

# St. Lawrence College

## Whole School Complaints Policy



Our school is one community, united in our respect for each other, tolerant of differences and proud of our diversity, honest and positive about our learning and behaviour every day.

Issued: 2016

Most recent review: 2021

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to set out to all staff and parents the procedure by which parental complaints are dealt with at St. Lawrence College. Underscoring all matters related to complaints are the following expectations:

- The school takes every complaint and comment by parents seriously
- The school welcomes such complaints and comments in the knowledge that the school can achieve better standards through being made aware of and studying parental comments and causes for parental dissatisfaction.
- On both the side of the parents and that of the school, all communication concerning complaints should be made courteously, promptly, and in adherence to this policy.
- All complaints and correspondence relating to the complaints will be treated in confidence with only those on both the parental and school sides of the complaint that need to know being cognisant of the complaint and its resolution process.

## STAGE 1: INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

Most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally. In the first instance the concern or complaint should be raised, with the class teacher/subject teacher in the junior school or subject teacher/form teacher in the senior school.

If the relevant teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with their Head of Key Stage/Head of Department/Deputy Head in the Junior School or Head of Department/Key Stage Assistant Head/Head of Year/Deputy Head in the senior school to seek resolution of the complaint.

A resolution, which may involve a meeting, telephone calls, written responses or a combination of these, will follow within three school days.

## STAGE 2: FORMAL RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS BY SENIOR MANAGEMENT

If the parents/carers feel that the matter has not been resolved after Stage 1, they should contact Ms Diplas ([diplas@slc.gr](mailto:diplas@slc.gr)), Deputy Head of the Junior School or, in the senior school, the Deputy Head, Ms Walters ([walters@slc.gr](mailto:walters@slc.gr)), if it is a non-academic matter, or Ms Meritt ([f.meritt@slc.gr](mailto:f.meritt@slc.gr)), if it is an academic matter. The matter will be acknowledged within one school day and a full written response with the details of any action taken to investigate the matter may take up to three school days.

A written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received, along with details of how the complaint was resolved will be prepared by the senior manager of the school who has been most directly involved at this stage of the complaints procedure and will be filed in the Record of Complaints held securely held by the Head of school.

A parent may begin a complaint at this stage by initially contacting one of the senior leaders identified above. If that senior leader of the school decides that the complaint warrants a Stage 1 procedure they will inform the parents of this and pass the matter to the relevant teacher/Head of department/Assistant Head/Head of Year/Head of Key Stage.

Alternatively, the senior leader contacted may choose to proceed to use Stage 2 to deal with the complaint.

### STAGE 3: FORMAL RESOLUTION BY THE HEAD OF JUNIOR SCHOOL/HEAD OF ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE

If the complaint cannot be resolved as above, then the parent should write, in matters relating to the junior school, to the Head of the Junior School, Ms Shona Good ([s.good@slc.gr](mailto:s.good@slc.gr)) and in matters relating to the senior school, to the Headmaster of St. Lawrence College, Mr Phil Holden ([philholden@slc.gr](mailto:philholden@slc.gr)), where in either case their communication will be acknowledged within two school days and normally sooner. This communication will also indicate what further investigation is required and when the parent can expect to receive further communication and a resolution of their complaint.

The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made, and parents will be informed of this in writing within ten school days. The Head will also give his/her decision.

Where the complaint is about Ms Good, the Headmistress of the Junior School, the complainant should write to the Headmaster of St. Lawrence College, Mr Phil Holden, and where the complaint is about Mr Phil Holden, the complainant should contact the managing Director of the school, Mrs Kiki Karakostas ([kiki.karakostas@slc.gr](mailto:kiki.karakostas@slc.gr)) where in either case their communication will be acknowledged within two school days and normally sooner. This communication will also indicate what further investigation is required and when the parent can expect to receive further communication and a resolution of their complaint.

A central record will be kept by the Head of all formal complaints indicating whether they were resolved at this stage (Stage 3), or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (Stage 4).

A parent may begin a complaint at this stage by initially contacting Ms Good, Headmistress of the Junior School, Mr Holden, Headmaster of the St. Lawrence College, or Mrs Karakostas, Managing Director of St. Lawrence College. If that senior leader of the school decides that the complaint warrants a Stage 1 or Stage 2 procedure they will inform the parents of this and pass the matter to the relevant teacher/Head of Department/Assistant Head/Head of Key Stage/Head of Year/Deputy Head. Alternatively, the senior leader contacted may choose to proceed to use Stage 3 to deal with the complaint.

## STAGE 4: REFERRAL TO THE COMPLAINTS PANEL OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE SCHOOL

If parents seek to invoke Stage 4 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should write formally and confidentially to the Mrs Kiki Karakostas ([kiki.karakostas@slc.gr](mailto:kiki.karakostas@slc.gr)) Managing Director of St. Lawrence College, requesting their complaint be considered formally by the Complaints Panel of the Management Committee of St. Lawrence College. The Managing Director of the school will acknowledge the complaint within 3 days of receipt, explaining to the parent that they will convene a Complaints Panel comprising all members of the Management Committee not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint to investigate the complaint.

The Managing Director, on behalf of the Complaints Panel, will then schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within five school days at a time convenient to those members of the Management Committee sitting on the Complaints Panel (i.e. those members of the Management Committee who are not directly the subject of the complaint) and the parent making the complaint.

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 3 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 usually 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 normally reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 10 working days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster of St. Lawrence College, the Headmistress of the Junior School and, where relevant, the person complained about.

### **The decision of the Complaints Panel, following the completion of the above procedure, will be final.**

Records of Stage 4 complaints and how the procedure was followed and what actions were taken, including minutes of the Complaints Panel hearing(s) will be filed in the Complaints file held by the Headmaster and the Managing Director of the school.

Correspondence statements and records of complaints have to be kept confidential, except in cases where local legal requirements permit access.

This policy is written in compliance with the UK government's Department for Education's British Schools Overseas Standards, section 6 'The Provision of Information to Parents' and section 7 'Procedures for Dealing with Complaints'.