



St. Columba's College

Complaints Policy & Procedure

Reviewed by the Board of Management December 2024. Next review date, December 2025

Person Responsible for updating policy: Warden, Chairperson of the Board of Management

Introduction


The College has adopted the Complaints Procedure contained within the 'Procedures for Voluntary Secondary Schools with Boards of Management,' which was published in September 2000. This covers how to handle complaints made by parents or guardians against a teacher.

Complaints concerning the operation of the school

In the event of a complaint concerning the operations of the school (not against a teacher) the following procedure will apply:

Stage 1

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Warden. The Warden will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

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- In most cases, the Warden will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within 5 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 Warden to carry out further investigations.
 - The Warden will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Once the Warden 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 Warden will also give reasons for his decision. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 - Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 2 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to a Convenor who has been appointed by the Board of Management to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints 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 shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Management. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 7 days prior to the Hearing.
- The 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.
- If possible, the Panel will 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. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within a reasonable time of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, where relevant and appropriate, the person complained of.
- Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential in so far as is feasible.