

Complaints Policy and Procedure - IB and Pre-IB courses

At St Clare's we are proud of our friendly and open atmosphere and our tolerance and respect of each other's differing views. If you have any questions or complaints, we would like to hear about them as soon as possible so they can be resolved to the satisfaction of individuals and the community. We prefer if complaints can be dealt with in an informal and friendly manner by the individuals involved. If this is not possible then the procedure detailed below should be used.

This procedure may be used by students and parents who have a complaint they wish to resolve.

The principles:

1. Where possible we will handle complaints in confidence.
2. We will not take action against anyone who makes a reasonable complaint.
3. All relevant facts will be established and examined fairly before any action is taken.
4. We understand that in some situations people do not *intend* to offend others; instead they are misunderstood.
5. Parents and students may take complaints, problems or concerns to any member of staff.
6. The following people have a particular responsibility to listen to and to try and resolve complaints:

- Personal Tutors
- Wardens
- Assistant Principals
- Vice Principals
- Principal

The practice:

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

We prefer if complaints can be dealt with in an informal and friendly manner by the individuals involved. If a student or parent has a complaint about a member of staff, they should act immediately and either

- speak directly to the person responsible, if appropriate **OR**
- write to the person responsible, outlining the nature of the complaint **OR**
- ask a friend to speak to the person responsible on your behalf

In most cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means.

If your complaint is not resolved, then you should

- contact the Personal Tutor and ask for advice on what to do or ask them to speak to the person responsible on your behalf **OR**
- if the complaint is about the Personal Tutor then contact the Assistant Principal, Pastoral

The member of staff to whom the complaint is referred will investigate it and respond within 5 working days. Should the matter not be resolved within 5 working days or in the event that a satisfactory resolution is not reached, then you are advised to proceed with the complaint to the next stage of this procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

If your complaint is not resolved it may be necessary to make a formal complaint in writing. You should address your complaint to a Vice Principal (or to the Principal if you are complaining about the Vice Principal).

The complaint will be investigated, dealt with and a response made including a written report, within 28 working days.

If you are still not satisfied with the decision, you should proceed to the final stage of this Procedure.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

If you are not satisfied with the response to the written complaint, please contact the Principal who will organise the following:

1. a hearing before a panel appointed on behalf of St Clare's Governors, consisting of three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
2. one person on this panel will be independent of the management and running of St Clare's;
3. you may be accompanied to a panel hearing if you wish e.g., a student may ask their parent to accompany them;
4. a written record will be kept of the process. The panel will make findings and recommendations. The complainant, Chair of Governors and Principal, and where relevant the person complained about, are given a copy of any findings and recommendations. The records will provide details of the action taken by St Clare's as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).

Stage 3 will be completed (i.e. points 1-4 above) within 15 working days of your contact with the Principal. It represents the final stage in the complaints procedure.

What complaints are covered by this procedure?

All complaints are covered by this basic procedure e.g.

- related to a student's academic performance or to their life outside of the classroom
- involving a student's interaction with other students or with adult members of staff
- related to College procedures and facilities

Further advice is contained in the College Regulations for IB and Pre-IB students, Anti-bullying Policy, Health Policy.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is responsible for inspections of independent schools including boarding inspections under the National Minimum Boarding Standards. They may be contacted through www.isi.net/contact/ or telephone 020 7600 0100. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Child Protection can be contacted at (01865) 810603.

All written complaints are recorded and filed by the Vice Principal together with written responses or records of verbal responses. The records will state whether the complaint was resolved at stage 2 or whether it proceeded to a panel hearing (stage 3). Action taken by St Clare's as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether it was upheld) will also be recorded.

Please note that all correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Number of written complaints in academic year 2016-17: 13

Number of panel hearings: 0

This policy and procedure is reviewed annually.

Most recent review/amendment
VPP September 17

Seen by Governors June 2016