

# Complaints



SIS has, and follows, an appropriate policy on responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled.

Introduction:

SIS has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

## **1. Stage 1: Informal Resolution**

1.1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

1.2 If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their son's/daughter's Head of Section. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Head of Section cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department, a member of the School's Senior Management Team or the Principal.

1.3 Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, a member of the School's Senior Management Team or the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant Head of Section unless the Head of Department, Member of the School's Management Team or the Principal deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

1.4 The Head of Section 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 14 days, or in the event that the Head of Section and the 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.

## **2. Stage 2: Formal Resolution**

2.1 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.

2.2 In most cases the Principal will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

2.3 It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations.

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

2.5 Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision or conclusion will be made and parents will be informed of this decision or conclusion in writing. The Principal will also give reasons for her decision or conclusion.

2.6 At this stage, parents should indicate either that the complaint has been resolved or investigated to their satisfaction, or, if still not satisfied with the decision or conclusion, that they wish to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

2.7 Parents should indicate their response to the Principal's decision or conclusion, in writing, within 7 days of receipt.

### **3. Stage 3: Panel (Board) Hearing**

3.1 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should do so within 7 days of receiving a Stage 2 response. They will then be referred to the Chair of the Board who has been appointed by the Board to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

3.2 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 Chairman of Board. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.

3.3 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 shall be supplied to all parties not later than 7 days prior to the hearing.

3.4 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.

3.5 If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

3.6 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 7 days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. **The decision of the Panel will be final.** The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Principal, Board and, where relevant, the person complained of. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations will also be available in the Principal's Office for inspection.

A written record of complaints made under the formal part of the procedure (i.e. Stages 2 and 3) will be kept, indicating whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or proceed to a Panel, and the action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (whether or not it is upheld).

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

#### **4. Monitoring and review**

The Council will monitor the number and type of complaints received and the operation of the procedures set out in this policy. They will also review the policy at least annually to ensure it meets statutory requirements and continues to reflect best practice.