

Complaints Policy

St. Patrick's & St. Brigid's College, Claudy



Foreword

At St Patrick's & St Brigid's College we value and respect all members of our school community and value feedback from all to enable us to best support and develop our pupils effectively. We recognise that, from time to time, legitimate concerns about progress, achievement, behaviour or welfare may be raised in relation to a pupil/pupils. As a school we will endeavour to deal with any concern or complaint in a timely manner. We encourage early dialogue with relevant staff so that issues can be resolved at an early stage.

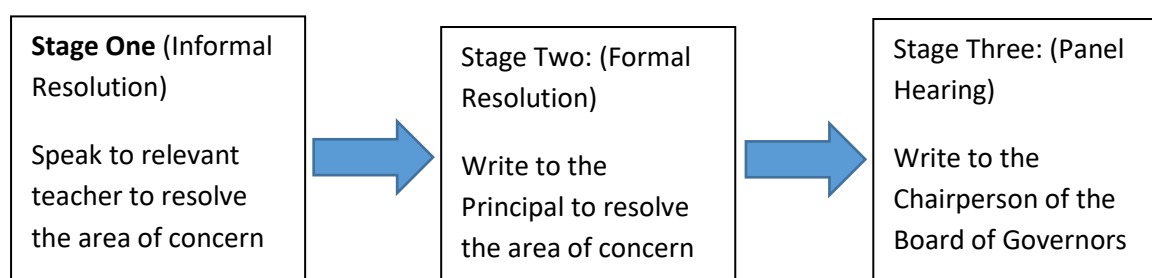
AIMS

At St. Patrick's & St. Brigid's 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 as quickly and effectively as possible.
- 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 all.
- 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

These procedures are applicable to all pupils in our college. They are available to staff, pupils, parents/guardians and the parents of prospective pupils on the college's website and paper copies are available on request from the college secretariat.

Concerns and Complaints procedure at a glance:



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 any minor day to day concerns please contact the relevant subject teacher or Form 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).
- Should the concern/complaint be about the Principal, please endeavour to address your concerns directly with the Principal initially.

We will do all we can to ensure that we respond to concerns in a highly professional manner and within 10 working school days from the date the concern was raised. We would hope that the majority of concerns/complaints will be successfully resolved at this stage, however should you feel dissatisfied you can move to Stage Two of the procedure.

Stage 2- Formal Resolution

If you remain unhappy, please contact the Principal. This should be in writing. The Principal will acknowledge a written complaint within ten school working days of receipt of the complaint. The Principal may ask to meet you to discuss 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, normally within twenty school working days of receipt of the 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.

Should your complaint be about the Principal, and remains unresolved after Stage One, please proceed to Stage Three.

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 should write to the Chair of Governors in confidence c/o the Principal's Secretary, who will acknowledge the request within 10 school working days.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the committee will reach a decision and may make recommendations. The committee will write to the complainant informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within twenty school working days from receipt of the written complaint to the Chairperson. 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.

Where a complaint has been made and the procedures applied and where the allegations are found to be malicious, the college will follow internal disciplinary procedures against the complainant (pupils/staff) in line with relevant school policies/procedures.

Once the college's internal complaints process has been exhausted the complainant may refer the matter to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman. This must be done within six months of the date of the final correspondence from the college (Stage 3 – Panel Hearing's response). Details of how to contact the Ombudsman are as follows:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

Freepost: Freepost NIPSO
Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk