

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

## GENERAL

Salesian College has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint<sup>1</sup>, they can expect it to be treated by the College in accordance with this Procedure.

### STAGE 1 - INFORMAL RESOLUTION

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son's or daughter's class teacher or form tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the class teacher or form tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to consult the Head of Year, Deputy Headmaster or Headmaster.

Complaints made directly to the Heads of Year will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher or form tutor unless the Head of Year deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

A written record will be kept of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within two weeks, or in the event that the member of staff involved and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents are advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.

### STAGE 2 - FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster, or in his absence the Deputy Head, will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within two days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

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<sup>1</sup> \*A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. A complaint may be made if a parent thinks that the school has, for example,

- done something wrong
- failed to do something it should have done
- acted unfairly or improperly

Parents are advised that

- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Headmaster 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 Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### **STAGE 3 - PANEL HEARING**

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chairman of Governors, who will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of Governors on behalf of the Panel, who 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 seven 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 seven 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 Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except insofar as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.