CASTLE SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Policy for dealing with complaints

The following policy statement is included in our Parent Handbook:

We welcome suggestions for improving our work in school. Be assured that, no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for your child will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate an incident or problem properly if it took place some time ago. We do appreciate the assistance we receive from parents in addressing any problems that arise.

Problems sometimes arise from misunderstandings which are easily addressed. Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking to us.

We will investigate any problems and discuss our findings with you so that we can find a way forward together which serves the best interests of both the school and your child. In the unlikely event of the problem remaining unresolved you can put your complaint in writing and, if necessary, could subsequently refer it to our Independent Panel.'

The procedure to be followed in the event of a complaint being made is summarised in the following stages:

Stage 1: Referral to the School

Parents discuss concerns with the school.

A meeting will be arranged with the complainant to clarify and supplement any information given.

The Principal and members of the SMT will investigate further, interviewing witnesses as appropriate. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil would normally be interviewed with a parent present or, if this is not possible, with a member of staff who is not directly involved.

The Principal will keep written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.

Once all relevant facts have been established, the Principal will respond.

If no satisfactory solution has been found, parents are asked if they wish their concern to be considered further.

If the complainant is not satisfied, they are advised to write to the Independent Panel (who must not have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint):- C/O Mrs Harriet Harrison (Director/Principal) who will ensure that all members receive a copy of the letter. The Independent Panel consists of three local professionals who are involved in some way with young people. A list is available on request. They are all independent of the management and running of the school

If the complaint is against the Principal, the Stage 1 procedures are carried out by the Headteacher.

Stage 2: Review by the Independent Panel

The Principal acknowledges receipt of the written complaint, informing the complainant that the complaint is to be heard by the panel of three members within 20 working days.

The Principal arranges to convene a Complaints Panel. The members should have no prior involvement with the complaint and they should elect a person to record all minutes of the meeting. All relevant documentation regarding the complaint should be given to the members of the panel as soon as possible.

The Principal will write and inform all concerned of the date, time and place of the meeting at least 5 working days in advance. The notification to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend and the right to submit further written evidence.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted.

After the meeting, the panel will consider the evidence and a written decision detailing all findings will be sent to the Principal and the complainant and where relevant, the person complained about, within 15 working days.

All written records of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing must be kept in a confidential place.