



SPPS 2.12 Complaints

Purpose

To resolve concerns and complaints in a fair and professional manner, cooperatively and as soon as is possible and in accordance with the relevant employment contracts, legislation and the school's codes of conduct.

Scope

This procedure applies to all members of the Lindisfarne College community and those with whom the College interact.

Procedures

- In terms of natural justice, all complaints shall be dealt with promptly, to minimise distress to all parties.
- To provide a prompt and appropriately detailed response to complainants.
- All complaints shall be kept "in committee" (confidential to those involved) until a satisfactory solution has been determined.
- Where the complaint is made in public the only communication shall consist of recognition of the problem and advice that it shall be dealt with by 'due process' in accordance with the Complaints' Procedure.
- The Rector/Board Chairperson is the only person authorised to make statements to the media and this will never be considered lightly. Wherever possible, The Chair and Rector should communicate with each other before issuing the media statement.
- The complaint shall be dealt with through the following procedures and in accordance with the relevant conditions of the current employment contract(s).
 - Obviously, every possible scenario cannot be covered in such a procedure. Where the complaint does not fit into any of the following situations the Rector shall use his/her discretion following the following guidelines as closely as possible.
 - Anonymous complaints are not investigated unless the safety or wellbeing of staff or students is at issue.
 - A report on or a copy of the complaint is made available to those implicated, without necessarily identifying the complainant, for the safety or protection of privacy of individuals. Those implicated are asked to provide a written report for the Rector, Board Chairperson or Grievance Committee, who will subsequently discuss the matter with them.
 - A telephone or written response to the complainant is given as soon as practicable, and the complainant is advised that they have recourse to the Board if they believe the complaint has not been dealt with appropriately.
 - The Rector will advise the Board Chairperson of any serious complaint which may impact on the College's reputation or the welfare of any member of the college community.

Parent-Staff Complaint:

- a. The preferred initial approach by the parent shall be to the teacher concerned. If this is not desired or fails to resolve the matter it might be referred to the relevant Dean/HOF/Hostel Manager/Director of Boarding.
- b. Before moving to a written complaint there shall be a mediation meeting with the parent-staff and Dean/HOF/Hostel Manager/Director of Boarding, where they shall endeavour to address the issue to bring about a resolution.
- c. For more serious matters, or if the above does not provide a solution, then a written complaint must be submitted and contact shall be made with the Rector who will endeavour to resolve the complaint, provided it is not 'frivolous' or 'malicious', in which case it will be dismissed without further discussion.



- d. The Rector will report back to the complainant if the matter is then settled.
- e. If conflict resolution needs to be organised, the Rector will arrange a meeting with a mediator (who may be the Rector). The staff member and/or the complainant may have a support person/s present.
- f. If the Rector cannot resolve the complaint, then he will establish a 'Grievance Committee' consisting of three persons of which the Rector shall be the Chairperson. The remaining members shall be selected by the Rector and may include a staff member, College Council member or an independent person suitably qualified to adjudicate.
- g. If the complaint is to be heard by the Grievance Committee, a full written report will be requested. This committee shall hear the complaint, allocating sufficient time to both parties. The committee shall then determine the procedure for any further action it believes necessary to affect a resolution or come to a decision that no further action is required. At the appropriate time both parties shall be advised of the outcome.
- h. In the case of a complaint against the Rector the complainant shall contact the Board Chairperson. If the complaint is justified, a full written report will be requested.
- i. If the Board Chair cannot resolve the complaint, then he/she will establish a 'Grievance Committee' consisting of three persons of which the Board Chair shall be the Chairperson. The remaining members shall be selected by the Board chair and may include a staff member, College Council member or an independent person suitably qualified to adjudicate.

Staff-Parent Complaint:

- a. The initial approach by the staff member shall be to the Rector. In cases of abuse the teacher may report this to outside agencies.
- b. The Rector shall determine whether the complaint is justified, and the health and well-being of the staff member is affected. The Rector shall then deal with the complaint either directly with the parent or with the assistance of a relevant support agency.
- c. The College Council must be informed of any action likely to create media attention.

