

## NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

### GENERAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

#### CODE OF PRACTICE

As in any organisation of community, misunderstandings can from time to time arise which may lead to a parent wishing to express some concern. A concern is **not a complaint** and should not be treated as such by the parent or school. Only a very small number of concerns raised by parents need to be investigated using the formal procedure. When concerns are addressed and resolved there should be no need for a formal complaint. An initial request for action or an enquiry is not a complaint. However, failure to respond could give rise to a complaint.

A number of procedures already exist. There are special arrangements for dealing with the following matters which must not be dealt with under the complaints procedure.

The existing special arrangements are for dealing with:

- (A) Admissions Procedures
- (B) Child Protection Procedures
- (C) Curriculum Complaints Procedures
- (D) Disciplinary Procedures
- (E) Exclusion Procedures
- (F) Special Educational Needs Procedures

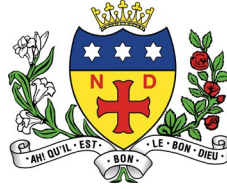
#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. **The main purposes of a general complaints procedure are:**

- 1.1.1. To solve problems
- 1.1.2. To give parents a mean to raise issues of concern and have them addressed

1.2. **These guidelines for dealing with complaints consists of two elements:**

- 1.2.1. A statement of principle and
- 1.2.2. A Code of Practice relating to the management of and response to complaints in Notre Dame High School



## **2. PRINCIPLES**

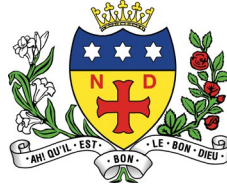
It is important that staff and parents have a clear understanding of the context within which the procedure operates and of how the process of investigating a complaint is conducted. The following statement of principles provides that understanding:

- 2.1. Complaints will be treated respectfully during and after the course of any complaints investigation.
- 2.2. Action through a complaints procedure may lead to action being initiated under other (e.g. statutory) procedures will be suspended until action under the procedure (including appeals) has been concluded. The complainant will be advised if this is the case. They will also be told the likely delay in the final resolution of their complaint which will result.
- 2.3. In most cases, it will be necessary for the details of the complaint to be shared with a range of people who might contribute to its resolution. However, within this constraint, the confidentiality will be respected.
- 2.4. All complaints will be immediately acknowledged. Complainants will be advised of what is happening, time-scales, and the name of the person from whom they will next hear about the progress of the investigation.
- 2.5. Employees will be informed of any complaints against them, will be shown the complaint (if in writing) and will be shown all subsequent correspondence. Employees shall be advised to seek advice on their rights in this situation.
- 2.6. No person will investigate a complaint against her/himself.

## **3. CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

### **Accepting a Complaint**

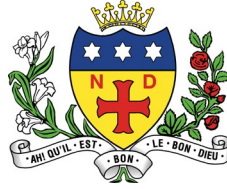
- 3.1. General complaints will be dealt with by Pastoral Staff. The Deputy Head (Discipline and Welfare) will manage the complaints procedure with the support of Heads of Year and the Pastoral Administrator. In the Sixth Form, complaints will be managed by the Head of Sixth Form. The objective of the complaints procedure should be the resolution of problems. The objective may be achieved without using the formal procedure.
- 3.2. Complaints will be accepted in writing or verbally.
- 3.3. The school will ensure that all complaints are recorded by Pastoral Staff. The information to be recorded (where possible) for complaints requiring a formal investigation is:
  - 3.3.1. Name of complainant
  - 3.3.2. Address of complainant



- 3.3.3. Telephone number
- 3.3.4. Nature of Complaint
- 3.3.5. Preferred solution (what the complainant would like to happen)
- 3.3.6. Name of the person recording the complaint
- 3.3.7. Date complaint recorded
- 3.4. All members of staff should be aware of the complaints procedure including:
  - 3.4.1. Understanding procedures for dealing with complaints
  - 3.4.2. The importance of treating complaints respectfully
  - 3.4.3. The importance of good listening skills
  - 3.4.4. The importance of finding out and recording the complainant's preferred solution
  - 3.4.5. The importance of resolving problems before they become formal complaints
  - 3.4.6. Obtaining complainant's acknowledgement that their problem has been dealt with satisfactorily.
- 3.5. When a complaint has been recorded it will be acknowledged in writing. The acknowledgement will include an explanation of what will happen next.
- 3.6. Where complaints cannot be resolved within the procedure, complainants will be informed of alternative procedures they can use.

#### **4. PROCESSING A COMPLAINT**

- 4.1. All general complaints should be referred to the Pastoral Team. They will be acknowledged by the Pastoral Administrator.
- 4.2. It is recommended that a complaint can be dealt with at a number of levels. Where appropriate these stages are:
  - 4.2.1. Informal discussion with member of staff concerned, Head of Year, Deputy Head or Head
  - 4.2.2. Complaint to Headteacher
  - 4.2.3. Complaint to Governing Body
  - 4.2.4. Formal complaint to the Diocese
- 4.3. The Deputy Head (Discipline and Welfare) will nominate someone to investigate complaints which cannot be resolved speedily and easily.
  - 4.3.1. Anyone investigating complaints should be aware of good investigative practice



## 5. OUTCOMES

- 5.1. In all cases where a formal complaint has been investigated, the complainant will be given a written report covering:
  - 5.1.1. The report investigated
  - 5.1.2. The scope of the investigation
  - 5.1.3. The conclusion of the investigation
  - 5.1.4. Any action which has resulted (e.g. changes in procedures or practice, an intention to invoke other proceedings).
- 5.2. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to discuss the written report and its recommendations. If the complainant is acting on behalf of another person, that person should also receive a copy of the report.
- 5.3. Redress should be **appropriate to the complaint**. Where upheld redress may include:
  - 5.3.1. An appropriate expression of regret
  - 5.3.2. Providing the solution desired by the complainant
  - 5.3.3. Changing procedures to prevent future problems
  - 5.3.4. Financial compensation
- 5.4. The Deputy Head (Discipline and Welfare) will:
  - 5.4.1. Decide who can take remedial action and to what extent action can be taken under delegated powers
  - 5.4.2. Make arrangements to ensure that the remedy is carried out.
  - 5.4.3. Ensure that any remedy is within the school's legal powers
  - 5.4.4. Ensure that the approach to remedies is reasonable and consistent
- 5.5. Where a complaint is not upheld, the complainant will be given a report (5.1) and informed of any further action which may be appropriate in their situation

## 6. RECORDS AND MONITORING

- 6.1. Formal general complaints will be recorded in a file for that purpose.