

# Parents' Complaints Policy and Procedure

## Introduction

The St. Michael Steiner School aims to provide quality teaching and pastoral care to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, we aim to deal with it fairly, thoroughly and as promptly as possible. Complaints will be treated by the school in accordance with the following procedure.

## Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- We will endeavour to resolve concerns and complaints quickly and informally if possible.
- If parents have a concern or complaint related to their own child, they should normally contact their son/daughter's Class Teacher or Tutor. In most cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this method.
- If the Class teacher/Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, he/she may consult another colleague.
- If the complaint concerns a member of staff other than the Class teacher or Tutor, it is advisable to contact that teacher directly if at all possible.
- Complaints of any kind about the school may be made directly to the College. Unless explicitly asked not to, or the College Chair feels it is inappropriate, s/he will usually refer these to the relevant teacher. In such cases, the College chair may agree to facilitate a meeting between the parties concerned.
- The Class teacher/Tutor (or the College Chair if he/she is dealing with the complaint) will make a written record of all the concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. This written record will be shown to all people concerned, to agree an accurate record of what has taken place.
- Should the matter not be resolved within 7 days, or in the event that the parties concerned fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.
- If the complainant is not a parent, the complaint can be directed to the College Chair who will deal with the matter as deemed appropriate, referring it to the appropriate person or acting as mediator at a meeting.

## Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the complainant(s) should put the complaint in writing to the College Chair. S/he will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the College Chair will have a meeting with the complainant(s), normally within 7 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the College Chair to carry out further investigations.
- The College Chair will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Such records will be viewed by all parties and seen to be accurate.
- Once the College Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established. A decision will be made and the complainant(s) will be informed of the decision in writing. S/he will also give reasons for the decision.
- If complainant(s) are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

## Stage 3 - Hearing Group

If complainant(s) seek(s) to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to a delegated College member.

- The matter will then be referred to the Hearing Group for consideration.

- The Hearing Group will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and at least one of whom will be independent of the management of the school.
- Each of the Hearing Group members will be appointed by the College.
- The delegated College member, on behalf of the Hearing Group, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as is practicable, and normally within 7 days.
- If the Hearing Group 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 3 days prior to the hearing.
- The complainant(s) 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 Hearing Group will resolve the complaint immediately without need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Hearing Group will decide how it should be carried out.
- After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Hearing Group will reach a decision (and may make recommendations) which it shall complete within 7 days of the hearing.
- The Hearing Group will write to the complainant informing them of its decision and the reasons for it.
- The decision of the Hearing Group will be final.
- The Hearing Group's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the College Chair and, where relevant, the person(s) against whom the complaint was directed.
- In accordance with the Staff Grievance Procedure, if a complaint against a member of staff is upheld, the Hearing Group will give a formal warning, with the right to appeal within 2 days, to the person against whom the complaint has been made.
- 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 Section 7 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2015, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection, or where other legal obligation prevails.
- None of the above procedures affect the complainant(s) statutory rights.