



## G1 - Complaints and Grievance Procedures

### Rationale and Principles

#### Rationale

As key stakeholders in the education of their children, parents have a right to voice any concerns they might have about their children's education. It is the school's duty and in its best interest to provide a channel for and be responsive to parents' complaints.

#### Guiding principles

- Parents naturally consider the education of their children of the utmost importance and so it is to be expected that parents will from time-to-time voice concerns about some aspect of the education provided by the school.
- If parents' concerns can be addressed promptly and with care, it will minimise any sense of anger or frustration.
- Some concerns may be valid and justified and others may be beyond the scope of what the school can offer. The process of dealing with complaints must distinguish whether something can be done, and then prompt action should be taken where it can and parental expectations should be managed where it can't.
- Whilst complaints will most likely come from parents, it shouldn't be ruled out that they might come from pupils.

### Measures

#### Establish Clear Channels and Procedures for Complaints

The first port of call for any concern parents might have regarding their child's education must be through the homeroom/class teacher.

The first port of call for any concern regarding administrative matters must be through the designated email to the parent concerns team.

Complaints about a teacher should be directed to a senior member of staff or to the School Director.

Complaints about the School Director should be directed to the Board of Trustees.

Every reasonable effort should be made to ensure that parents are aware that these channels exist for queries or concerns.

A log will be kept of complaints and will be confidential.

It is the responsibility of the School Director and the SMT to ensure that the procedures for dealing with complaints are understood by all staff and that any complaints do not remain unresolved.

## Guidelines

### Guidelines for fielding complaints

- It is good practice when dealing with a complaint or a concern to ensure the person feels they are being acknowledged, before taking any kind of action. Useful tips include:
- If the complaint or concern is verbal, allow the person to speak without interruption.
- Before responding in any way repeat back to the person their complaint or concern so that they are in no doubt that you have listened to and understood their concern.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions and if need be, take time to think about the complaint before giving a response.

## Procedures

### Complaints Procedure

#### Stage 1: Informal

Most complaints are easily resolved informally by discussion with staff at the school. More difficult or complex concerns may require further discussion or action.

Procedure for initial contact by office staff or a member of staff:

- Listen to, and record, in writing the basic details of complaint. The complaint should be acknowledged within 2 working days and a target date for a response set: this should normally be within 5 working days of acknowledgement.
- Decide upon the appropriate person to deal with the complaint.
- Appropriate member of staff interviews complainant or makes telephone contact.
- Complaint listened to and details recorded.
- Collect enough evidence to make an objective decision about the complaint. (Speak to those involved, speak to witnesses and take written statements if required.)
- Member of staff decides upon action to be taken.
- Communicate with complainant and other affected parties.
- If the matter remains unresolved then invite complainant to make formal complaint, in writing, to the School Director.
- Should the complaint be about the School Director, the complainant should approach to Chairman of the Board who is obliged to investigate it.

#### Stage 2: Formal

The School Director will carry out an investigation and respond to the complainant. The complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt, and a target date for providing a response will be given. This will normally be within 10 working days. The School Director may request to meet with the complainant to gain further information relevant to the complaint. Statements from witnesses will be collected where necessary. When all the relevant facts have been established, the School Director should produce a written response to the complainant.

If the complaint is not resolved, the complainant will be given the option to move to Stage 3. The School Director should refer the complaint to the Board within 2 working days.

### **Stage 3: Board**

The Board will meet to discuss the complaint and appoint a representative who will contact the complainant directly within 5 working days of the receipt of the complaint. The representative will aim to resolve the issue with the complainant in writing, in conversations or face-to-face.

Following this, if the complaint is not resolved, the complainant may request a hearing with the Board or a panel appointed by the Board of three people who have not been directly involved in the complaint.

The Board will endeavour to ensure that one of the people appointed to the panel is independent of the running and management of the school.

The complainant is entitled to be accompanied to the hearing. The hearing will be scheduled at the earliest possible convenience for both parties.

A final decision will be made and communicated to the complainant in writing, within 5 working days of the hearing.

## **Recording Complaints**

An **informal complaint** is recorded by the senior member of staff who deals with the complaint and the School Director is informed.

A **formal complaint** is recorded by the School Director.

All complaints will be kept on file in the complaint log for reference purposes.

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