



1. **Introduction:** We try to achieve the highest quality both of teaching and pastoral care provided to our pupils. However, if parents or others do have a complaint, it will be treated in accordance with this procedure. This procedure aims to achieve compliance with Part 7 of the Independent School Standards: manner in which complaints are handled. This is included in full at the end of this document.

2. **Concerns:** If a parent is worried about something or wants to express a concern or complaint, the first stage is normally to go to the person most closely connected with it, such as the student's form teacher. If it is a problem with a subject, the starting point is the subject teacher. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

3. **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**
 - a. If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway to the parents' satisfaction. During a busy school day, teachers can be hard to reach by phone, but parents can leave a message or email them to alert them to a possible issue.
 - b. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult others, such as a MYP Subject Coordinator, School Counselor or the Principal.
 - c. Complaints made directly to a MYP Subject Coordinator, School Counselor or the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher unless the School Counselor or the Principal deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
 - d. The form teacher 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 ten school working days then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.
 - e. Written records of the complaint and outcomes will be sent by the form teacher for review by the Principal.

4. **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**
 - a. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the complaint should be put in writing to the Principal. It should be made clear that it is a formal complaint and it will then be logged as such. Safeguarding matters are always logged and a record kept, whether or not they are taken to the level of a formal complaint.
 - b. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Principal will meet or speak to the parents concerned within seven school working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
 - c. It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations.
 - d. The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

- e. Once the Principal 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 within a further 7 school working days. The Principal will give reasons for the decision.
- f. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.
- g. If a stage 2 or 3 complaint is received within or close to school holidays the school will furnish a date by which it will provide its response.

5. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- a. If parents are not satisfied with the Principal's response to a formal complaint, they can appeal to the Advisory Board. Such appeals should be lodged as soon as is reasonable following the Principal's response by writing to the Advisory Board setting out the matter and the grounds of such appeal. The letter of appeal should indicate when, in the following four weeks, parents would be available to attend a Review Panel.
- b. The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom is independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Advisory Board who will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 17 school working days. The independent panel member will be appointed depending on the complaint itself, to ensure that the panel member has the requisite skills and interests.
- c. 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 five days prior to the hearing.
- d. One other person may accompany the parents to the hearing. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- e. The procedure to be followed will be fair and flexible at the discretion of the Panel. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- f. 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 14 school working days of the Hearing.
- g. The panel will make findings and recommendations and a copy of the findings and recommendations will be sent to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.

- 6. General:** The school will maintain a written record of all formal complaints and of whether they are resolved at the second stage or the third and also any action taken by the school as a result of those complaints. These records will be kept securely for six years from the date the complaint is resolved.
- a. The correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints and appeals will be kept confidential, except where disclosure is required by law.
 - b. The Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor.
 - c. Part 6 of the Independent School Standards requires that the number of complaints in the preceding school year is made available on the school website. The final step of this process is to record the basic details of the complaint on the Written Record of Complaint form.

7. Legislation: Independent School Standards Part 7

PART 7 Manner in which complaints are handled

33. The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which—

- (a) is in writing;
- (b) is made available to parents of pupils;
- (c) sets out clear time scales for the management of a complaint;
- (d) allows for a complaint to be made and considered initially on an informal basis;
- (e) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (d), establishes a formal procedure for the complaint to be made in writing;
- (f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
- (g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
- (h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;
- (i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is—
 - (i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
- (j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and—
 - (i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
 - (ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
- (k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.