

# St Patrick's & St Brigid's College Parent Concerns/Complaints Policy



Adopted on:

Review Date

## Complaints (Parents)

Policy Statement

St Patrick's & St Brigid's College recognises that parents will, from time to time, have normal and legitimate concerns about the progress, achievement, behaviour or welfare of their son or daughter. Parents are encouraged to make those concerns known to staff so that they can be addressed in partnership with the college.

*(For the purpose of our Complaints Policy and procedures the term parents includes guardians and the parents of prospective pupils)*

At SPB College we:

- Take all concerns and complaints seriously.
- Make every effort to deal with complaints informally and at an early stage, in the spirit of partnership.
- Resolve all complaints within 28 working days of the complaint being received.
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with in line with the procedures set out in this document.
- Ensure that complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.
- Ensure that, where appropriate, a full and fair investigation of the issue is undertaken.
- Ensure that no-one, including pupils, are penalised for making a complaint in good faith.
- Keep a written record, for at least three years, of all complaints, the action taken and at what stage they were resolved. (Note: This information may be provided to ETI at their request)
- Review regularly at senior leadership level the written record of complaints and their outcomes
- Keep confidential all records relating to individual complaints
- A record of formal complaints and their outcomes is kept by the Principal

**This policy is applicable to all pupils in our college. It is available to staff, pupils, parents and the parents of prospective pupils on the college's website and paper copies are available on request from the college secretariat.**

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### **Concerns and Complaints procedure**

A vital aspect of working in a close partnership with parents is that we want to know when things are, in the view of parents, not going right. If you have any concerns about any aspect of your child's life at college, please contact an appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. We will take all such expressions of concern seriously and follow them up courteously and promptly. In any college things can go wrong but we want to do all we can to sort those things out.

Two things tend to make parents and pupils reluctant to express concerns:

- A fear that the College will not see the issue to be important. Please be assured, if it is important to you, it is important to us.

- A fear that a complaint may lead to repercussions for the pupil. Please be assured that under no circumstances will the College discriminate against a pupil because of expressions of concern or complaints. We are also very experienced in ensuring that, if other pupils are involved (e.g. in an allegation of bullying), there are no repercussions from other quarters.

### **Who should you contact? Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is to be hoped that most concerns can be made and considered on an informal basis.
- For a minor day to day concerns please contact the relevant teacher or Tutor.
- For a more serious subject related academic concern, the Head of Department should be contacted.
- For a more serious general academic concern or pastoral matter, the relevant Head of Year is the appropriate person to contact.
- For concerns about the curriculum, please contact the Assistant Principal (Curriculum).
- For any other serious pastoral or disciplinary concerns, please contact the Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care).

We will do all we can to ensure that we respond to concerns in a highly professional manner. However, if you feel that an expression of concern has not been resolved, please contact the relevant Assistant Principal.

The staff concerned will make a written record of every written complaint; this record will include the date on which the complaint was received. We will endeavour to acknowledge a written notification by telephone, e-mail or letter within five working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the College holidays. Should the matter not be resolved within a reasonable period ( not normally exceeding two term-time weeks) or in the event that the relevant staff and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint by writing directly to the Principal

### **What to do if you remain dissatisfied? Stage 2- Formal Resolution**

If you remain unhappy, please contact the Principal. This should be in writing. The Principal may ask to meet you for a discussion of the problem. The Principal will conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved.

You will receive a written response to your complaint. Full written details of the nature of the complaint, any relevant documents and full contact details should be sent by the parents in an envelope addressed to the Principal.

The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, upon the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Principal will speak to and/or meet with the parents concerned to discuss the matter, normally within ten days of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

### **Panel Hearing – Stage 3**

If having discussed the matter with the Principal, you still feel dissatisfied then please contact the Chairman of the Board of Governors who will convene a committee of at least three Governors to consider the complaint. No member of the committee may have any

involvement with any matter detailed in the complaint. You can write to the Chair of Governors in confidence c/o the Principal's Secretary, who will acknowledge the request within 5 working days.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the committee will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within seven days of the meeting or as soon as reasonably practicable. The committee will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within seven days of reaching this decision. The committee's findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Principal, Governors and, where relevant, the person(s) about whom the complaint was made. The decision of the committee will be final.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential. Parents are always welcome to address their serious concerns on any matter to the Principal. Written records of all serious complaints and their outcomes (including at what stage they were resolved) will be kept (for at least 3 years) and reviewed at least annually by The Principal, The Assistant Principals as appropriate to identify whether review or change in practice is needed so that patterns can be identified and so that appropriate intervention is made.

Signature (Chair of Governors): ..... Date: .....

Signature (Principal): ..... Date: .....