



St Joseph's Institution International School

Enabling youth to learn and to learn how to live, empowering them to become people of integrity and people for others.



Complaints Policy (Parents)

Policy Written:	August 2016
Policy Reviewed:	June 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024
Date of Next Review:	June 2026
Revised By:	GC
Signed By:	 Gary Cairns, Head of School
Signed By:	 Mr Seow Koh Han, Lead Board Representative

This policy is written in the spirit of putting into practice our Lasallian core values.



Complaints Policy for Parents

Rationale

SJIS strives for excellence in education and values its partnership with parents. Should a concern arise, the school encourages open communication to address the concern promptly. As a school, we believe that open, honest communication is the most effective way to address challenges and ensure a positive learning environment for all students. The school encourages parents to first discuss concerns directly with the relevant staff member, as this often leads to a quick and satisfactory resolution.

Aims

- To offer a top-tier education to all students
- To proactively address concerns and complaints
- To foster open and respectful communication between the school and parents
- To maintain and improve the overall quality of the school through constructive dialogue and resolution

General Principles:

- While we encourage open communication, anonymous complaints will generally not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are compelling reasons that warrant an exception. This approach helps ensure fairness and allows for a thorough investigation with all relevant information.
- To ensure a thorough and timely investigation, we ask that complaints be brought to the school's attention as soon as possible. Generally, complaints raised more than three months after the event in question may not be considered, except in situations with exceptional circumstances. This time frame allows us to gather accurate information and address concerns effectively.
- We are committed to addressing concerns promptly. Upon receiving a complaint, we will acknowledge receipt within 24 hours. An investigation will typically commence within five school days and will be completed as quickly as reasonably possible. We will keep you informed of the progress throughout the process.

If the complaint is a safeguarding concern, please refer to the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Part A. Complaints about the actions of a member of staff other than the Deputy Principal(s) or Head of School.

1) Informal Stage

At SJHIS, we believe in resolving disagreements and concerns constructively and respectfully. We encourage parents to initially communicate directly with the relevant staff member to address most issues. This can be done through email, letter, telephone, video call, or an in-person appointment. Often, a simple conversation or exchange of information can lead to a quick resolution. If the staff member feels it would be beneficial, their line manager may also be present.

We are committed to acting fairly and impartially, ensuring everyone involved has an opportunity to be heard. Therefore, we strongly encourage parents to attempt an informal resolution first. While we understand there may be exceptional circumstances, consistently refusing to engage in this initial step may limit our ability to process the complaint. "Reasonableness" in this context will be assessed objectively. In situations involving serious concerns or a perceived conflict of interest, parents may address their complaint directly to the Head of School.

If, after communicating with the staff member, the parent remains unsatisfied, they may escalate the concern to the Head of Year or Head of Department for further informal resolution.

2) Formal Stage

If the concern remains unresolved after the informal stage, the parent should submit a formal written complaint to the Head of School for investigation.

To facilitate a thorough investigation, the written complaint should include:

- A clear and detailed description of the concern.
- Relevant dates, times, and locations.
- The names of any potential witnesses.
- Copies of any supporting documents.

The parent should also be prepared to meet with the Head of School to provide further clarification or information, if needed.

The Head of School will gather all necessary information and evidence to conduct a fair and impartial investigation. If an interview with a staff member who is the subject of the complaint is required, that staff member may be accompanied by a friend or representative. All parties involved will have a reasonable opportunity to share their perspectives and provide relevant information.

The investigation will commence promptly. Upon its completion, both the parent and the staff member involved will receive a written notification of the outcome. This notification will fall into one of the following categories:

- Insufficient Evidence: "After careful consideration, there is insufficient evidence to reach a definitive conclusion. Therefore, the complaint cannot be upheld."
- Unsubstantiated Concern: "The evidence gathered does not substantiate the concern raised."
- Partially or Fully Substantiated Concern: "The investigation found that the concern was substantiated (in part/in full)." (The school may then provide general information about any procedural reviews being undertaken, but details of the investigation or any staff disciplinary actions will remain confidential.)
- Confidential Procedures Underway: "The matter has been fully investigated, and appropriate confidential procedures are being followed." (This applies to situations involving staff disciplinary procedures, which are strictly confidential.)

