



Complaints Policy and Procedure

“Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the lord is able to make them stand.”

Romans 14: 4

Policy statement

St Martha's School believes that if anyone wishes to make a complaint or register a concern they should find it easy to do so. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or concerns are taken seriously. The School supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly and can be resolved quickly and in an informal manner.

Ref: Parents can access the Behaviour Management, Rewards and Sanctions Policy on the web site.

Aim

The aim of the School is to ensure that its complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented and that people feel confident that their complaints and concerns are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly and with due diligence.

All complaints, seemingly no matter how minor, and from whomever, will be given the same consideration.

All correspondence will be treated in the strictest confidence. Written records will be treated as prescribed in the Independent Education (Independent School Standards 2014)

Details of how to obtain this Complaints Procedure have been made available on our website and through the Parent Guild.

Stage 1

In most cases complaints will be directed towards the Tutor in the first instance where the aim is to resolve any issues quickly and informally (within 5 working days). Details of any complaints concerning staff will be passed to the Headmaster immediately for consideration. State how informal complaints are recorded and monitored.

Stage 2

If a complaint is not resolved informally at Stage 1 the parent may write to the Headmaster asking for the complaint to be dealt with at Stage 2. All complaints, including written complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days.

Any complaint made directly to the Headmaster at Stage 2 will normally be referred, in the first instance, to the Deputy Head and/or the Director of studies Dr Mary Wall for investigation unless the Headmaster feels the complaint would be better answered by another member of staff.

The response to the complaint will be sent within 5 working days from the issue of the acknowledgement of the complaint and not more than 28 days when the time falls during a holiday period. (A response may include further investigation with clear timescales – no more than 10 working days)

Stage 3

If the complaint cannot be resolved at Stage 2, the complainant has the opportunity to move to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure which consists of a panel hearing. Any request for this must be in writing to the Headmaster. An acknowledgement of this formal complaint at Stage 3 will be sent within 5 working days. The response may include the need for further investigation – no more than 10 working days.

The complaints panel is appointed by the Chair of Governors, and consists of at least three people who are not directly involved in the complaint or investigation. This panel will include at least one person not involved in the management of the school. The complaints panel will be arranged within 10 working days of the acknowledgement. If further investigation was required the panel will be arranged within 10 working days following the conclusion of the investigation.

The complainant will be invited to attend the panel hearing if he or she so wishes and be accompanied at that hearing. There would not normally be legal representation by either party at this hearing.

The findings of the panel, and its recommendations, will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise to the complainant and where relevant to the person(s) to whom the complaint was directed. This will be done within 3 working days of the panel hearing. These findings are final.

The findings will be available for inspection, on the school premises, by the Chair of Governors and/or Headmaster.

Records will be kept of all complaints whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing.

Records will include action taken by the school as result of the complaints regardless of whether they are upheld.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints must be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them

Details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure will be made available to parents and prospective parents as part of this policy and published on the school website.

The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure for 2015/2016 is 1.