

*St Patrick's Academy*  
**SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**Rationale:**

While the aim of the school will always be to ensure that concerns can be resolved speedily, to the mutual satisfaction of all parties concerned, it is recognised that there may be occasions on which this cannot be done.

This procedure sets out the arrangements for the school in respect of all complaints that are made, other than: (i) complaints about the curriculum of religious worship; (ii) complaints about admissions or expulsion appeal procedures; (iii) staff grievance procedures, for each of which separate complaints procedures exist.

**Purpose:**

- To ensure that all complaints will be dealt with as efficiently and effectively as possible;
- To establish an appropriate time frame within which complaints will be addressed;
- To strive for consistency and fairness of approach in dealing with complaints;
- To ensure that Governors, staff, parents, pupils and the general public are fully informed of how the school will seek to resolve complaints.

**Guidelines:**

- As far as it is possible to do so, the school will try to achieve resolution by informal means, in a manner which is non-adversarial. In some instances, the matter may be resolved by means of one phone call. In other situations, a more prolonged process may be required;
- All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully, and the complainant informed of the outcome;
- All complaints should be made through the appropriate channels, with meetings arranged by appointment, to suit all parties;
- Appropriate records will be kept at all stages, from the first contact with the school to the point of resolution;
- In the case of a complainant contacting the school by phone, secretarial staff will keep the conversation as brief as possible, by (i) taking the complainant's contact details and (ii) reassuring the complainant that the Principal or one of the Vice-Principals will respond at the earliest opportunity;
- In the case of a complainant contacting the school in writing, the matter should be referred immediately to the Principal or one of the Vice-Principals;
- Initial response to a complaint will normally be made within 48 hours and, at the latest, within five working days;
- A complaint made by a parent should always be addressed in a confidential manner, in an appropriate setting. Thus, if a parent raises a serious concern at a Parent/Teacher meeting, s/he should be asked to make a separate appointment, at which the Principal and/or a Vice-Principal will be present;
- In the case of a complaint being made by a pupil, the concern will be addressed at a meeting in the presence of his/her parent;
- In the case of a complaint being made against a member of staff, the matter should always be referred directly to the Principal. If the Principal decides that the relevant member of staff should meet the complainant to try to resolve concerns, that meeting will only take place in the presence of the Principal and/or a Vice-Principal;
- In the case of someone making a complaint against the Principal, the matter should be put in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, at the school address;
- The Principal or Vice-Principals may delegate to a member of staff, such as a Head of Year or Form Teacher, the investigation of the background to a complaint;
- Investigation of a complaint should seek to establish all facts of the incident. It should also identify the nature of the complaint and the issues that remain unresolved, clarifying, if appropriate, what the complainant feels would put things right;
- If concerns cannot be resolved through the above means, a complainant may wish to make a formal complaint, in writing, to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, at school address.