



# **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

**Updated: May 2020**

**Review Date: November 2021**

**Review led by: M. Brennan**

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The majority of issues raised by parents, pupils or the community are concerns rather than complaints. The school is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. The prime aim of the school's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

1.2 This Complaints Policy has three main stages:

**Stage 1** A concern is raised with a Head of House, member of Leadership / Headteacher.

**Stage 2** Complaint is heard by Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

**Stage 3** Complaint is heard by Complaints Appeal Panel.

## 2. Stage 1 – Raising a concern

2.1 Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will usually result in a speedy response, which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact with a Head of House or a member of Leadership. They may report serious concerns in writing to the Headteacher. Sometimes the concern raised will require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an initial response within 3 days and, if required, a subsequent substantive response.

2.2 The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to the CEO within 10 days as set out below.

## 3. Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

3.1 If you wish to make a formal complaint, please write to the CEO stating that you wish to make a formal complaint. Your letter should state details of the complaint and the outcome that you are seeking. The CEO will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and will then investigate the complaint with the school.

3.2 The investigation will be undertaken by the CEO or a person appointed by the CEO and acting on the CEO's behalf. The nature of investigation will vary according to the complaint but may involve:

- establishing **what** has happened so far, and **who** has been involved;
- clarifying the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meeting with the complainant or contacting them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- speaking to those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.

3.3 The CEO will write to the complainant following the investigation and will outline the findings. If you remain dissatisfied you will need to let the school know within 10 school working days of receiving the CEO's findings on the complaint. Your complaint will then be considered by a Complaints Appeal Panel.

## 4. Stage 3 – Formal Complaint

4.1 The final stage will involve a Complaints Appeal Panel. This will be comprised of at least three people - a minimum of two Trustees and a person independent of the management and running of the school. The aim of the Complaints Appeal Panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. The hearing will normally take place within 10 school working days of the receipt of the written request. The panel will consider the CEO's investigation and report and will also consider the representations of the complainant. All parties will be notified of the panel's decision in writing within three school working days after the date of the hearing.

4.2 The Complaints appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

4.3 If you believe that the Trust Board has acted unreasonably or has failed to carry out its statutory duties you may take your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education. The Secretary of State must be satisfied that a decision is unreasonable in the sense that no reasonable authority, acting with due regard to its statutory responsibilities, would have reached that decision.

## Summary of Dealing with Complaints

