

Adagio School of Performing Arts

Complaint Policy



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1. Introduction.

1.1 Adagio School of Performing Arts (ASOPA) aims to have the highest quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. If parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated in accordance with this procedure.

1.2 This procedure is available to all current parents of students on the school's website (adagioschoolofperformingarts.org) and from the school reception.

ASOPA) will ensure that parents of students and of prospective students are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available. In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, ASOPA will make available to parents of students and of prospective students and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, details of the complaint's procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding School year.

1.3 The dates of terms are published on the school's website.

1.4 The whole School complaints procedure applies to parents of current students. The process will not apply to complaints from parents of prospective students or students who have left (except for a complaint that was initiated when the student was being educated at the school).

2. What constitutes a complaint?

2.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about several issues such as the school, a specific department or an individual member of staff. Any matter about which a current parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is within the scope of this procedure.

2.2 Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your pupil, and you can be assured they will not be penalised for a complaint that is raised in good faith.

3. Confidentiality and record keeping.

3.1 A written record will be kept of all formal complaints and of whether they were resolved at Stage 2 or proceeded to a Complaints Panel Hearing, including the action taken by the Complaints Procedure.

3.2 Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by the secretary of state or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, or where disclosure is required as a result of any other legal obligation to which the school is subject.

4. Stage 1 - Informal Resolution.

4.1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Complaints should be raised in a timely way (as soon as possible in relation to the incident and normally within 3 months). Historic complaints, other than safeguarding issues, are unlikely to be investigated if the issues relate to a period of more than 6-months previously.

4.2 If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact the person directly concerned or alternatively speak to the Principal. In most cases any matter is likely to be resolved promptly by this means. If the relevant member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone or if the nature of the complaint is of a more serious nature, then it will be referred to the Head Teacher or Principal.

4.3 Complaints made directly to the principal will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff unless either the Principal deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally in the first instance, or the parents have specifically requested a review by the Principal and there is good reason for agreeing to this at the first stage.

4.4 If a complaint is made in term time, the member of staff dealing with the complaint will contact the parents to acknowledge its receipt within 3 working days of receiving the complaint. In case of staff unavailability (e.g., due to a school trip), it is recommended that the Principal is copied in on any email or is separately notified of the matter.

4.5 Within 7 working days of the acknowledgement of the complaint, the member of staff dealing with the matter will investigate the complaint and then speak with or write to the parents with the outcome.

4.6 If the feedback has been verbal/informal, the formal written conclusion to the investigation is to be communicated within 5 working days of any meeting/telephone discussion.

4.7 The member of staff dealing with the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within the timescale notified to parents, or if the parents are not satisfied with the outcome at this stage, they may choose to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

4.8 If, however, the complaint is against the Principal, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors.

5. Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

5.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should state their complaint formally to the Principal. Where possible, it is expected that the complaint will be set out in writing.

5.2 The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

5.3 The Stage 2 formal complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days of receipt, although the timescale may be extended if the complaint is received during a school holiday.

5.4 In term time, in most cases, the principal will meet or speak to the parents, within 5 working days of acknowledging the complaint, to discuss the matter. It is hoped at this stage a resolution will be reached. Parents will be informed of this decision in writing by the Principal when they are satisfied, as far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established. The Principal will also give reasons for their decision.

5.5 It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations. In this case, the Principal will nominate an Investigating Officer (IO), who will be a senior person not previously involved at Stage 1.

5.6 The IO will investigate the complaint within 10 working days of acknowledging the complaint in term time (NB this may be longer in the School holidays); the follow up meeting with parents will also take place within this timescale. The parents will be invited for a meeting with the Principal and the IO.

5.7 Following the Stage 2 meeting, the Principal will decide regarding the outcome and OF any actions to be taken This will be confirmed in writing to the parents within 5 working days in term time (as well as to the person whom the complaint is about, if applicable).

5.8 The Principal will inform the Chair of Governors of the nature of the formal complaint and the outcome of Stage 2. The details of the complaint will only be shared in general terms with the governing body in case a complaints panel needs to be organised.

5.9 The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

5.10 If the complaint is against the Principal the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Principal and any relevant documents. The Chair of Governors may also call for briefings from other members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair of Governors is satisfied that, as far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing within 5 working days.

