



**SACRED HEART CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**  
**PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS**

## Procedure for Managing Complaints

The school is founded upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ, His teachings and values as seen in the light of the tradition of the Society of the Sacred Heart. The school's emblem is an open heart with Christ's love flowing out to the world. Everyone within the School's communities aims to let their actions and words be a vehicle for His Love, striving always to support and affirm one another in our community where there are no divisions of ability, colour, culture or race. Words and actions are measured for their potential to nurture and support each other.

Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 requires schools to have a formal Complaints Procedure. This policy meets the requirement and is in keeping with Sacred Heart High School's ethos of dedication to the wellbeing and progress of every child in partnership with her parents.

### Principles

Anyone who has concerns of any kind, should first discuss the matter with the School and, in the spirit of the DfE guidance, every effort will be made to resolve the matter informally first. This procedure will be invoked when informal means have been unsuccessful and the person raising the concern wishes to make a formal complaint.

### The Stages of Complaints

#### Stage 1: Complaint heard by a member of staff

The school will ask the complainant to state the nature of the complaint in writing, enclosing a Complaint Form. A member of staff who is not the subject of the complaint or directly involved will be assigned, impartially and objectively and keeping accurate notes, to:

1. Meet with the complainant or contact them to establish:
  - What has happened so far and who has been involved
  - The nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
  - What the complainant feels would put things right
2. Interview those involved in the matter and those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
  - All efforts will be made to arrive at a fair appraisal
  - Areas of agreement and of misunderstanding will be noted
3. Identify steps to resolve the issues, communicating and acting upon them in a positive, reassuring manner. These may include:
  - An explanation which warrants no further action
  - An apology
  - An acknowledgement that the matter could have been handled differently
  - A description of steps to be taken to ensure that it will not happen again
  - An undertaking to review school policies in light of this complaint

#### Stage 2: Complaint heard by Head teacher or appropriate person

If the complainant is not satisfied, the matter will be referred to the Head Teacher, who will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint
- Evaluate the substance of the matter, obtaining additional information if necessary
- Determine whether Stage 1 was handled appropriately
- Decide upon further action if necessary
- Inform the complainant and those involved

#### Stage 3: Complaint heard by Appeal Panel of Governing Body

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, he/she must write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. The Chair or a representative will convene a Complaints Panel.

Complaints must **not** be raised with the whole Governing Body at any stage since this would compromise the impartiality of a Panel for a possible disciplinary hearing should a complaint prove to be serious.

- The panel will comprise three Governors
- A Chair will be agreed at the meeting
- No governor with any prior involvement or relationship with those involved may sit on the panel
- The Hearing will be in private and the tone will be non-adversarial
- The aim is to consider the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the School and the complainant
- If not possible, the Panel will establish the facts and assure the complainant that the complaint has been taken seriously
- The complainant will be invited
- Others involved may be invited if the Panel considers this helpful
- The meeting will be clerked

### **Roles for Stage 3**

- **The Clerk will:**
  - Set the time, date and venue, giving between five and ten days notice
  - Collate papers and send them to all parties in advance
  - Record the proceedings
  - Notify all parties of the Panel's decision
- **The Chair of Governors will:**
  - Notify the Clerk to arrange the Panel
  - Check that correct procedure is followed
- **The Chair of the Panel will:**
  - Explain the remit of the panel to all parties
  - Check that no Panel member has had any involvement or has any vested interest
  - Maintain a tone of courtesy and respect in keeping with Sacred Heart Catholic High School
  - Give each party the opportunity to put the case and ask questions
  - Ensure that issues are addressed
  - Identify key findings based upon fact
  - See that the Clerk notifies all parties of the Panel's decision in writing within five days

### **Checklist for the Panel Hearing**

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible
- Witnesses are only required to attend for that part of the hearing in which they give their evidence
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain the complaint, and call his/her witnesses where required
- The Head Teacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after they have spoken
- The Head Teacher is then invited to explain the School's actions and call any School witnesses
- The complainant may question both the Head Teacher and the witnesses after each has spoken
- The panel may ask questions at any point
- The complainant is then invited to sum up his/her complaint
- The Head Teacher is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues

The Chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale

### **Publicising the Complaints Procedure**

The procedure will be available on Sacred Heart Catholic High School's website, and reference made to it in the School Prospectus. Copies will be sent to persons who indicate that they wish to make a complaint.

