**Complaints Procedure**

If parents have cause for concern or complaint about an aspect of their child's education at Stowe, they should raise the matter with the School as soon as possible. All concerns or complaints will be taken seriously and the School will respond promptly. The sooner we hear of a problem or potential problem, the sooner and more easily it can be investigated and satisfactorily resolved.

Parents should feel free to talk directly to a member of staff, to telephone, or to write with details of the issue that concerns them. In the first instance it may be best to address a concern to the member of staff most closely involved in the matter (e.g. Deputy Heads, Housemaster or Housemistress, Faculty Chair, Head of Department or Tutor), who may well be able to resolve the problem quickly. There may, however, be some concerns which parents prefer to bring directly to the Deputy Headmasters (Academic or Pastoral), Second Master or the Headmaster.

Any complaint will receive an acknowledgement within 24 hours during term time. During School holidays, a complaint will receive an acknowledgement within three working days. Acknowledgement will consist of either immediate discussion (and it is hoped, resolution) in person or by telephone or, if wider consultation and/or investigation is required, by letter, setting out the conclusion of the inquiry and any action taken or proposed. If such action includes use of the disciplinary procedures for staff, this will be handled confidentially within the School. This would constitute an informal complaint that the School would expect to have resolved within seven working days.

Confidentiality will be observed as far as is consistent with proper investigation and effective handling of a complaint. It is School policy that a complaint by a parent should not in any way adversely affect their son or daughter.

Should parents not be satisfied with the School's handling of an issue, they should make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors who will call for a full report and all relevant documents before making his response, and may wish to hold a meeting with the parents and the Headmaster. The formal complaint will be acknowledged within three working days and resolution within two weeks.

Should this still not effect a satisfactory resolution, parents may refer the complaint further to an Appeal Committee of the Governing Body. The Appeal Committee will be comprised of at least three individuals not directly involved in the matters that are the subject of the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the School. Parents are entitled to attend (and be accompanied) at any formal hearing of the Appeal Committee. The hearing will be held within 21 term-time days from the referral of the complaint. The findings, recommendations, and decision of the Appeal Committee will be made in writing, and copied to all relevant parties, within 7 term-time days from the date of the hearing. The decision of the Appeal Committee will be final.

Written records will be kept of all complaints and the manner of their resolution, this includes any actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints, regardless of whether they are upheld. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual

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complaints will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

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## STOWE SCHOOL'S REVIEW PROCEDURE FOR EXPULSIONS

These guidelines are non-contractual in nature. They have been prepared for the information and guidance of all who may become concerned in a review hearing following expulsion or the removal of the pupil at the request of the School.

### Applying for a Review

1. Parents/guardians must apply for a review of a decision to expel or require removal, using the Request for Review Form. This form is below and must be returned by email to admin@alliedschools.org.uk or posted to:

The Chair of the Appeal Committee
C/o Michael Porter
Secretary to the Governors
Stowe School
Buckingham
MK18 5EH

within seven days of receipt of the written notification of the decision in question, which shall contain reasons for that decision.

2. Unless there are exceptional circumstances the review will take place within 15 days of the expulsion or removal, and may be sooner if convenient to all parties.

3. Each member of the Review Committee for Expulsions will be supplied with a copy of all appropriate documents including a conduct file of the pupil. The parents shall be entitled to copies of all those documents in advance of the meeting except for those which, in the opinion of the Head, should not be disclosed.

### The Review Committee

This will normally consist of a three member sub-committee of the Governing Body, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the School. The Committee members will have no previous detailed knowledge of the case or of the pupil, parents or guardian, and will not include the Chair of Governors.

### The Review Hearing

1. This will take place at the School premises.

2. Those present at the review hearing will usually be:

- Members of the Review Committee
- The Head and his nominees
- Parents or those with parental responsibility

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- Clerk to the meeting

The pupil may, where appropriate, be invited to attend the hearing. The parents and pupil may be accompanied by a friend or relation and by a member of the School staff if desired. That person will attend as a friend not as a representative.

3. The proceedings will be chaired by one member of the Review Committee and will be conducted in an informal manner, and all statements made at the hearing will be unsworn. The meeting will not be tape recorded but the Clerk will be asked to keep minutes of the proceedings. All present will be entitled, should they wish, to write their own notes. The hearing will be directed at all times by the Chair of the Committee who will conduct the hearing in such a manner as to ensure that all those present have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments.

4. All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners. The Chair may in his/her discretion adjourn or terminate the hearing. If the hearing is terminated the original decision will stand.

5. The Committee will consider each of the queries raised by the parents and pupil so far as these are relevant to:

   - whether the facts of the cases, so far as they related to the pupil, were sufficiently proved when the decision was taken as to expel or require removal of the pupil. The standard of proof will be the balance of probability; and

   - whether the sanction was warranted, i.e. proportionate to the breach of discipline or other events that are found to have occurred.

   The requirements of natural justice will apply.

6. If the Headmaster considers it necessary in the interests of the individual or of the School that the identity of any person should be withheld, the Chair of the Committee may require that the name of that person and the reasons for withholding it be written down and shown to the Review Committee. The Chair in his/her discretion may direct that the person be identified.

7. A member of the School staff may speak generally about the pupil's character, conduct and achievements at the school if s/he is willing to do so.

8. When the Committee Chair decides that all issues have been sufficiently discussed and if by then there is no consensus s/he may adjourn the hearing.

9. The decision of the Review Committee will be final. It will be notified to the parents by the Chair of the Review Committee or the Chair of Governors by letter or telephone within three days of the hearing.

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14 December 2017

**REQUEST FOR REVIEW**

Name of Pupil:

Names of those with Parental Responsibility:

Address of Parents/Guardian:

Telephone numbers: …… (day time) ……..(evening)

I, being a person with parental responsibility for the above named pupil, request that a committee of the Governing Body carries out a review of the decision [to require removal of or to expel the pupil]

We have received with this form a copy of the *Stowe School's Review Procedure for Expulsions* and we agree to abide by its terms.

We also agree that the proceedings are and will remain confidential and that this review will be final subject to such (if any) legal rights as may exist.

The grounds upon which we seek a review and the matters which we wish to discuss at the review and to ask the Committee to take into account are as set out on the reverse side of or attached to this sheet.

We understand that we may be accompanied at the review by a friend or relation or by a member of the School staff who knows and who is willing to speak on behalf of the pupil.

(Two signatures required where practicable)

| | |
|---|---|
| First Signature: ..... | Second Signature: …… |
| Full Name: ..... | Full Name: ……..... |
| Relationship to Pupil: ..... | Relationship to Pupil: …… |
| Date: ..... | Date: ……. |

**Author:** **Crispin Robinson, Second Master**
**Reviewed:** **December 2017**
**Next Review:** **September 2018**

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