

## PARENTS' COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

In the event that a parent wishes to make a complaint about the School, whether on its treatment of a student or a general matter affecting the safety or welfare of a student or the students as a whole, the following procedure has been established by the School to comply with the legal requirements under which the School operates.

For any child protection issues, the School's Child Protection Policy procedures should be followed. The School lies within the County of West Sussex, and Child Protection is one of a number of responsibilities of the County's Social Services Department. They are the 'lead' agency and the first contact for the School if outside agencies have to be brought in to help. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), should be contacted within 24 hours of the incident being reported to the Headmaster. Tel. No. 0330 222 3339.

For any other complaints, the procedure to be followed is given as a series of progressive steps. These are:-

1. Initially, the parent wishing to make a complaint should approach a member of the School staff on an informal basis. This informal approach could be to the Class Teacher (or Deputy) of the student involved, another member of staff known to the parent, or direct to the Headmaster. The staff member approached must respond to the complaint within a maximum of seven days.
2. If no response is received within seven days, or the response does not satisfy the complaining parent, the parent should put his/her complaint in writing to the Headmaster, specifying the person with whom he/she has already discussed the problem and that, either no response has been received within the time limit, or the response is unsatisfactory.
3. The complaint is recorded in the School's Complaints Book and the Headmaster or his Deputy must acknowledge, within two days, receipt of the written complaint and that the complaint is being considered.
4. Within one week of sending the acknowledgement, the Headmaster or his Deputy must send a response by electronic mail or otherwise to the parent either inviting the parent to an interview to discuss the complaint within the following fourteen days or advising the decision on the complaint. If the latter, the parent has the right to request a personal interview if the decision is considered by the parent to be unsatisfactory; if the parent has not responded within seven days of receiving the written decision, either expressing dissatisfaction with the decision or requesting a personal interview, the parent is deemed to be satisfied with the outcome.

5. If an interview is held, the parent may be accompanied by any person of their choice. The parent should advise the Headmaster (or Deputy if appropriate) no later than seven days prior to the interview the name, relationship (if any) and status (professional and occupational) of the accompanying person. The School must ensure that the parent receives written confirmation of the School's decision within seven days of the interview.
6. If the parent does not receive written confirmation of the decision within the seven day period, or disagrees with the decision, he/she may request that the complaint be referred to the School's Complaints Panel. This request should be made in writing to the Headmaster and should specify all the main points of disagreement with the decision.
7. The Complaints Panel comprises three people: the Vicar for the time being of St Nicolas Church, Cranleigh, Surrey (Church of England), a senior member of the School staff nominated by the Headmaster and who has not been involved in the complaint, and the School's Independent Listener (a Japanese speaker). Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the Panel should be convened within fourteen days of the parent's formal request being received. Should the Vicar or the Independent Listener not be available, because of sickness or absence, the parent may agree to a substitute or await availability. If the latter the School will not be considered to have failed to convene the Panel within the stipulated time provided it acts with reasonable expedition. The parent will be given reasonable notice of the Panel Meeting and has the right to be accompanied on the same terms as for the interview described in para 5 above.
8. The Panel will issue a confidential written statement of their findings and recommendations (if any) within seven days of the conclusion of the Meeting with the parent, copies of which will be sent to the complaining parent, the Chairman of the Trustees, the Headmaster, any person who accompanied the parent to the Meeting and the staff member about whom the complaint had been made.
9. The confidential statement will be filed in the confidential section of the School's Complaints file, together with any relevant records, available for inspection on the School premises by the Headmaster. The papers will be destroyed twelve months after the Panel Meeting, or the date on which the student concerned leaves the School, whichever is the later.
10. On the issuance of the Panel's confidential statement this procedure is concluded.

(Note that a separate procedure has been established for students making their own complaints on an issue affecting them entitled "Students' Complaints Procedure".

## STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The full procedure, setting out for students how to make complaints, is detailed in the attached Notice, which has been issued to students and their parents. Put simply, the following are the progressive steps which can be taken by a student with a problem:-

1. The student should approach someone in who they have trust - the Class Teacher or any other member of staff, the Independent Listener or his/her own parents. This would be informal initially, but he/she may wish to be accompanied by a fellow student or another teacher.
2. The student should put the complaint in writing to his/her Class Teacher. This will ensure that a formal record of the complaint is put in the School's Complaint Book and he/she receives a written response.
3. The Headmaster or his Deputy will, within 2 days of the registration of the complaint reply in writing that the complaint has been received and is being considered.
4. Within a week of receiving a letter from the Headmaster, the student will be invited to meet the Headmaster or his Deputy to discuss the complaint. He/she can choose to be accompanied to the interview by a friend, a fellow student or a teacher. He/she will receive written confirmation of the decision of the review within two days of the meeting.
5. If, within two days of the interview the complaint has not been resolved to the student's satisfaction, he/she may contact the School Chaplain or the Independent Listener to talk to him/her and advise him/her. The student may be accompanied to the interview if it is wished.
6. If the student is still not satisfied, he/she should write to the Headmaster asking that he/she be permitted to make his/her case to a Panel of three persons appointed by the Chairman of the Trustees. At least one of the members of the Panel will not be a member of the School's staff and none will have been involved directly in the handling of the complaint.
7. The student will be given appropriate advance notice of the proposed date of the Panel meeting and the names of the Members. He/she may ask that one of his/her parents, or any other person with a connection with the School, accompany him/her to the hearing of the complaint.
8. The Panel will issue a confidential written statement of their findings and recommendations (if any) within seven days of the conclusion of the meeting, of which copies will be sent to the student, the Chairman of the Trustees, the Headmaster, any person who accompanied the student to the Panel Meeting and the staff member or members about whom he/she was complaining.
9. The confidential statement will be filed in the confidential section of the School's Complaints file, together with any relevant records. The papers will be destroyed twelve months after the Panel Meeting or the date on which the student leaves the School, whichever is the earlier.