



# Complaints Procedure for Parents

<b>Audience</b>	Parents, Staff and Directors
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<b>Related Policies</b>	Behaviour, Rewards and Discipline Accessibility Plan

## **Introduction and Purpose**

St. Christopher's International School has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, it will be dealt with by the school in accordance with this procedure, which is available to the parents of pupils and prospective pupils at the school.

The Board of Directors and staff of St. Christopher's International School take seriously their responsibility for safeguarding and promoting welfare of all pupils in their care. The St. Christopher's International School Board of Directors are ultimately responsible for the provision stated in this policy.

### **Stage I: Informal Resolution:**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

- If parents have a complaint, they should contact their son/daughter's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parent's satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a member of Senior Leadership Team as appropriate.
- Complaints made directly to the school will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless the 'line manager' concerned deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally. In this event the 'line manager' will attempt to resolve the matter in five days or as soon as is practicable.
- The relevant teacher will make a written record of all complaints and concerns and the date on which they were received. Should a matter not be resolved within five days, or in the event that the relevant teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

### **Stage 2: Formal Resolution:**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents will be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster, who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will speak to the parents concerned within forty eight hours of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations. These will be completed in seven days or as soon as is practicable.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

- Once the Headmaster is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will give reasons for the decision.
- The written decision will be issued within fourteen days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the Headmaster will write to the parents within the fourteen day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why he is unable to issue his decision and informing the parents when he will do so, which will be within twenty-eight days of receipt of the complaint in any event.
- If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they may take the opportunity to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3: Panel Hearing:**

- Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents seek to invoke Stage 3 of this procedure, they are to write to the Headmaster informing him of their decision to do so within 28 days, whereupon the matter will be referred to a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Chair of the Board of Directors.
- The panel will consist of at least three persons who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One of these shall be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The complaint will be acknowledged on behalf of the panel and a hearing scheduled to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.
- If the convener of the panel and/or the panel members deem it necessary, they may require (in writing) that further particulars of the complaint or any other related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five days before the hearing. Any such further particulars received within five days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it may not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the panel will resolve the parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However should the panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required, the panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded. The panel will reconvene and, after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, will reach a decision and may make recommendations. This procedure will be completed within fourteen days of the first hearing wherever possible but within twenty-eight days in any event unless otherwise agreed with the parents. The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision together with the reasons. The decision of the panel will be final.
- The panel 's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the Headmaster, Chair of the Board of Directors and, where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual.
- Provision will be made for a written record to be kept of all complaints, and of whether they

were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing.

- Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Minister for Education, or, body conducting an inspection requests access to them.