



PUPILS' COMPLAINT POLICY

Here at Malvern College, we want everyone to feel part of a safe and happy community. We try to create an environment and ethos in which young people feel secure and their points of view are valued. Pupils are encouraged to talk and they are listened to. We want our pupils to feel their voices are heard.

From time to time, you may be worried or upset about something. This policy tells you about various people available to help you, so that you can choose someone you feel you can trust. The experience of pupils in this and other schools is that, no matter how bad the problem may seem to be, it is almost always a great help to talk about it.

Is something worrying you? Here are some examples of the kinds of thing which can be worrying for young people:

- You are having difficulty with one or more of your academic subjects.
- You think you may be ill and are too afraid or embarrassed to tell anyone.
- You feel very depressed, or that life is not worth living.
- You or your friends are being bullied or treated unkindly by another pupil.
- You think that another pupil is not eating properly, or may be harming him/herself.
- You are worried, angry or hurt about something happening at home.
- You think that another pupil has done, or is about to do, something seriously wrong or dangerous.
- You are caught in a serious situation that you don't know how to get out of, for example to do with drugs, alcohol, money or sex.
- You feel you are being treated unfairly simply because of your gender, or because of your colour or religion, or because you have a disability or learning difficulty, or because you may be lesbian or gay.
- You feel that a member of staff has treated you unfairly e.g. in a punishment given, or favouring other pupils.
- You feel that you are not given enough privacy or independence. What should you do?

If any of these things are happening, please talk to someone about it, even if you feel you can handle the situation. It may be that what's going on affects other people at the College, or that you are unaware of all the different ways a problem can be tackled.

There are a number of different people who will be very happy to talk to you and to help you try to find a solution to the problem. It may help to talk first with another pupil who is a trusted friend. However, sometimes you may also need the help and support of an adult or professional. Choose whoever you feel most comfortable and safe talking to: your tutor, Housem, Deputy Housem and/or his/her wife/husband, Head of Year, the Deputy Head: Pastoral, the Head of Safeguarding & Pupil Wellbeing, a nurse or doctor in the Medical Centre, the Chaplain, the Head, House Assistant or any member of staff.

If you have a complaint about the College or a member of staff, speaking to one of these people is normally the quickest and most effective way to get to the heart of the problem and resolve it.

However, if you do not feel able to speak to a member of staff, other people to talk to are:

- your parents or other relatives
- a College Counsellor
- an older pupil at the College
- a peer mentor
- Independent Listeners: Reverend John Barr (01684 563707), Mrs Jane Hill (01684 541169, janemihill@sky.com): these are people who live locally but have no formal connection with the College. They can be contacted directly about any personal problems or concerns at the College.
- Children's Commissioner: telephone 020 7783 8330 or email advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
- Child Line: telephone 0800 1111
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If you prefer, you can write to one of the people mentioned, although this does sometimes slow things down.

Who else needs to know?

The College 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:

1) the Headmaster is required by the College Council to make sure he is aware of all issues affecting the safety and welfare of pupils at the College. This means that the Headmaster will need to be kept informed by College staff of the broad nature (but not usually the details) of any serious health, safety or welfare issue of which they are aware. If your problem or complaint involves the Headmaster, then one of the College Council or the Senior Deputy Head will be informed instead;

- 2) the College has a legal duty to keep your parents/guardians informed about your welfare and academic progress. However, if you do not wish them to be informed, please say so, so that the options can be discussed with you.

Please do not let this stop you from raising complaints or saying when you are worried or upset. Most young people who speak up, say afterwards that it helped them enormously and that the problem did not seem quite as bad once they had a chance to talk it through with someone experienced and helpful.

Making a formal complaint

If you feel that you have not been able to sort out a complaint on an informal basis you may make a formal complaint. You may wish to involve your parents at this stage if you have not already done so. You or your parents should write to the Headmaster setting out the complaint and what you want to be done about it. The Headmaster may suggest a meeting to discuss the complaint but will in any case give you a written answer explaining what he has decided to do about the complaint. You will not get into trouble for making a complaint if you believe that you have a good reason for doing so.

The Headmaster will keep a record of serious complaints from pupils and what happened to those complaints and will review them from time to time.

Once the Headmaster has provided his written decision, this will be the final stage of this procedure. If you are unhappy with the outcome, you should talk to your parents who may wish to use the College's formal complaints procedure which is available on the College's website or alternatively can ask for a copy of the procedure to be given to them.