The parent will be informed that the Head of School's investigation is now complete. If the concern remains unresolved, the parent may proceed to Part C of this policy.

Part B Complaining about the actions of the Deputy Principal

1) Informal Stage

We believe many concerns can be effectively addressed through clear communication and information sharing. Therefore, we encourage parents to speak directly with the Deputy Principal as a preliminary step. If the concern remains unresolved after this initial discussion, and with the agreement of both parties, a neutral third party may be invited to facilitate further informal resolution. While we strongly encourage attempting informal resolution, we understand there may be exceptional circumstances. Consistently refusing to engage in this process may limit our ability to proceed. However, in cases involving serious and significant concerns, parents may address these directly to the Head of School.

2) Formal Stage

If the concern remains unresolved after the informal stage, the parent must submit a formal written complaint to the Head of School for review and determination.

The written complaint should include:

- A detailed description of the concern.
- A chronological timeline of relevant events.
- The names of any potential witnesses.
- Relevant dates and times.
- Copies of any supporting documents.

The parent may also be invited to meet with the Head of School to provide oral clarification or additional information. The Head of School will gather all necessary and relevant evidence, which may include interviewing witnesses and other individuals who can provide pertinent information.

The Deputy Principal will receive a copy of the complaint and all supporting evidence. The Deputy Principal will then have the opportunity to provide a written and oral response in a separate meeting with the Head of School, and may be accompanied by a friend or representative.

Upon completion of the investigation, both the parent and the Deputy Principal will receive written notification of the outcome.

The parent will be informed that the Head of School's review is complete and whether action has been taken. However, details of any staff disciplinary or capability actions will remain confidential.

If the parent is dissatisfied with the process followed by the Head of School, they may request a review by the Chair of the Board of Governors (or a designated Board Member). This request must be submitted in writing within two weeks of receiving the Head of School's outcome, specifying any perceived procedural failings.

If the parent believes the Head of School's decision is demonstrably unreasonable or made in bad faith, they may file a complaint against the Head of School under Part C of this procedure, allowing for an investigation of the supporting evidence.

Part C Complaining about the actions of the Head of School

1) Informal Stage

We believe that many concerns can be effectively addressed through open and honest communication. Therefore, we encourage parents to speak directly with the Head of School as a preliminary step. Often, simple clarification or information sharing can resolve the matter. If the concern remains unresolved, and with the agreement of both parties, a neutral third party may be invited to mediate. While we strongly encourage attempting informal resolution, consistently refusing to engage in this process may limit our ability to proceed. However, in cases involving serious concerns, parents may address these directly to the Chairperson (or a designated Board Member).

2) Formal Stage

If the concern remains unresolved after the informal stage, the parent must submit a formal written complaint to the Chairperson (or designated Board Member) for review and determination. The Chairperson (or designated Board Member) will determine the applicable procedures and assess the merits of the complaint.

The written complaint should include:

- A detailed description of the concern.
- The names of any potential witnesses.
- Relevant dates and times.
- Copies of any supporting documents.

The parent may be invited to meet with the Chairperson (or designated Board Member) to provide oral clarification or additional information.

The Chairperson (or designated Board Member) will gather all necessary evidence, including interviewing witnesses and other relevant individuals.

The Head of School will receive a copy of the complaint and all supporting evidence. The Head of School will then have the opportunity to provide a written and oral response in a separate meeting with the Chairperson (or designated Board Member), and may be accompanied by a colleague or representative.

Upon completion of the investigation, both the parent and the Head of School will receive written notification of the outcome.

The parent will be informed that the review is complete and whether action has been taken. However, details of any staff disciplinary or capability actions will remain confidential.