

## Our Lady's Catholic College

# Complaints Policy

### LISTENING TO YOUR CONCERNS AND RESPONDING TO YOUR COMPLAINTS

#### We care about what you think

At school we make many decisions every day. We try hard to do our best for all our pupils. Your views help us plan for the future. We like to know when things are going well. We also want parents to tell us about their worries, concerns or complaints as soon as possible. It is much easier for us to sort out a recent problem than something that happened some time ago.

If you are unhappy with the way your child is being treated, or any of our actions or lack of action, please feel able to tell us your concern. We know it can be difficult to question what a school is doing, but if you do not tell us what is worrying you, we cannot explain our actions or put things right. Our support and respect for you and your child will not lessen in any way.

#### Our promise to you

- We will deal with your concern or complaint honestly and politely.
- It will be looked into thoroughly, fairly and as quickly as possible.
- We will keep you up-to-date with what we are doing.
- We will apologise if we have made a mistake.
- We will tell you what we are going to do to put things right.

#### What to do first

If you have a concern about anything we do you can tell us by telephone, in person or in writing. If any of these are difficult for you, a friend or adviser can speak to us on your behalf. Most concerns or complaints will be sorted out quickly either by putting things right or by explaining the School's actions to you.

Try to go to the member of staff involved or your child's class teacher (*primary*)/your child's form tutor or head of year (*secondary*) who will either deal with your issue or pass you on to someone who is more able to help.

Please remember the beginning or end of the school day can be a very busy time. If you talk to a teacher at these times, for practical reasons, it may not be possible to sort things out there and then. Be ready for the teacher to say she or he will see you or ring you as soon as possible. This is because we want to give your worries the attention they deserve. You should not be

asked to wait more than a week and often she or he will discuss things with you much sooner. We hope this will be enough to put things right.

Sometimes the teacher will send you a brief note after the phone call or meeting with details of what we are doing about your concern.

### **Making a complaint**

If you have already told us about a concern but are not satisfied with how we have responded, you may wish to make a complaint.

We have a complaints procedure to make sure we respond to complaints in the best possible way. Our aim is to resolve complaints as quickly and as effectively as possible.

The complaints procedure will tell you exactly what will happen and how long it should all take. If you want to look at it before speaking to us please contact The School Manager, Our Lady's Catholic College, Morecambe Road, Lancaster, LA1 2RX who will be happy to give you a copy.

The procedure has three stages. We have time limits in our complaints procedure to make sure that complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible.

The first stage is an informal stage. At this stage, we would like you to put your complaint first to the member of staff involved. If this is not possible, please go to a more senior member of staff or the Headteacher. S/he will either meet you or, if you prefer, discuss your complaint on the phone.

If your concern involves the Headteacher, you should put your complaint to the Chair of Governors via the School.

We hope very much that your complaint will be resolved at this informal stage, but if you are still not satisfied, you can complain formally to (*name of Headteacher*). Please try to do this not more than 20 school days after getting a note explaining the teacher's response to your complaint. If we have not heard from you by then, we will assume that you do not want to take things any further. If the Headteacher has already been involved you can complain formally to the Chair of Governors.

At the formal stage, the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors, if appropriate) will fully investigate if necessary and arrange to discuss your complaint with you, and then send you a letter with an explanation of the actions the School will take.

Generally complaints are sorted out at the informal or formal stages, but occasionally complainants still feel dissatisfied and if so have a right to appeal against the outcome of the formal stage to the Complaints Appeals Committee of the Governing Body.

If you are not happy with the outcome of the formal stage you must let us know not more than 20 school days after getting a letter from the Headteacher explaining the school's response to your complaint, that you wish to go to the next Stage. If the Clerk of Governors has not heard from you by then, we will assume that you do not want to take things any further.

Arrangements for a meeting of the Complaints Appeals Committee will be made by the Clerk to Governors.

We hope very much that our complaints procedure will resolve all complaints in the School but a parent who is not satisfied may refer certain complaints to Ofsted. Any complainant who is not satisfied with the outcome of the Complaints Appeals Committee's consideration may take the complaint to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

We keep copies of all correspondence about concerns and complaints. These will be treated with the utmost confidence. You and your child have a legal right to have a copy of your child's school records.

All complaints are reported in general terms to the School's Governing Body to enable the School to learn from them.