

## DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY

1. For the purpose of the School's Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedures, a 'dispute' refers to any students'/parents' official complaints that the School may receive from any channel, and should be communicated to students / parents and be aligned with the Private Education Regulations.
2. All complaints must be properly recorded and /or documented. Any correspondence (including actions taken) between the School and the complainant must be annexed as evidence. This is to ensure that any staff handling the case are kept aware of the progress and outcomes.
3. The school will respond to respective students or parents within 3 working days of receipt of any complaints received for both informal and formal complaints. A matter raised orally may not necessarily be acknowledged in writing. This is to ensure that students/parents are aware that the School is aware of the complaint received and is in the process of handling it.
4. Our aim is that all informal and formal complaints be resolved within 4 working days and 21 working days respectively. In the event that this target cannot be met, respective students and parents must be notified and the reasons with regards to the delay must be made clear.
5. In the event that the School and the student / parent cannot come to an agreement or the student/ parent does not accept the final decision made by the School's Senior Team, they will be referred to Singapore Mediation Centre (SMC) or Singapore Institute of Arbitrators (SIArb) through SSG Student Services Centre for mediation.

## DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

### **Stage One: Informal**

1. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. The timescale for resolving informal complaints is normally 4 working days. If parents have concerns, they should normally speak to their child's Class Teacher or Form Tutor in the first instance. A matter raised orally may not necessarily be acknowledged in writing. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. It is expected that in almost all cases this will lead to an agreement or understanding being reached between the various parties.

2. However, where a parent is not satisfied with the response received, full written details of the matter should be referred to the relevant Pastoral Leader for an issue dealt with by a Class Teacher or Form Tutor and to the Head of Department for a matter dealt with by a subject teacher. (Throughout this document the term Pastoral Leader means a Head of House in the Senior School or, in the case of the Junior School, the Vice Principal (Head of Junior School)). Concerns and complaints relating to non-teaching staff should be referred to the appropriate Line Manager. The Class Teacher/Pastoral Leader/Head of Department/Line Manager will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. The School maintains a central written record of all informal complaints for management purposes to enable patterns of low-level concerns to be monitored. If a stage one informal complaint transitions to a stage two formal complaint, the complaint will be noted in the formal complaints log.

3. Any concern about the safety of children should be notified immediately to the person best placed to take urgent action and should be confirmed in writing to the Principal.

4. Where the first contact is directly to the Chairman of Governors or Principal this will initially be treated as an informal complaint.

### **Stage Two: Formal**

1. Should the matter not be resolved informally within 4 working days or in the event that the Class Teacher/Pastoral Leader/Head of Department/Line Manager and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents should promptly put their complaint in writing to the Principal, including any relevant documents together with their full contact details. The Principal will normally hold a meeting with the parents before instigating an investigation or making any decision in respect of the complaint. The Principal will endeavour to convene the meeting within 3 working days of receipt of the formal complaint.

2. The Principal will decide, after considering the written complaint, the appropriate course of action to take and would normally ask the relevant Vice Principal or the Director of Operations (for complaints relating to certain non-teaching staff) to investigate.

3. The Principal, the relevant Vice Principal or the Director of Operations will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. NORTH LONDON COLLEGIATE SCHOOL (SINGAPORE) Pte. Ltd. SSG Registration Number 201621489R Period of Registration 25-07-2019 to 24-07-2023

4. Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing, normally within 4 working days of the decision having been made.

5. The Principal's aim would be to inform the complainant of the outcome of an investigation and the resolution to the complaint within 7 working days from the receipt of the complaint.

### **Stage Three: Panel Hearing**

1. A Complaints Panel hearing is a review of the decisions taken by the Principal. The Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint which have not been previously raised as part of the complaints procedure. The Panel's task is to establish the facts surrounding the complaints that have been made by considering: a. the documents provided by both parties and b. any representations made by the parents and the Principal

2. After establishing the facts, the Panel will either uphold or dismiss the complaint. The decision will be made on the balance of probabilities. It is not within the Panel's power to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, pupils or parents. The Panel may make recommendations to the Principal or to the full Governing Body as appropriate.

3. If parents are dissatisfied with the decision of the Principal at Stage Two above they should write to the Director of Operations within 2 working days of the date they have been notified of the decision so that the matter can be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. Parents should ensure that a copy of all relevant documents and their full contact details accompany their letter, which should also state the outcome desired and all the grounds of the complaint. A Complaints Panel will only be convened if Stages One and Two of this procedure have been followed.

4. The Director of Operations shall acknowledge the request in writing within 2 working days and will endeavour to convene the panel hearing within 3 working days of the date of acknowledgement or as soon as is reasonably practicable. If the dates within that period are unavailable to panel members, parents or relevant members of staff. The Panel will consist of at least 3 persons not having detailed knowledge of or being directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the Senior Team who is running the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of Governors who may appoint themselves to the Panel if not previously involved in the matter. The hearing will be chaired by one member of the Panel (chosen by themselves) and will be conducted in an informal manner. The Director of Operations will be asked to take a handwritten minute of the proceedings.

5. The parents will be sent written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing together with brief details of the Panel members. Parents will be asked to attend the hearing and may be accompanied by one other person. This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation is not normally considered appropriate. If parents wish to bring a legally qualified person to act in their professional capacity, subject to the consent of the Chair of the Panel, the parents should provide the School with at least 7 days' notice.

6. The Chair may, at his/her discretion, adjourn the hearing for further investigation of any relevant issue. This may include an adjournment to take legal advice.

7. After consideration of all matters discussed at the hearing, the Panel will reach a decision (unless there is an agreed position). The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations may be notified orally at the hearing or subsequently within 3 working days of the hearing. The Director of Operations will write to the parents informing them of the Panel's decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing by electronic mail to the parents, the Principal, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. If parents do not wish to receive this by electronic mail, a copy will be posted. The decisions, findings and any recommendations will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Governing Body and the Principal.

8. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will normally be destroyed following each school inspection. In exceptional circumstances, some details will be retained for a further period as necessary.

9. If the student / parent is still not satisfied with the outcome / decision, he / she will be referred to the Singapore Mediation Centre (SMC) or Singapore Institute of Arbitrators (SIArb) through the Committee for Private Education Student Services Centre.

10. The entire process should not take more than 21 working days unless otherwise specified. Students need to be informed of the reason as to why it is so and justification needs to be provided by the School. Justifications need to be recorded on the Feedback Form under the Remarks section.