

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

(Senior and Prep, including Early Years Foundation Stage)

Our Vision

To be a school that lives the Gospel values, promotes the dignity of every individual and is committed to excellence.

Mission Statement

We are a Catholic School where every student, regardless of her individual faith:

- is valued
- is a member of a thriving, happy community
- is helped to achieve her personal best
- is given a wide range of opportunities to develop her talents
- is prepared for the challenges of adult life
- is helped to understand and fulfil her responsibilities to self, family and society

Introduction

The School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. A vital aspect of working in a close partnership with parents is that we want to know when things are, in the view of parents, not going right. If you have any concerns about any aspect of your child's life at school, please contact an appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. We will take all such expressions of concern seriously and follow them up courteously and promptly. In every school things can go wrong but we want to do all we can to sort any issues out.

Two things tend to make parents and pupils reluctant to express concerns:

- A fear that the school will not see the issue as important. Please be assured, if it is important to you, it is important to us.
- A fear that a complaint may lead to repercussions for the pupil. Please be assured that under no circumstances will the school discriminate against a pupil because of expressions of concern or complaints. We are also experienced in ensuring that, if other pupils are involved (e.g. in an allegation of bullying), there are no repercussions from other quarters.

However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally** i.e during Stage 1 or 2

Whom should you contact?

Stage 1

- If a parent has a complaint for a minor day-to-day issue the right person is likely to be the relevant Teacher or Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Teacher/Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department/Pastoral Head of Key Stage/the Deputy Head/Head of Prep.
- For a more serious subject related academic concern the relevant Head of Department will be the best person to contact
- For more serious general academic/curriculum concerns the Director of Studies/Head of Prep will be the best person to contact
- For Pastoral or Disciplinary concerns please contact the Pastoral Head of Key Stage/The Deputy Head/Head of Prep
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department/Pastoral Head of Key Stages/ /the Deputy Head/Director of Studies/the Head of Prep will usually be referred to the relevant Teacher/Tutor unless the Head of Department/the Deputy Head/Director of Studies/Head of Prep deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally

- The Teacher/Tutor will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received
- Parents are always welcome to address their serious concerns on any matter to the Head
- In matters regarding finance, fees and non-academic services please contact the Bursar
- We will do all we can to ensure that we respond to complaints in a highly professional manner. However, if you feel that an expression of concern has not been handled properly by a member of staff please contact the Deputy Head/Head of Prep.

In all these cases, should the matter not be resolved within 7 days or in the event that the Teacher/Tutor 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.

Stage 2

What do I do if I remain dissatisfied?

If you remain unhappy please contact the Head. This should be in writing. If possible a resolution will be reached informally at this stage.

- The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take
- In most cases, the Head will contact the parents concerned, normally within 3 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 Head to carry out further investigations
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint
- Once the Head 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 Head will also give reasons for her decision
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to the formal stage (Stage 3) of this Procedure

Stage 3 (Formal stage)

If, having discussed the matter with the Head, you still feel dissatisfied then please contact the Chair of Governors who will convene a Complaints Panel consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint; one person independent of the management and running of the school to consider the complaint. You can write to him in confidence c/o the Bursar, who is Clerk to the Governors. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Panel and will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.

- 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 2 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 considered relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 5 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 Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Parents can make a complaint directly to the Independent Schools Inspectorate if they wish to do so.

Contact details for ISI are:

Via the website – <http://www.isi.net/> where links to the appropriate person can be found

Address – CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. A written record of all complaints will be kept for three years, and also a record of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 163 of the 2002 Act requests access to them.

Early Years Foundation Stage

This Complaints Procedure applies to all complaints relating to children at the Early Years Foundation Stage including:

- A written record of all complaints will be kept for three years
- Parents of children in EYFS can make a complaint directly to the Independent Schools Inspectorate. Contact details can be found above.

There has been one formal complaint to the Governors in the last academic year.

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL

APPEALS AGAINST INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS OF WORK FOR EXTERNAL QUALIFICATIONS

St Catherine's is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff assess students' work for external qualifications, this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned. Assessments should be conducted by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and who have been trained in this activity. Pupils' work should be produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the examinations board. When a set of work is divided between staff, consistency should be assured by internal moderation and standardisation.

If a pupil feels that this may not have happened in relation to her work she may make use of this appeals procedure. Note that appeals may only be made against the process that led to the assessment and not against the mark or grade.

The existence of this procedure is made known to students by reference to it at a Year Assembly.

This procedure is available from the Examinations Officer.

1. Appeals should be made as soon as possible, and must be made at least 2 weeks before the end of the last externally assessed paper in the examination series. (So the appeal must be made before a date in mid-June for the summer series as presently timetabled).
2. Appeals should be made in writing to the Examinations Officer who will investigate the appeal. If the Examinations Officer was directly involved in the assessment in question, the Head will appoint another member of staff of similar or greater seniority to conduct the investigation. Likewise if the Examinations Officer is not able to conduct the investigation for some other reason.
3. The Examinations Officer or other member of staff will decide whether the process used for the internal assessment conformed with the requirements of the awarding body and the examinations code of practice of the QCA. This will be done before the end of the series (currently the end of June for the summer series).
4. You will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any correspondence with the board, any changes made to the assessment of your work, and any changes made to improve matters in future.
5. The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the Head. A written record of the appeal will be kept and made available to the awarding body at their request. Should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding body will be informed.

After work has been assessed internally it is moderated by the awarding body (examination board) to ensure consistency between centres. Such moderation frequently changes the marks awarded for internally assessed work. This is outside the control of St Catherine's School and is not covered by this procedure. If you have concerns about it, please ask the Examinations Officer for a copy of the appeals procedure of the relevant examinations board.

Reviewed: February 2012

Next Review Date: February 2014