



St Andrew's School, Turi

Complaints Procedure

1. Procedure

Procedure statement

The School is committed to providing high quality teaching and pastoral care for students. However, if parents or students do have a complaint they can expect it to be treated seriously by the School.

Staff are responsible for reading and understanding the Complaints Procedure.

Scope

The procedure applies to any person who wishes to make a complaint against the School, with the exception of staff.

A complaint made by a member of staff against the School is dealt with through the Grievance Procedure.

Definition

A complaint is defined as any matter about which someone within the scope of this procedure has a cause for concern.

Terminology

In this procedure, **'School'** refers to both the Senior and Preparatory Schools either separately or jointly; **'Head'** refers to both the Head of Senior School and the Head of the Preparatory School; **'Appropriate Person'** refers to any member of staff with a position of responsibility to whom a complaint is made; **'Senior Member of Staff'** refers to any member of staff nominated by the Head or Bursar; **'Staff'** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the School (including staff working on behalf of third party contractors), full or part-time, permanent or temporary, in either paid or voluntary capacities; **'Complainant'** refers to a person who lodges a complaint.

Regulatory framework

This policy acknowledges 'Standards for British Schools Overseas' (November 2016) and the accompanying cited legislation and guidance.

Review

This procedure will be subject to biennial review by the Director.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Chair of Governors

The Chair of Governors is responsible for the receipt of an Appeal and the appointment of the ensuing Complaints Panel.

Clerk to the Governors

The Clerk to the Governors is responsible for ensuring that any Appeal is passed to the Chair of Governors in a timely fashion and appeals process followed correctly.

Heads and Bursar

The Heads and Bursar are responsible for ensuring that all staff have read and understood the Complaints Procedure.

Senior Member of Staff

A Senior Member of Staff (SMoS) is responsible for ensuring that Stages 1 & 2 of the procedure are followed.

Appropriate Person

The Appropriate Person (AP) is responsible for ensuring that Stage 1 of the procedure is followed.

3. Principles

Every complaint is a matter of concern to the School and will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness.

The AP or SMoS will:

- Seek resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Enable swift handling and clear and timely communication

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent where disclosure is required by another legal authority.

4. Procedure

Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the events or actions (or lack of actions) which have prompted the complaint.

Stage 1

Stage 1 is to seek informal resolution:

- Most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally
- A complainant should contact the AP. In most cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway to the complainant's satisfaction. If it cannot be resolved, it should be referred to a SMoS
- The AP will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received
- Complaints made directly to a SMoS will be referred to the relevant AP unless the SMoS deems it appropriate for it to be dealt with personally
- Should the matter not be resolved within 14 days or in the event that the AP and the complainant fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then the complainant will be advised to proceed to Stage 2 below

Stage 2

Stage 2 is to seek formal resolution:

- If the complaint cannot be resolved informally or is of a sufficiently serious nature, the complainant should put their complaint in writing to the SMOs. The SMOs will decide the appropriate course of action to take
- The SMOs will normally meet with the complainant within seven days of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage
- It may be necessary for the SMOs to carry out further investigations
- The SMOs will keep written records of all meetings and interviews
- Once the SMOs is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the complainant will be informed of this decision in writing. The SMOs will also give reasons for his/her decision
- If the complainant is still not satisfied, they will be advised to proceed to Stage 3 below

Stage 3

Stage 3 is an appeal to a Complaints Panel (the Panel):

- In the event of an appeal to the Panel, the complainant should send written notice of their complaint to the Chair to the Governors, *via* the Clerk of Governors
- In the written notice, the complainant should give reasonable particulars of the complaint and should specify the outcome being sought
- The Panel will be appointed by the Chair of Governors and consist of at least three persons who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the School
- The Chair of the Panel will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 28 days of receipt of the complaint
- In the case of a complaint relating to a student's suspension or exclusion, the Head shall have complete discretion to suspend or exclude a student pending the outcome of the appeal
- At least seven days before the hearing, the SMOs shall submit to the Panel a written statement setting out his response in relation to the complaint. The Chair of the Panel shall give a copy of the SMOs's statement to the complainant
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to the complainant not later than three days prior to the hearing
- The Panel may conduct interviews before the hearing as it sees fit. In such circumstances, a summary of the interviews will be given to the complainant
- At least three days prior to the hearing the complainant will submit to the Chair of the Panel copies of all documentation they intend to rely upon
- There may be exceptional circumstances where it would be more suitable to hold the hearing outside the School
- The complainant may be accompanied at the hearing by one other person of their choice. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out
- Any person under the age of 18, or any student at the School, will not normally be permitted to attend the hearing

- If the Chair of the Panel believes that the Panel should hear evidence in private, he may so decide. In such circumstances, the complainant will be given reasons for that decision. The complainant will be given a summary of the evidence
- After due consideration, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations
- Within 10 days of the hearing, the Chair of the Panel will send the complainant and the SMOs a summary of the Panel's findings and recommendations. Copies will also be forwarded to the Chair of Governors and the person complained about as appropriate
- The decision of the Panel is final

5. Managing and recording complaints

A written record will be kept of all formal complaints for at least three years for regular review by a SMOs (whether they are resolved at the preliminary stages or proceed to a Panel hearing) to help identify whether review or change in practice is needed and so that patterns can be identified and appropriate interventions made. All written records of formal complaints are kept by the Head.

A report about complaints is made to the Board of Governors annually by the Clerk to the Governors.

Compiled by: Director
Approved by: The Board
Date of review: June 2017
Date of next review: June 2019

Signed: _____

Date: _____