

# Complaints Procedure

## Introduction

The School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However if complaints do arise they will be dealt with in accordance with this Procedure.

**Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.**

## Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally**.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's teacher. In many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Principal.
- Complaints made directly to the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless the Principal deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The teacher 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 five working days or in the event that the teacher and parent **fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure**.

## Stage 2 – Formal resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should **put their complaint in writing to the Principal**. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Principal will write to, meet with or speak to the parents concerned, normally **within two working days** of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations either initially or following the contact with parents.
- The Principal **will complete a pro-forma with all actions taken** in relation to the complaint. Any complaints made to the Principal are kept on file.
- Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Principal will also give reasons for the decision.

- **If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3** of the Procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- If parents seeks to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred the Convenor (School Bursar), the person who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- **The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration.** The Panel will consist of **at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School.** Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governors. The Panel Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as possible and **normally within twenty-eight days.**
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied to all parties **not later than seven days prior to the hearing.**
- **The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person.** This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' 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 will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within **fourteen days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reason for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Principal, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.**

**The decision of the Panel will be final.**

September 2003

Reviewed January 2008

Reviewed November 2009