



Cistercian  
College  
A Place To Grow

## **General Complaints Procedure for Parents/Guardians**

### **Our Mission:**

The Cistercian College community is committed to educating and developing our students to reach their potential in a Christian, caring, affirming, inclusive and supportive environment, so they lead fulfilling lives and make a positive contribution to society.

### **Our Vision:**

To be a leading boys secondary school, nationally and internationally, delivering exceptional education, which is holistic and inclusive, developed in an environment rich in the Cistercian ethos, the Irish spirit, and sense of community, where our graduates are recognised to be resilient of moral character, with strong leadership qualities.

### **Our Values:**

From our Mission and Vision, we develop our core CCR Values of:

- **Character** – spirituality, resilience, self-development, confidence, leadership
- **Community** – participation, diversity, environmental care, responsibility
- **Respect** – loyalty, friendship, tolerance, support, individuality, care

### **Our Ethos**

- We remain true to our rich Christian and Catholic history and to those who have gone before us, where the whole College community works tirelessly towards the achievement of each one's full potential, to be the very best that each can be while staying grounded and resilient in the face of adversity.
- Facilitate students and staff working together in partnership across our full College programme, recognising that each person's talents are unique and individual.
- Inspire all within the College community to live by core Cistercian values of reflection, academic endeavour, work, and recreation as well as develop the spiritual, moral, and personal qualities of the students in a progressive boarding school environment.
- To develop and deliver an exceptional education on our unique rural campus setting, facilitated by ongoing investment in our teaching resources, our technology, and our extensive facilities.
- Support students in a welcoming, inclusive and affirming environment producing solid, self-assured, confident young men well equipped for the transition to adult life, who will make a positive contribution to the lives of the women, men, and the environment with which they engage.
- Live out the College motto in our everyday lives: '*Insideat coelis animo sed corpore terris – Let the mind be in heaven while the body dwells upon the earth.*'



## Introduction

Procedures are necessary to ensure fair treatment for all in the school and acceptable procedures should be known, agreed, and observed in the interest of good industrial relations and harmony in the school environment. Periodic review of all procedures should take place to ensure practices are good and adhere to any developments in employment legislation or other legislation or case law.

## Purpose of Complaints Procedure

- (a) To provide a fair, consistent and equitable mechanism for processing complaints by parents/guardians or students (who have reached the age of 18 years) against teachers.
- (b) To do so in a manner that affords all concerned full rights in accordance with natural justice.
- (c) To outline the procedures which should be followed by all - employer, employees and their representatives - in the event of complaints being made against teachers.

## Exclusions

- (a) When complaints are deemed by the Principal to be:-
  - (i) on matters of professional competence which cannot be dealt with at school level and which are to be referred to the Department of Education and Science for investigation;
  - (ii) frivolous, vexatious or anonymous complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school;
  - (iii) complaints in which either party has had recourse to law or to another standard procedure; they shall be excluded from the scope of this procedure.
- (b) Verbal complaints may be processed informally through Stage 1 of the procedure.

Where the complaint is made in writing initially, the complaint should be processed through Stage 1 but a copy of the complaint should be given to the teacher at Stage 1. Only those complaints which are written and signed by the complainants may be investigated through stage two and stage three of the procedure.

## Procedures

### Stage 1

- 1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should make an appointment and discuss the matter with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint.
- 1.2 The resolution and outcome of Stage 1.1 should be communicated verbally to both parties.
- 1.3 If the complaint is still unresolved, the parent/guardian/student should be advised that they may raise the matter formally with the Board of Management as set out at Stage 2 with a view to resolving it.
- 1.4 In the case of a complaint against the President or Principal, the parent/guardian/student should discuss the complaint with the President or Principal in the first instance. If the parent/guardian/student is unable to resolve the complaint with the President or Principal, the complaint may be processed as provided for at Stages 2 and 3 of this procedure.



## Stage 2

- 2.1 If the issue is not resolved at Stage 1 then the parent/guardian/student should lodge the complaint in writing with the Board of Management.
- 2.2 The Board should acknowledge receipt of the complaint, note it formally and appoint two authorised representatives, one of whom may be the President or Principal, to deal with the matter.
- 2.3 The authorised representatives should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board of Management:-
- (a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint, and
  - (b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the Principal and the complainant, with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 school days of receipt of the written complaint as specified at 2.1.
- 2.4 The teacher may be accompanied by a colleague or the ASTI School Steward at this stage of the procedure.
- 2.5 The authorised representatives should convey the outcome of these discussions/investigation, in writing, to the teacher, complainant and the Board of Management and indicate whether or not the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.
- 2.6 If the complaint has not been resolved at this stage and the complainant wishes to proceed to Stage 3 s/he shall indicate this in writing to the Board within 10 school days of receipt of the letter referred to in 2.5.

## Stage 3

- 3.1 If the Board considers the complaint is not substantiated, the teacher and the complainant should be informed.
- 3.2 If the Board considers that the complaint warrants further investigation, he should proceed as follows:
- (a) the teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
  - (b) the teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence relevant to the complaint;
  - (c) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board of Management in response to the complaint;
  - (d) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a formal presentation of their case to the Board of Management. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a colleague or union representative at any such meeting, and
  - (e) the Board of Management may arrange a meeting with the complainant. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting, and
  - (f) the meeting/hearing of the Board of Management referred to in 3.2(d) and 3.2(e) will take place within 15 days of the meeting referred to in 2.3(b).
- 3.3 When the Board of Management has completed its investigation, the decision of the Board of Management should be conveyed in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five school days of the decision being taken.
- 3.4 The decision of the Board of Management shall be final, except in respect of matters governed by appeals procedures in the Education Act 1998.
- 3.5 In the case of a complaint which is upheld the matter may be dealt with by the Board of Management under the provision of Stage 3 of the agreed Disciplinary Procedures.



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## NOTES

- (i) In this procedure a school day means a day on which the school is in operation.
- (ii) At all stages of the Complaints Procedure a written record should be kept of
  - (a) the investigation undertaken;
  - (b) communications to the Board of Management/Parent/Guardian/Student and Teacher, and
  - (c) the steps and/or decision taken.

Copies of this written record may be made available for inspection to the parties to the complaint and to the teacher(s) concerned.

- (iii) The Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed by the parties every three years or at the request of any one of the parties.