

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Coming into force: May 2014

To be reviewed: July 2015

The policy is under continuous review; it shall be formally reviewed annually at the end of the school year, in July. The procedures described therein will be evaluated in the light of experience and where necessary modified immediately.

Distribution:

This policy shall be available online, on the School's website, at all times; it shall be made available in print upon request to any parent, pupil, or staff requesting it. It shall be offered to parents as part of the Admissions pack. It shall be present in the Staff Handbook for both academic and administrative staff.

The policy outlined below is meant for the use of the School's parents and pupils, and may not be used by a third party or by a member of staff in relation to Verita School.

1. Stages of resolution

It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.

In a first instance, any issue or complaint of an academic, pedagogical, pastoral care nature may be raised directly with the class / form teacher. If he / she cannot solve the matter, the complaint will be brought forth to the attention of the Headteacher. If the problem fails to be resolved at this level as well, the problem should be brought to the attention of the School Board.

Cases of extreme gravity will be presented to the School Board and Board of Governors.

2. Tracks of complaint and responsibilities

It is important to distinguish and use an adequate communication, in order, to solve any issues in a timely and efficient manner.

Matters pertaining to teaching, class activity, pastoral care, should be brought forth to the attention of the teaching staff.

Matters pertaining to administrative matters may be brought to the attention of the administrative assistant, secretaries, or Headteacher. Administrative staff has the obligation to present any unsolved issues and complaints in administrative board meetings.

3. Means of filing a complaint

Complaints may be presented informally, in a first instance, to teachers and/or administrative staff, if they do not concern the health and safety of the child. Simple expressions of concern will not be recorded and teachers or administrative staff will try to solve the situation, to the best of their abilities and without a reasonable delay.

Situations of higher concern should be brought forth in writing. Parents and pupils wishing to file a formal written complaint should address it to the School Headteacher and ask that they be given a registration number on a copy of the document.

4. Time required

While we acknowledge that complaints need to be taken seriously and acted upon in a timely manner, it is also important that haste does not compromise the resolution of the situation.

The receipt of the communication will be acknowledged within one working day, and shall contain an estimate when parents should be expecting a solution to their complaint.

In situations where facts, causes and effects are not clear, the school will take up to three working days before responding to the parents' or pupil's complaint.

5. Registry of Complaints

All formally lodged complaints shall be kept in the School's records in original and copy. A registry of complaints shall be maintained by administrative staff, where the issues, date, solution and people involved will be recorded.

6. Resolution of complaints

In order to clarify a solution and / or find adequate means of solving the situation, a formal discussion may be required between the plaintiffs and the Headteacher / School Board.

It will always be sought to find a positive solution for all sides that does not harm the interests of any of those involved.

Complaints against other pupils will be dealt with in the Discipline Committee.

The solutions found, reasons, and decisions made regarding complaints shall be communicated in writing, by email or letter, to all concerned parties within one week of the decision having been reached. The outcome letter shall be written by the Headteacher.

7. Panel hearings

It is hoped that parents will feel satisfied with the solutions found by the Headteacher, or at least understand the situation more fully, that their concerns have been heard and that the School is working towards addressing the issues identified.

However, should they wish to pursue further, within 7 working days from receiving the outcome letter they can address in writing the School Board and request a panel hearing.

The panel will convene within 2 weeks from the moment the request was made, except in extraordinary circumstances. The panel shall be supplied with the relevant information required for judging the situation.

Parents / guardians may be accompanied to the hearing by a translator.

While not required, they may also bring a legal counsellor.

The presence of any other person but the parents shall be made known in advance to the panel by the parents.

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 and after due consideration will reach a decision and make recommendations within five working days of the Hearing. The Panel's findings and recommendations will be given in writing to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person complained about. Copies will also be given to the Headteacher.

8. Confidentiality

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be treated in a confidential manner and restricted to the Headteacher and those directly involved, except where any other legal obligation prevails.

9. Abuse of the Complaints Procedure

The complaints procedure is not meant to arrest the functioning of the School. For very serious and urgent concerns that fall under the scope of the Children Health and Safety Policy or the Child Protection Policy, complaints shall be treated as threats to the safety of the child and immediate measure shall be taken to address the situation.

For all other concerns and issues, the Complaints procedure can be used.

Parents and / or pupils may not use the Complaints procedure to avoid examinations, sanctioning by the School of policy, code of conduct and code of ethics infringement, fees, penalties or damage compensations, or to change examinations and evaluation results.

Parents and / or children found to be abusing the Complaints Procedure shall be fined. The first time, they shall receive a warning and the fine will be suspended; subsequent occurrences they will be notified about the abuse and shall be invoiced with the amount of 100 Euro.