



## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

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### Introduction

The Royal Ballet School is committed to working in a close partnership with parents (or guardians or carers) and students, whether day or boarding. A vital aspect of this is the need to know when they feel that things are not going right. If parents and students have any concerns about any aspect of life at School, they should contact an appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. The School takes all such expressions of concern seriously and aims to follow them up courteously and promptly. In any school things can go wrong but the School wants to do all it can to sort those things out.

Two things tend to make parents and students reluctant to complain or to express concerns:

- a) A fear that the School will not see the issue to be important: parents and students should be assured that, if it is important to them, it is important to the School
- b) A fear that a concern or complaint may lead to repercussions for the student: under no circumstances will the School discriminate against a student because of expressions of concern or complaints. The School is very experienced in ensuring that, if other students are involved (e.g. in an allegation of bullying), there are no repercussions from other quarters.

This policy seeks to explain the systems we have put in place to give parents and students confidence in our willingness to listen to them and in our determination to be open, honest and fair in our dealings with them. It highlights the routes anyone can follow if they feel that something is not right, that they are fed up or unhappy, that they are being treated unfairly, are being bullied, or have any other concern or complaint.

### Aims

Our aims are to:

- a) make it as easy as possible to voice a concern or submit a complaint
- b) treat each concern or complaint as a constructive expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of School life and, as such, deserving of a response
- c) treat each concern or complaint seriously, however it is made, whether in person, by telephone or in writing (letter, fax or e-mail)
- d) deal with each concern or complaint promptly and politely; where appropriate, this may be by telephone or in conversation
- e) respond appropriately, with for example
  - an explanation
  - an apology, if we have made an error
  - information on the action we have take
- f) learn from the concerns and complaints of parents and students by referring the outcomes to the Senior Management Team
- g) make and keep confidential records of complaints (and whether they are resolved at a preliminary stage or proceed to a full panel hearing) so that they are available for consultation in the future

## PROCEDURE FOR RAISING A CONCERN OR MAKING A COMPLAINT

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### Stage 1 - Informal raising and resolution of concerns

Most problems or uncertainties at School begin life as concerns. We hope that parents and students will feel that such concerns can initially be raised and resolved on an informal basis. They should always feel free to speak in person or by 'phone to the appropriate member of the School staff, or to write a letter, e-mail or fax.

<b>Nature of concern</b>	<b>Please contact</b>
<b>Lower School</b>	
Minor day-to-day	The relevant teacher, tutor or, if it is an issue to do with boarding, the House staff
More serious academic	The Head of Department
Dance-related	The Ballet Principal
More serious general academic or pastoral matter	The Tutor or House staff
Boarding-related	House staff
Wider pastoral or disciplinary concerns	Deputy Head
Wider curricular, pastoral or disciplinary concerns	Head of Lower School
Finance, fees and services	Chief Operating Officer
<b>Upper School</b>	
Minor day-to-day	Wolf House or Jebesen House staff, subject teachers, dance staff, School Secretary
Wider academic or pastoral	Academic and Pastoral Head
Disciplinary and wider dance	Assistant Director
Finance, fees and services	Chief Operating Officer

When a concern is raised, the person who has been spoken or written to will acknowledge the message and respond to the concern within five working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the School holidays. If we are not able to provide a full reply within this time, for instance, because an investigation is necessary, we will tell the parent or student what is being done and when they can expect a full reply. We will usually respond by telephone to matters raised orally and make a written response to matters raised in writing, unless told otherwise. If the concern involves an allegation against a member of staff, it will be immediately passed to the Director who will either investigate herself or appoint somebody to investigate on her behalf.

Once an initial response has been made the parents or student will be asked to confirm their satisfaction with this process. If they are not satisfied, they will be asked if they would like a meeting in school to see if the problem can be resolved. If the parents or student are unable to attend such a meeting or think it is not appropriate, it may be suggested that they raise the matter at the next highest or any further level.

### Stage 2- Formal making and resolution of complaints

There are two reasons why parents or students might wish to make a formal complaint:

- a) if they feel that their initial expression of concern has not been:
  - a. handled properly by a member of staff
  - b. resolved within a reasonable period (one not normally exceeding two term-time weeks)
  - c. resolved in a satisfactory way
  
- b) if they feel that their complaint is more serious than a concern

Any parent or student wishing to make a formal complaint should send full written details to the School of the nature of the complaint, any relevant documents and full contact details in an envelope addressed as follows:

- a) If the complaint concerns an academic or pastoral matter, the complaint should be addressed to the Head of Lower School or the Academic and Pastoral Head.
- b) If the complaint concerns dance or a wider question of School policy or procedure, the complaint should be addressed to the Assistant Director or the Director.

It would be very helpful if parents or students could also indicate what they envisage as the desired outcome.

After considering the complaint, the person written to:

- a) Will if necessary consult other colleagues, and will decide upon the appropriate course of action to take
- b) may ask to meet the parents or students for a discussion about the problem, normally within 10 days of receiving the complaint
- c) will conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or students involved.

If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. The parents or students will receive a written response to their complaint, giving reasons for the way the complaint has been resolved.