5.12 If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

6. Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

6.1 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), this request should be made in writing and addressed to the Chair of Governors. To ensure closure within a reasonable timeframe we would ask that any request is made within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of Stage 2. The request should set out the details of the complaint, which the Panel is asked to consider.

6.2 The request for a panel hearing should include:

- a copy of all relevant documents and full contact details.
- details of all the grounds of the complaint and the outcome desired.
- a list of the documents which the parents believe to be in the school's possession and wish the Complaints Panel to see.
- whether they propose to be accompanied to the hearing by someone who is legally qualified; and
- if assistance with the request is required, for example because of a disability.

6.3 The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel would consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The Chair of Governors will not be a member of the Complaints Panel and at least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school. The independent person on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place. Generally, in term time this will take place within 15 working days.

6.4 If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars, together with any documents the parents have requested the Panel to see, shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.

6.5 Both parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied by one other person if they wish, for support.

This may be a relative or friend, who must be independent of the complaint. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

6.6 If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Should further investigation be required, the Panel will decide how this should be carried out.

6.7 After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.

6.8 The Chair of the Panel will write to the parents informing them of the Panel's decision and the reasons for it, within 5 working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent electronically to the parents, and the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Principal. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the school premises. The completion of Stage 3 represents the conclusion of the School's Complaints Procedure.

7. Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

7.1 All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 3 working days, if received during term time, and as soon as practicable during School holiday periods.

7.2 It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete Stage 2 of the procedure within 20 working days from the written acknowledgement. Stage 3, the Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days. If a complaint is raised during the summer holiday, the School's target is to complete the first two stages within 30 working days of the acknowledgement of the complaint. In exceptional circumstances, where a complaint is particularly complex, or key witnesses are unavailable, it may be necessary to allow some additional time for the investigation. Where this is necessary, the revised timescale will be discussed and agreed with parents in advance and confirmed in writing.

7.3 Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, 'working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) and that timescales may be longer for complaints made during the school holidays. The term dates are published on the school's website.

7.4 In summary:

Stage 1 Written acknowledgement of complaint within 3 working days
Informal investigation and communication of outcome (meeting/telephone/letter/ email, as appropriate) within 7 working days of the acknowledgement
If the feedback has been verbal/informal, the formal written conclusion to the investigation is to be communicated within 5 working days of any meeting/ telephone discussion.

Stage 2 Written acknowledgement of complaint sent by the Principal within 3 working days. The Principal will meet or speak to the parents, within 5 working days of acknowledging the complaint. Where possible a resolution will be reached at this stage. If further investigations are needed, the Principal will nominate an Investigating Officer (IO), who will investigate the complaint within 10 working days of acknowledging the complaint in term time; the follow up meeting with parents will also take place within this timescale. Following the Stage 2 meeting, the Principal will make a decision regarding the outcome and any actions to be taken, to be confirmed in writing to the parents within 5 working days of the Stage 2 meeting in term time.

Stage 3 Written acknowledgement of complaint sent by the Clerk to Governors within 3 working days.
A Stage 3 Complaints Panel hearing will be scheduled to take place within 15 working days from the

acknowledgement (this may be longer in School holidays) The documents for the hearing will be supplied to all parties not later than 6 working days prior to the hearing. The Chair of the Panel will write to the parents informing them of the Panel's decision and the reasons for it, within 5 working days of the hearing.

In the event of any extraordinary circumstances e.g. (Pandemic) the timescales for responding to complaints may be increased. Please also be aware that any complaint hearing may be held remotely rather than in person, given any prevailing social distancing rules.

8. Recording Complaints

8.1 Following the resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of it whether they are resolved at the informal stage, the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

Additional records may be kept at the school's discretion which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of student
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member/s of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of telephone conversations).

8.2 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

8.3 ASOPA will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all formal complaints made during any specified period and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. These records will be kept for a minimum of three years.

9. Complaints to Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate

9.1 All parents have the right to contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) if they have a complaint that has not concluded to their satisfaction through the School's Complaints Procedure.

ISI can be contacted at concerns@isi.net, on 020 7600 0100 or at the following address: Independent Schools Inspectorate CAP House 9 - 12 Long Lane London EC1A 9HA ISI may also be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net 9.4 It is expected that complaints made under this Policy will go through the School's Complaints Procedure before Ofsted or ISI is contacted.