in writing to the Headteacher. If the complaint is about the Headteacher or a Governor it should be referred to the Chair of Governors. A complaint made to a Governor, Local Authority Officer or Councillor, the Education Department at County Hall or to a local Area Education Office will be referred to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, as appropriate, for investigation. Anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with unless they are about very serious matters.

#### **How are complaints investigated?**

The aim of the Complaints Procedure is to resolve the matter as speedily as possible.

First the Headteacher will try to establish the facts and respond to your complaint. Most matters can usually be dealt with in this way. If this does not resolve the matter to your satisfaction, there is a further formal stage. You will be asked to put your complaint in writing and a further investigation will be undertaken by the Headteacher. In the case of a complaint about the Headteacher, or a Governor the matter will be dealt with by the Chair of Governors.

#### **What if I am still not satisfied?**

You can appeal to a special Committee of the Governing Body of the school. You may, if you wish, have the opportunity to attend and put your case to the Committee. The Committee will inform you of their final decision.

#### **Which matters are not covered by this Complaints Procedure?**

Whilst all complaints should, in the first instance, be addressed to the Headteacher or, where appropriate, the Chair of Governors, some complaints have to be handled differently because of legal requirements. These include:-

- complaints about the provision of National Curriculum, sex education or Collective Worship in an individual school
- appeals against school admissions and pupil exclusions
- the statementing process for special educational needs
- serious complaints relating to the abuse of children, criminal or financial matters.

If you are unsure which procedure you should use, please contact the school.