

## **4.4 Complaints Policy - ISSR 7**

The school has a Complaints Procedure which satisfies the requirements of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014.

The Complaints Procedure document is as follows:

Current and prospective parents can see the complaints procedure both on the school website or on request from the School Office.

The school prides itself on the quality of its pastoral care and on the speed with which parental concerns are dealt with. Outlined below is a term-time schedule. Complaints received during the holidays will be acknowledged on the day of receipt, and every effort will be made to adhere to the published timescales but it may be necessary to defer resolution until the start of the next term. If this is the case the parent will be informed of an estimated timescale.

### **4.4.1 Stage 1: Informal Resolution**

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

For small matters, in the first instance, parents should consult their son's Form Teacher.

For more serious matters or if the Form Teacher deems the matter more serious, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) should be consulted. He will keep a written record of the complaint and keep the Headmaster informed. He will consult with any relevant staff. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached within 14 days then parents are advised to proceed to stage 2 with a Formal Complaint.

### **4.4.2 Stage 2: Formal Resolution**

The parents put the complaint in writing to the Headmaster who will see the parents as soon as possible and seek to find a resolution. This should take place within 7 days of receiving the complaint. It is not normal for parents to adopt legal representation at such meetings. All written complaints are logged and appear on a termly report to the school's Governors.

If necessary the Headmaster will undertake further investigation of the matter.

The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews in relation to the complaint. Parents will be kept fully informed (By letter, telephone, or in person) of the ways in which the issue is being handled.

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 give reasons for his decision. This letter will be produced within seven days from the meeting with the parents.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision they may proceed to Stage 3.

#### **4.4.3 Stage 3: Panel Hearing**

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to a convenor appointed by the Governing Body to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the convenor. The convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within one week.

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.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. The panel hearing will proceed whether the parent attends or not, unless they have indicated that they are satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. If necessary the panel should consider the parent's complaint in absentia and issue findings on the substance of the complaint, thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion. The requirement for the panel to proceed does not prevent the school from accommodating parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning the panel composition.

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, the Panel will reach a decision and will make findings recommendations within five days of the hearing. A copy of those findings and recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. The findings will also be made available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headmaster. The decision of the Panel will be final.

The Deputy Head maintains records of all complaints at all stages. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 and 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.