Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

1.1. The definition of a complaint: a complaint may be made about any matter that a parent is unhappy about, and about which they wish the school to take action.

1.2. This policy describes the three stage complaints procedure for parents to follow:

- Stage 1: the informal raising of a complaint with a member of staff
- Stage 2: a formal complaint submitted in writing to the Headmaster
- Stage 3: a reference to the Complaints Panel appointed by ISP Regional Managing Director – Europe.

The school aims to resolve any complaints in a timely manner.

2. Policy aim and statement

2.1. Aim: the aim of this policy is to ensure that complaints are managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level, and that they are resolved as soon as possible.

2.2. Policy statement: complaints should be raised at the appropriate time and not retrospectively if there is any cause for dissatisfaction.

3. The management of complaints

3.1. Complaints Coordinator: Deputy Head is responsible for the administration of the Complaints Procedure. The Deputy Head:

- ensures that all employees are aware of and familiar with the complaints procedure;
- monitors the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to complaints;
- reports regularly to the Headmaster on these and other matters that may arise.

4. Stage 1: Informal complaints

4.1. Informal complaint: in the overwhelming majority of cases complaints can be resolved informally. Examples might include: a complaint about an aspect of teaching or pastoral care; a timetable clash; some issue with an aspect of the school's systems or equipment; a billing error.

4.2. Notification: please raise the initial complaint as follows:

Academic and pastoral complaints should be raised with the respective Head of Form. The Head of Form will refer the matter to the Assistant Head Pastoral where it relates to student

behaviour or pastoral matters, or to the Deputy Head where it relates to teaching, learning or professional conduct. The Headmaster is kept informed of all complaints.

Where a matter raises a safeguarding concern, it must be referred immediately through the school's safeguarding procedures rather than being managed solely under the Complaints Procedure.

Queries relating to accounts should be put in writing to the School Office.

4.3. Unresolved informal complaints: a complaint which has not been resolved by informal means within 15 working days should be set out in writing to the Headmaster, and will be dealt with in accordance with Stage 2 below.

5. Stage 2: formal complaints

5.1. Notification: an unresolved complaint under Stage 1; or a complaint which needs investigation at a more senior level; or a complaint about the school's policies, procedures, management or administration, should be set out in writing in detailed description and sent with all relevant documents to the Headmaster.

5.2. Investigation: the Headmaster may then ask one or more senior member(s) of staff to act as "investigator(s)". The investigator(s) may request additional information from a parent and will probably wish to speak to parents personally, and to others who have knowledge of the circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the Headmaster who will then notify parents in writing of his decision and the reasons for it. Written records of the decision will be kept.

5.3. The Headmaster aims to inform any complainant of the outcome of an investigation and the resolution to the complaint within 28 working days of receipt of the complaint.

6. Stage 3: Reference to the Complaints Panel

6.1. If a parent is dissatisfied with the decision made by the Headmaster at the outcome of Stage 2, the matter can be referred to the Complaints Panel appointed by ISP Regional Managing Director – Europe.

6.2. Please note that when the Panel convenes, they will review the complaints at stages 1 and 2, and they cannot consider any new complaint that has not been previously raised through the appropriate channels.

6.3. If, after establishing the facts, and after reviewing the handling of the complaint at both stages 1 and 2, the Panel considers that the complaint is justified, they will uphold and remedy the complaint. If not, they will dismiss the complaint. They will make these decisions based on the balance of probabilities.

6.4. It is not within the powers of the Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, or on other pupils, or other parents. Nevertheless, the Panel may make recommendations to the Headmaster in light of its decisions.

6.5. Notice of hearing: every effort will be made to enable the Panel hearing to take place as soon as possible within 15 working days of the receipt of the request for the complaint to proceed to Stage 3.

6.6. Evidence: the Chair of the Panel will conduct the hearing in such a way as to ensure that all those present have the opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns. The hearing is not a legal proceeding and it is not necessary for either party to seek legal advice.

6.7. Conduct: all those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners.

6.8. Decision: The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations may be notified to the parents at the hearing and subsequently confirmed in writing. Reasons for the decision will be given.

6.9. Private proceeding: a hearing before the Complaints Panel is a private proceeding.

6.10. Confidentiality: a written record will be kept of all complaints, detailing whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or proceed to a panel hearing. Written records of the Panel hearing remain confidential to the parties involved.