

# SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

## *Complaints Procedure*

Saint Nicholas School is proud of the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. It is inevitable, however, that situations will arise from time to time in which parents may feel that they have grounds for complaint. Any such complaint will be dealt with by the school according to the following Procedure.

### *Stage 1 – Informal Resolution*

- It is anticipated that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint, they should contact the Head of Infants, Head of Juniors or Head of Seniors in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will quickly be resolved to the parents' satisfaction by this means. If the matter is not resolved, it will then be necessary to consult the Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant head of department as above, unless the Headmaster deems it appropriate for the matter to be dealt with personally.
- The head of department 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 working days, or should the head of department and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then the parent will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.

### *Stage 2 – Formal Resolution*

- If a complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet the parents concerned, normally within ten working 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 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 the 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 of this Procedure, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, they will be referred to the Chairman of Governors or, in his absence, the Vice-Chairman of Governors.
- The matter will then be referred to a Complaints Panel set up by the Board of Governors for this purpose. The Panel will consist of two Governors not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one other person independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The Convenor of the Complaints Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as is practicable and normally within twenty working 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 two working 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 they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within twenty working days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, its 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 in so far 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.**