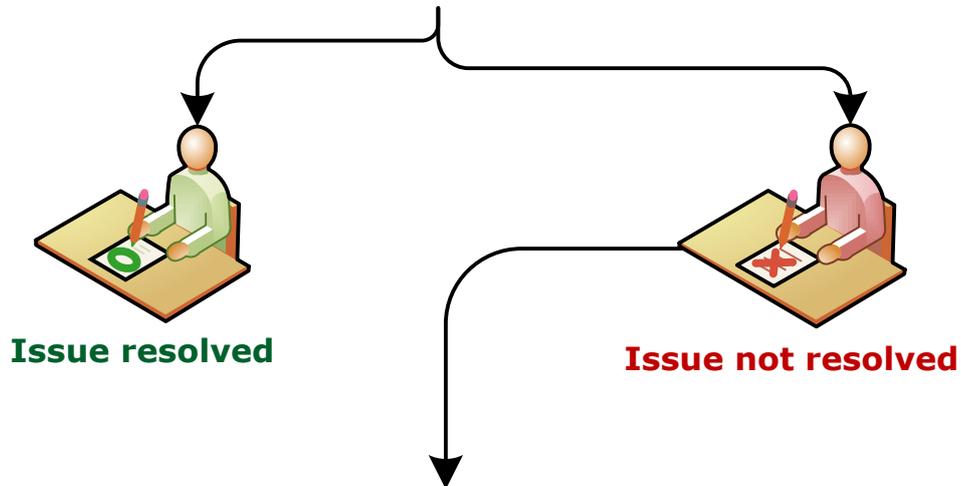
### **Conclusion**

Sacred Heart Catholic High School hopes this procedure will not be needed. For the very rare occasion when it is, it will be followed objectively. If a complainant tries to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governors will inform her/him that the procedure has been followed and is now closed.

## Summary of Managing Complaints

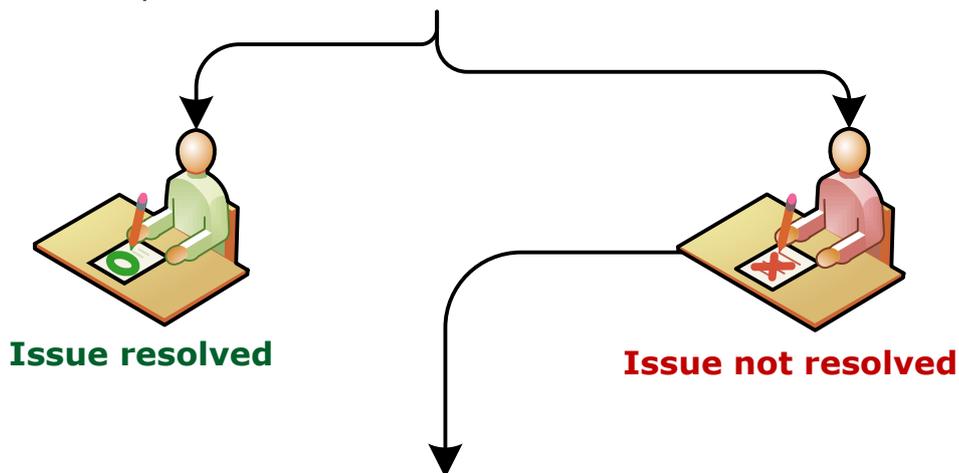
### Complaint heard by member of staff

- Complaints co-ordinator informed of outcome



### Complaint heard by Headteacher

- Acknowledge receipt of complaint
- Evaluate complaint
- Write to complainant with outcome of investigation
- Complaints co-ordinator informed of outcome



### Governor Complaints Panel meeting arranged

- Issue letter inviting complainant to meeting
- Hear complaint
- Issue letter confirming panel decision
- Complaints co-ordinator informed of outcome

### Notification of Complaint

Please complete and return to the Assistant head teacher, Pastoral Care who will acknowledge receipt and explain how this matter will be dealt with.

<b>Your name:</b>		<b>Student's name:</b>	
<b>Your relationship to the student:</b>			
<b>Address:</b>			
<b>Day time telephone number:</b>			
<b>Evening telephone number:</b>			
<b>Please give details of your complaint:</b> Continue over leaf or write on a separate sheet if preferred			
<b>What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?</b>			
<b>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</b>			
<b>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details:</b>			
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

<b>For School use only</b>
<b>Date acknowledgement sent:</b>
<b>By whom:</b>
<b>Complaint referred to:</b>
<b>Date:</b>