Internal Staff Complaint:

- a. The Rector shall deal with all internal staff complaints except in cases of a complaint against the Rector.
 - i. In the case of teaching staff, the Rector can be assisted by the Deputy Rector (or SLT member) and relevant Dean or Head of Faculty as necessary.
 - ii. In the case of Hostel staff, the Rector can be assisted by the Director of Boarding as necessary.
 - iii. In the case of non-teaching staff, the Rector can be assisted by the Deputy Rector (or SLT member) or Bursar as necessary.
- b. If the Rector cannot resolve the complaint, then he will establish a 'Grievance Committee' consisting of three persons of which the Rector shall be the Chairperson. The remaining members shall be selected by the Rector and may include a staff member, College Council member or an independent person suitably qualified to adjudicate.
- c. Any action required as a result of a complaint involving a staff member must be dealt with in accordance with the relevant Employment contract.
- d. In the case of a complaint against the Rector the complainant shall contact the Board Chairperson. If the complaint is justified, a full written report will be requested.
- e. If the Board Chair cannot resolve the complaint, then he/she will establish a 'Grievance Committee' consisting of three persons of which the Board Chair shall be the Chairperson. The remaining members shall be selected by the Board chair and may include a staff member, College Council member or an independent person suitably qualified to adjudicate.



Student Complaint:

- a. The preferred initial approach by the student shall be to the staff member concerned. If this is not desired or fails to resolve the matter it might be referred to the relevant SLT member, Director of Boarding, Director of Sport, Director of Performance Music, HOF or Dean.
- b. Before moving to a written complaint there shall be a mediation meeting with the student, staff member and SLT member, Director of Boarding, Director of Sport, Director of Performance Music, HOF or Dean where they shall endeavour to address the issue to bring about a resolution.
- c. For more serious matters, or if the above does not provide a solution, then a written complaint must be submitted and contact shall be made with the Rector who will endeavour to resolve the complaint, provided it is not 'frivolous' or 'malicious', in which case it will be dismissed without further discussion.
- d. If conflict resolution needs to be organised, the Rector will arrange a meeting with a mediator (who may be the Rector). The staff member and/or the complainant may have a support person/s present.
- e. For sensitive issues, students are encouraged to discuss this first with their parents/caregivers
- f. If not followed through by parents/caregivers, students may approach one of: Tutor Teacher, the relevant Dean, Guidance Counsellor, member of SLT, Hostel Manager, or Director of Boarding.
- g. The Tutor Teacher, Dean, Guidance Counsellor, member of SLT, Hostel Manager, or Director of Boarding may then deal with the complaint directly or choose to refer it on to the Rector.

Board Chair or Trustee Complaint:

- a. Complaints regarding a Council (Board) member are referred to the Rector and Board Chairperson for investigation and response. Complaints regarding the Board Chairperson should be referred to the Rector who will convene a sub-committee of the College Council.

General Complaint:

- a. The initial approach shall be made with the Deputy/Assistant Rector/Director of Boarding who will endeavour to resolve the complaint, provided it is not 'frivolous' or 'malicious', in which case it will be dismissed without further discussion.
- b. The Deputy/Assistant Rector/Director of Boarding will investigate the complaint and report back to the complainant if the matter is then able to be settled. In more serious circumstances the matter should be referred to the Rector.
- c. If conflict resolution needs to be organised, the Rector will arrange a meeting with a mediator (which may be the Rector). The parties involved may have a support person/s present.
- d. If the Rector cannot resolve the complaint, then he will establish a 'Grievance Committee' consisting of three persons of which the Rector shall be the Chairperson. The remaining members shall be selected by the Rector and *may* include a staff member, College Council member or an independent person suitably qualified to adjudicate.
- e. If the complaint is to be heard by the Grievance Committee, a full written report will be requested. This committee shall hear the complaint and then determine the procedure for any further action it believes it is necessary to affect a resolution, or come to a decision that no further action is required. At the appropriate time both parties shall be advised of the outcome.

Date Reviewed: Term 2, 2022

Next Review Date: Term 2, 2025