In more complex cases it may be necessary for the Director to carry out further investigations that may delay a resolution. The Director may ask a senior member of staff to act as investigator and may involve one or more Governors. Once the Director is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made about how best to resolve the complaint, and parents informed of this decision in writing (within a further 14 working days after the initial discussion). The letter will also give reasons for the decision.

### **Stage 3 - Panel Hearing**

If parents or students still feel dissatisfied after going through the procedure for stage 2, they should contact the Chair of Governors. Parents and students can write to the Chair in confidence c/o the Chief Operating Officer, who is Secretary to the Governors. The Secretary to the Governors acknowledges requests within five working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the School holidays.

Within five working days of the acknowledgement, the Chair of Governors will convene a panel of at least two members of the Governors' body and one person independent of the management and running of the School to consider the complaint. No member of the panel may have any involvement with any matter detailed in the complaint. At least 10 days' notice will be given of the date on which the Panel will meet.

The complainant(s) may attend Panel Hearing and may be accompanied by one other person e.g. a relative or friend. Legal representation is only permitted if the Chairman considers it appropriate. If it is considered appropriate, the Chairman will inform the complainant(s) to that effect so that they may choose to be legally represented at the Panel Hearing if they so wish. Should they decide to be so represented they shall inform the Chairman of their intention at least seven days before the date set for the Panel Hearing. If the complainant(s) choose to be legally represented the Chairman will notify the other parties of that decision, to enable them to have legal representation at the Panel Hearing should they so wish.

If possible, the Panel will resolve a parental complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel reaches a decision and may make recommendations, which it completes within seven days of the meeting or Hearing or as soon as reasonably practicable. The Panel writes to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within seven days of reaching this decision. The Panel's findings and any recommendations are

sent in writing to the parents, the Director, Members of the Governors' body and, where relevant, the person(s) about whom the complaint was made. The decision of the Panel is final.

## **RECORDS AND CONTACTS**

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### **Record-keeping**

Written records are kept of all complaints, of all meetings and interviews held in relation to complaints, and of the outcomes of complaints. All correspondence, statements and records of concerns must be kept confidential but must be shown to HMI, Ofsted or ISI when they inspect. Copies must also be made available to the Registration Authority on request.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints are treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Education Act, as amended, requests access to them, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

SMT will review complaints annually.

### **Stage 3 complaints received in the School year 2010-11**

One.

### **Contact details**

All contact details are available in the relevant School handbooks, which can be found on the School website (look under 'School', then 'Documentation') or which can be supplied in hard copy on request.

### **Chair of Governors**

The Marchioness of Douro CBE  
The Royal Ballet School, 46 Floral Street,  
Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DA  
e-mail: c/o the Clerk to the Governors: alanw@royalballetschool.co.uk  
Tel: c/o Alan Winter (Clerk to the Governors) 0207 836 8899  
Fax: 0207 845 7080

### **Director**

Miss G Stock AM  
The Royal Ballet School, 46 Floral Street,  
Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DA  
e-mail: gailenes@royalballetschool.co.uk  
Tel: 0207 836 8899  
Fax: 0207 845 7080

### **Assistant Director**

Mr J Jolley  
The Royal Ballet School, 46 Floral Street,  
Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DA  
e-mail: jayj@royalballetschool.co.uk  
Tel: 0207 836 8899  
Fax: 0207 845 7080

### **Academic and Pastoral Head**

Dr C Runacres  
The Royal Ballet School, 46 Floral Street,

Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DA  
e-mail: charlesr@royalballetschool.co.uk  
Tel: 0207 836 8899  
Fax: 0207 845 7080

### **Head of Lower School**

Ms Pippa Hogg-Andrews  
The Royal Ballet School, White Lodge,  
Richmond Park, Richmond, Surrey TW10 5HR  
e-mail: pippaha@royalballetschool.co.uk  
Tel: 020 8392 8440  
Fax: 020 8392 8496

### **Inspectorates**

From January 2012, the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) will oversee independent school boarding in the UK and may be contacted by anyone with any concerns.

ISI,  
CAP House, 9 - 12 Long Lane,  
London EC1A 9HA  
Telephone: 0207 600 0100  
Fax: 0207 776 8849

Until January 2012 Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) oversees boarding in the UK and may be contacted by anyone with any concerns.

Ofsted,  
Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square,  
Manchester M2 7LA  
Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
Helpline: 0300123 4234

Ofsted hosts the office of the Children's Rights Director for England, which may be contacted with any query or concern at any time, even after January 2012.

Roger Morgan,  
Office of the Children's Rights Director,  
Ofsted, Aviation House, 125 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
Website: [www.rights4me.org](http://www.rights4me.org)  
Free Phone: 0800 528 0731

### **General Advice**

If parents or students are unsure about a situation or events, several organisations will speak in confidence to advise what would be the best thing to do:

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000  
Childline: 0800 1111  
Kidscape: 08451 295

### **Child Protection**

If parents or students are concerned that a student may be at risk of harm, please see the Child Protection Policy for details of how to contact the LADO or local authorities.