

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

(All references to a male member of staff here shall be deemed to refer to a female member of staff occupying the same post.)

JIS undertakes to deal with complaints as sympathetically and expeditiously as possible; and to resolve them either to the complainant's satisfaction or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.

There is a separate Complaints Procedure for Pupils. It alerts pupils to *this* Complaints Procedure for Parents and to the fact that parents may wish to invoke it if they are dissatisfied with the school's handling of a complaint by a pupil.

Heads of School will keep a separate file of the parental complaints which come to them. This file will include a record of their responses, actions and other aspects of the outcome of complaints. Heads of Faculty will pass on to the Principal their records of complaints. The Principal and Deputy Principal will maintain a complaints file similar to that kept by a Head of School. The Principal, or someone delegated by him to do so, will review these records of complaints regularly.

Pupils whose parents make complaints in good faith will not be penalised in any way.

The UK Independent Schools Inspectorate requires JIS to follow a clear procedure when a complaint is made. Because the investigation and response to a complaint can be so time consuming, we ask parents who make a complaint to be clear, at the start of any letter or conversation, that they are making a **complaint** rather than an **observation** about some aspect of administration or welfare. JIS has always dealt swiftly with matters of concern raised by parents and it will continue to do so. **This document outlines a formal procedure in the event of an official complaint. We hope that it will be invoked only on rare occasions.**

Confidentiality

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the UK Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- 1.1 **It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved *quickly and informally*.**
- 1.2 **If parents have a complaint or a concern they should normally contact their son's Head of School or appropriate member of staff in the first instance. In the majority of cases, we hope that the matter will be resolved straightaway to parents' satisfaction. If the Head of School cannot resolve**

the matter alone, it may be necessary for him to consult the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

- 1.3 **Complaints made directly to a Head of Faculty, Academic Directors, the Deputy Principal or the Principal will usually be referred to the Head of School unless the Head of School, Academic Directors, Deputy Principal or Principal deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally.**
- 1.4 **The Head of School 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 five working days, or in the event that the member of staff 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

The Principal may delegate responsibility at this stage to another senior member of staff (normally the Deputy Principal). All references to 'Principal' under Stage 2 shall therefore automatically be taken to include the Deputy Principal where appropriate.

- 2.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Principal. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- 2.2 In most cases, the Principal (or his nominee) will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. Every attempt will be made to reach a resolution at this stage.
- 2.3 It may be necessary for the Principal (or his nominee) to carry out further investigations.
- 2.4 The Principal (or his nominee) will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 2.5 Once the Principal (or his nominee) is 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 Principal (or his nominee) will also give reasons for his decision.
- 2.6 If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Appeal Hearing

- 3.1 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should write to the Secretary to the Board of Directors (who has delegated responsibility, as Clerk to the Appeal Panel of the Board of Directors, for calling hearings of that Panel) setting out the grounds for their appeal.
- 3.2 This procedure also applies in cases where parents wish to appeal against the dismissal of their son or daughter by the School.
- 3.3 The Principal will report all such dismissals immediately to the Chairman of the Board of Directors.
- 3.4 An appeal must be requested within ten (10) working days of the decision given under Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure or notification of the dismissal of the pupil.
- 3.5 The matter will be referred to the Appeal Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of *at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint*, one of whom may be independent of the management and running of the school. At least two Panel members will be Board members (but not the Chairman – see paragraph 3.3). Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Clerk. The Clerk, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint/request for appeal, and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fifteen (15) working days of the receipt of the complaint/request for appeal.
- 3.6 Any documents, which are to be considered by the Appeal Panel, will be disclosed to both parties not later than five (5) working days before the hearing.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 At the hearing the Appeal Panel may consider evidence from any person who was involved in the decision at Stage 2 of the procedure, or the decision to dismiss the pupil, and any relevant documents pertaining to this decision.
- 3.9 The Panel will try to resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- 3.10 After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will withdraw to consider its decision and any recommendations it may wish to make. The Clerk to the Appeal Committee will remain in attendance to record the Committee's decision.
- 3.11 Notification of the Result of the Appeal. The Clerk to the Appeal Panel will write to the parents informing them of the Panel's decision and the reasons for it within five (5) working days of the Hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final.

- 3.12 The Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be sent in writing to the Principal, and, where relevant, the person against whom a complaint has been made. The matter will be reported to the Chairman and Directors at their next available meeting.

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