



ST ALOYSIUS' COLLEGE

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. The College communicates with parents in many different ways in the course of its work. This policy outlines how the college deals with concerns and complaints. Concerns and complaints can come from parents, pupils, staff and members of the public. This policy sets out how the College will deal with both concerns and complaints. It acknowledges that in most cases parents will be the complainants and this policy is written from their point of view. In the event of a concern or complaint being raised by a pupil or the public the same procedures will be followed.
2. Every so often situations arise where something has, or seems to have, gone wrong. The College welcomes parents' communication when things have gone awry and is committed to sorting them out to everyone's satisfaction. We are not too proud to make an apology when one is due. Successful education relies on positive and co-operative relations between home and school and the manner in which problems are resolved makes all the difference.

Before a concern becomes a complaint

3. Do not hesitate to contact the College if you are uneasy or dissatisfied about something. It is important not to let little concerns build up into serious mistrust or irritation. We are as keen to see things run smoothly as you are - after all, we all want the best for the children.
4. When you contact the College begin as informally as possible - say what concerns you and try to find out the facts. You will be in a much better position to know if you have grounds for a complaint when you are in possession of all the facts. We may be able to give an explanation or fill in details which answer your concerns. Do not rely solely on your child's account or on information from other parents.
5. A 'phone call is better than a letter, and a temperate letter is better than an ultimatum or threat of action. We welcome 'phone calls from parents who wish to talk about a problem before it becomes a complaint.

The College's expectation of parents

6. The College seeks to build a partnership with parents in the education of their children. This Complaints Policy sets out how the College will deal with your concerns. We would ask that, for your part, you . . .
 1. don't believe everything you hear, even from your own children - things are often not entirely the way they are reported (by children or by other parents); children very much see things from their own point of view and important elements, circumstances and nuances of the story are often omitted in the version told to parents; it is always as well to find out the full story
 2. find out what your child is like in school - you may be surprised; children in school can be very different people from the way they are at home - sometimes for better and sometimes for worse
 3. trust the College to resolve matters according to the aims and methods stated in this policy
 4. seek information from the College where you need it
 5. consider what the College has to say
 6. disclose full and frank information which would help the College to resolve situations with integrity and justice
 7. take seriously and report without delay any concerns or suspicions of bullying
 8. do not involve your child inappropriately when you raise your concern or complaint - it is important that the child sees parents and the College working together to resolve differences or difficulties; the child should not be placed in a position where s/he appears impertinent, insolent, disobedient or acts inappropriately; remember that directly countermanding a teacher's instruction or requirement is likely to make matters worse and bring confrontation rather than resolution.

What you can expect of the College

7. If you write, e-mail or leave a message, you can usually expect the College to get back to you within 48-hours (during the school week in term time) - this may not be a full response but will let you know that your complaint has been received and is being dealt with.
8. You can expect staff to be friendly, courteous and supportive.
9. You can expect staff to be professional. This may sometimes mean we do not agree with you and must put forward a view or make a decision that you may not like - but we will always explain our reasons.
10. Your child will be involved only if the concern directly and personally concerns them. Parents are sometimes worried that if they raise a concern there will be adverse consequences for their child. The College is firmly committed to ensuring that this is never the case.
11. You can expect a face-to-face meeting at a reasonable time and usually within five school days if you request it.

12. You can expect members of staff to treat the concern with appropriate confidentiality. Notes of any concern raised will be kept on file.

Contacting the College

13. Talk to the right person. It may be tempting to "go straight to the top" but putting the concern to the Head Master often escalates something that could have been better resolved at a lower level. You can expect members of staff to treat the concern with appropriate confidentiality. Notes of any concern raised will be kept on file.
14. Your first line of approach is your child's Head of Year (in the Senior School) or Head of Section (in the Junior School).
15. These senior members of staff are the people who have immediate and overall responsibility for your child's pastoral care, discipline and involvement in school life. In most cases it is they who will be best informed about your child and will be best placed to resolve concerns.
16. Parents are asked not to contact individual class or subject teachers directly.

A concern becomes a complaint

17. If you believe that your concern has not been resolved, the matter may become a complaint. A complaint is a more formal matter and it is important that complainants are clear in their mind that they are raising the concern into a complaint. Complaints **should be in writing and addressed to the Head Master. The Head Master's PA** will keep a file of all complaints which will be formally logged by the Head of Senior School (Senior School) and Head of the Junior School (Junior School).
18. The Head Master will ensure that every complaint is investigated and will appoint a senior member of staff who is not involved in the matter to investigate. If appropriate the investigation will be conducted by the Head Master.
19. Complaints will be dealt with timeously and usually within 10 working school days. You may be invited to a meeting to discuss the complaint as part of the investigation. The Head Master will communicate the decision to you in writing or may ask the senior member of staff to do so on his behalf. If you believe that your complaint has not been resolved you may take the matter to the Governors.

