



St. Paul's School

MANIBUS POTENTIA STUDIUM ANIMIS

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

*Reviewed June 2016*

### **School internal procedure that should not be published as part of this policy**

Any complaint that is resolved by a member of the leadership group at the end of stage 1 or later must file all correspondence in the central complaints file kept with the PA to the Leadership Group. This is in addition to the pupil's file. In the central complaints file very brief details of the complaint should be written on the log sheet. From time to time this log will be transferred to an electronic file. The Deputy Head will be responsible for reporting this information as a termly key performance indicator to the Board. Any issues relating to bullying must also be recorded in the bullying log. Issues related to child protection should not be kept in the central complaints file but instead in the child protection folder inside leadership on the computer network (which has restricted access to DSLs and the Head).

### **Introduction**

The school welcomes suggestions and comments from parents that may enable it to improve what it does, and will take seriously all concerns and complaints. Where possible complaints will be dealt with **informally** between the parent and the member of staff or line manager most closely connected with the issue. However, there may be instances when the issue is more serious or where an issue has not been resolved to a parent's satisfaction and in such cases a more **formal** approach may be followed as outlined below.

This policy is made available on the school website and is available for parents of pupils and prospective pupils.

Communications between parents and school should be based on mutual respect. Staff can expect the full support of their head of school in the event of difficult or pressurised situations.

### **Stage 1 Informal resolution**

It is hoped that 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/tutor or subject teacher. If the class teacher/tutor or subject teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with their head of year or head of department, or a member of the leadership team. A resolution, which may involve a meeting or a written

response, will follow within three school days.

### **Stage 2 Formal resolution by the head of school**

It might be that the parent(s) feel that the matter has not been resolved after Stage 1 and so they should therefore contact the Head of Pre-Prep, or the Head of Prep School or relevant leader of the Senior Leadership Team (Senior School) (SLT). Again, 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.

All formal complaints and the date on which they were received, along with details of how the complaint was resolved will be held by the head of school or member of the SLT. Files notes and correspondence pertaining to any concern or complaint are also maintained.

### **Stage 3 Formal resolution by the Head**

If the complaint cannot be resolved as above, then the parent should write to the Head (either by e-mail [head@stpauls.br](mailto:head@stpauls.br) or by letter). The Head will acknowledge receipt of the communication, normally within one school day, and indicate what further investigation is required and when the parent can expect to receive a reply. 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 her decision.

Where the complaint is about the Head, the complainant should contact the Chairman of the Board directly; this can be done through the Bursar (who also acts as the Clerk to the Board of Governors).

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)

### **Stage 4 Panel hearing**

It is hoped that parents will feel satisfied with the outcome given by the Head, or at least will understand the situation more fully and be assured that their concerns have been completely considered. If they are not satisfied they may, within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome letter, write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors to request a panel hearing.

The Chairman will ask the Clerk to the Governors to convene a panel of at least three members of the Board who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One member of this panel would normally be independent of the management and running of the school. A panel hearing will take place as soon as practicable and within fifteen working days of receiving the request to take the matter to this fourth stage. The panel may require that further particulars of the complaint be supplied in advance, copies of

which shall be supplied to all parties not later than three days prior to the hearing. One other person may accompany the parent(s) to the hearing. Legal representation will not normally 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 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 Head and to the Chairman.

### **Confidentiality**

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

### **The right to appeal**

At any stage, parents have the right to take their complaint to the Ministério da Educação (MEC). In these cases parents should write to Diretoira de Ensino Região Centro-oeste, Secretaria de Estado da Educação, Rua Dr. Paula Vieira, 257 Sumaré, Sao Paulo 01257-000 ([www.educacao.sp.gov.br](http://www.educacao.sp.gov.br)).

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### **British Schools Overseas (BSO) standards**

This policy has been written to meet the requirement of Part 1 of the UK Government's BSO standards regarding the quality of education provided by the school (1.5) and Part 6 regarding the provision of information for parents (1.6).

### **Policy review**

This policy is to be reviewed, at least, annually by the Compliance Committee and leadership of the school and presented to the Board of Governors for final consideration and approval.

Signed:

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Graham Nye, Chairman

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Louise Simpson, Head

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Date