

Complaints Policy

Rationale

It is important that complaints are handled in a professional and transparent manner in order to foster confidence and trust in the school's ability to facilitate natural justice, as well as maintain congruence with the vision and mission of the school. All stakeholders must be able to confidently complain, knowing that the school will follow an established process and that there is no fear of retribution.

Purpose

To ensure that complaints are dealt with in a fair, transparent and systematic manner.

Guidelines

1. Complaints and grievances may arise in a range of circumstances, including:
 - Behaviour by a member of the school community (staff, parent/guardian, volunteer, visitor or student) may have an adverse impact upon another member of the school community – affecting the performance of their duties, work or studies at the school or otherwise affecting them personally.
 - A conflict of interest.
 - Discriminatory or unprofessional behaviour or conduct.
 - A breach of school policies.
2. Complaints can come from staff, parents/guardians, students or other stakeholders.
3. All complaints must be taken seriously and dealt with according to the principles outlined below, no matter how frivolous they may appear.
4. All complaints must be transferred to the school's complaints form.
5. All complainants should receive contact from the school about the complaint within 24 hours of the complaint being made.

6. Complaints should be handled by the person who is in the best position to:
 - Investigate the complaint AND
 - Make decisions to resolve the complaint.
7. Unless the person receiving the complaint is the same as referred to above, that person should simply listen to the complaint, clarify any information not clearly understood and then inform the complainant of the next step that will be taken – referral to the appropriate person to handle the complaint. Unless the complaint is about a simple procedure or a misunderstanding about a place, time or date, no attempt should be made by the person receiving the complaint to resolve the issue.
8. The complainant should always be referred to the level at which it is made. A simple complaint about classroom procedure should be referred initially to the classroom teacher. Failure to resolve the complaint should see it pass through the Head of School and Director.
9. Any complaint that is serious, i.e. about student safety, staff conduct, bullying, must immediately be referred to the Head of School who will involve the Director where appropriate.
10. Protective disclosures (where the complainant does not wish to be identified) and anonymous complaints are difficult for the school to deal with in a transparent manner. If they are at the level of Guideline 9, they must be brought to the attention of the Head of School and investigated.
11. No parent/guardian should be informed of any consequences imposed on students or staff if, as a result of the investigation, there is a disciplinary consequence.
12. The complaints process must be clearly articulated to all stakeholders. It should appear in the Staff Handbook and be communicated to parents.
13. A (hard copy) file of complaints must be kept by the Head of School.
14. Disciplinary consequences arising from a complaint should be congruent with the seriousness of the complaint.