Appealing to the Governors

20. A written complaint should be made by you to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will investigate the complaint (or appoint another Governor to do so on his behalf). The Chair of Governors, or the Governor appointed to investigate the Complaint, will intimate the Decision to you in writing. If you believe that your complaint has not been resolved you may take the matter to an Appeal Panel.
21. If you consider your Complaint has not been resolved, a written Appeal, with the accompanying Reasons, must be lodged by you, within 14 calendar days of the date of intimation of the Decision, requesting the matter be further considered by an independent Appeal Panel. Your written Appeal, with Reasons, should be addressed to the Chair of the Governors.

22. The Appeal Panel will consist of three Governors, one of whom will chair the Panel. Any Governor involved previously in the investigation shall not form part of the Appeal Panel. The Chair of Governors, or another selected Governor, shall appoint the Appeal Panel.
23. You will be invited to a meeting with the Appeal Panel. Both you and the College may submit any additional papers about the complaint to be read by the Appeal Panel in advance of the meeting.
24. The procedure adopted for the Appeal Panel will be decided upon by the Chairman of the Appeal Panel. The Head Master and a member of staff with direct knowledge of the child or issues before the panel will be invited to attend and speak. You will also be invited to speak.
25. The purpose of the Appeal Panel is to consider the complaint impartially and reach a final decision. The Appeal Panel will communicate their decision to you in writing. The decision of the Appeal Panel shall be final.

Support

26. At any stage of the complaints procedure, you are welcome to bring with you a supportive friend who is not involved in the complaint.
27. Within the complaints procedure it is not appropriate for the College to engage in meetings to which parents bring legal representatives or advisors.
28. The College will not generally enter into correspondence with solicitors or others in place of direct communication with parents.

Admissions

29. There is no right of appeal against non-admission.

Appeal against Sanctions Issued

30. Senior School pupils who feel unfairly treated or wrongly punished may appeal against the punishment. It is important, however, that the appeal procedure is observed both by pupils and by their parents:
 1. In the first instance, it should be the pupil who appeals (not the parents).
 2. Before appealing, the pupil should speak calmly and courteously to the teacher concerned, explaining his or her point of view and asking the teacher to reconsider the matter.
 3. Appeals are to be made within 24-hours of the punishment being given.
 4. If the teacher declines to change his mind, the pupil should then appeal to his or her Head of Year.
 5. If the punishment is upheld by the Head of Year, the pupil will usually have to do it. Parents are asked to intervene only rarely and if they are absolutely sure there has been a serious miscarriage of justice. They should contact the Assistant Head Master (Pastoral). If a pupil refuses to accept punishment, or if parents refuse to allow their child to be punished, the pupil will be suspended. Heads of Year will consult the teacher who gave the punishment before making a decision on the appeal. Appeals are not intended to undermine teachers' authority but to ensure just and proportionate treatment for all.

If a detention is rescinded the Head of Year must inform the Head of Senior School. If a pupil exhibits an inappropriate or insolent attitude towards a teacher subsequent to a successful appeal, s/he is to be reported immediately to the Head of Year. In such circumstances a pupil could expect to have the original punishment re-imposed together with further sanctions.

Suspension & Expulsion

31. The decision to suspend a pupil is taken by the Head of Senior School or the Head of the Junior School. An appeal against suspension is heard by the Head Master.
32. For a suspension in excess of 5 school days, that has been upheld by the Head Master, parents have a right of appeal to the Governors as outlined in paras 20-25 of this policy.
33. The decision to expel a pupil is taken by the Head Master. Parents have a right of appeal to the Governors as outlined in paras 20-25 of this policy.

Anonymous complaints

34. Anonymous complaints are unhelpful and will not usually be acted upon, unless there is a child protection concern.

Complaints about Kindergarten and After Care

35. If you have a complaint about Kindergarten and After Care which has not been resolved by the College's own complaints procedures, you may wish to contact the Care Commission which regulates the provision of pre-school care in Scotland.

Policy Owner: Mr Matthew Bartlett, Head Master

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Policy Reviewed by Morisons November 2015

This Policy will be annually reviewed by: Mr Matthew Bartlett, Head Master