



# SILCOATES

Independent education for boys and girls aged 3-18

## Complaints Procedure

### Introduction

Silcoates School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure. The School keeps written records of complaints, and notes whether they are resolved at Stage 2 below or through a panel hearing.

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

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

If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Class Teacher (Pre-School/Junior School) or Tutor (Senior School). In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher or Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head of Junior School, a Faculty Leader, one of the Leadership Team, the Deputy Head (Academic) or the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Complaints made directly to the Head of Junior School, a Faculty Leader or a member of SLT will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher or Tutor unless he/she deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

The Class Teacher or Tutor will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days or in the event that the Class Teacher or Tutor and the parent 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 should put their complaint in writing to the Deputy Head (Academic) or the Deputy Head (Pastoral). The Deputy Heads will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Deputy Heads will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Deputy Heads to carry out further investigations.

The Deputy Heads will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Deputy Heads are satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Deputy Heads will also give reasons for their decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

A panel hearing cannot normally be requested unless Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure has been completed. An appeal following the permanent exclusion of a pupil will be conducted in the same manner as if it were Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure.

A panel hearing should be requested in writing to the Chair of Governors c/o Deputy Head's PA, stating the grounds of the complaint and the desired outcome. Only the parent or guardian of a current pupil can request a panel hearing. The panel will not normally accept any new areas of complaint which have not been previously raised during Stages 1 and 2 (or outside the issue of the permanent exclusion). The matter will then be referred to a complaints panel ('the panel') for consideration. A Stage 3 complaint will be acknowledged within three working days and all parties will be kept informed of the arrangements for the convening of the panel by the Clerk to the Governors.

The panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School (including of its parent and teaching bodies). They will be nominated by the Chair of Governors. The Clerk to the Governing Body, on behalf of the panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within twenty working days of the request for a panel hearing.

If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further details of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such details shall be supplied to all parties not later than three working days prior to the hearing. The Deputy Heads will not discuss the case with the panel beforehand.

The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by the pupil(s) concerned and one other person, if they wish, who may speak on their behalf if they feel unable to express themselves as they would like. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not be permitted. Minutes of the meeting will be taken, by the Clerk to the Governors if available.

If it is agreeable to all parties, all parties will meet with the panel at the same time and the procedure will be run by the Chair of the Panel. However, it is possible for the different parts of the hearing to be held separately, with minutes of the discussion being relayed at the start of each session.

It is at the Chair of the Panel's discretion as to how the hearing will be structured. In the normal course of events, the Deputy Heads will present their statement first and, subject to any questions from the panel, this will be followed by the parents' statement, identifying the factors which form the basis of the complaint. There will be an opportunity for clarification and discussion of the points raised. The Chair of the Panel will place a time limit on the various stages of the hearing and ensure that both parties are allocated a similar amount of length of time in front of the panel.

If possible, the panel will resolve the complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out. The hearing may be adjourned for this purpose. On completion of the hearing, the panel will consider all of the relevant facts. The panel will then dismiss or uphold the complaint. They may also make recommendations to the Deputy Heads or the full Board of Governors, as appropriate. It is not within the powers of the panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, students or parents, although they may recommend these actions to the Deputy Heads or the Governing Body. The panel will write to the parents and Deputy Heads informing them of its decision and the reasons for it; barring any unforeseen absence, this will be within seven working days of the hearing. The decision of the panel will be final.

A copy of the panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, any person who may be the subject of the complaint, as well as the Chair of Governors and the Deputy Heads.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State for Education or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Education Act requires access to them.

Written records are kept of all complaints made in writing, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing, along with the action taken by the School as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Additional requirements apply for EYFS settings beyond those which apply to the main school. Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will always be investigated and the complainant notified within 28 days. The records of complaints will always be available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

Number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the academic year 2019/20	1
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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Mrs Dews - Deputy Head (Academic) Mr Evans - Deputy Head (Pastoral)		
<b>Date of last review:</b>	January 2021	<b>Date of next review:</b>	June 2021