



## COMPLAINTS POLICY

### 1. General Principles

- 1.1. Elizabeth College has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. Elizabeth College seeks to ensure that parents are aware that staff in both the Junior and Upper Schools are readily available to deal with any issues that arise. It is our hope and intention that matters can be dealt with promptly to the mutual satisfaction of all parties. On the rare occasions when this is not possible parents may wish to make a formal complaint and this document sets out the procedures that should be followed. The College would always wish to deal with all complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible. The time this takes will vary with the circumstances, gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled, although we generally aim to resolve all complaints within 28 days of the complaint being received.
- 1.2. The school will record all complaints that have been received and dealt with either directly or indirectly by any member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The action taken and outcome of the complaint will be recorded, together with reasons for that decision. Any complaint progressing to Stage 2 or 3 will be clearly recorded as such. All correspondence, statements and records relating to the complaint will be kept confidential to the parties involved, except where inspecting bodies may wish to see them. Such information is held by the Principal's PA on file and is reviewed regularly by the Principal to identify whether a change of practice is required and so that patterns can be identified and appropriate interventions made.
- 1.3. Urgent complaints will be identified as such and given priority. All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully and complainants will be kept informed as appropriate. The main aim will be a speedy and mutually agreed resolution of the issue.

### 2. Procedures

The handling of complaints falls into three stages as set out below.

#### Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- 2.1. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. If you have a concern about College, please try to talk to someone at school, ideally at an early stage. You can contact them informally or arrange an appointment to meet with them.
- 2.2. Your concern can usually be settled quickly and without fuss by contacting the right person in College. In the first instance, this is most likely to be your child's Class teacher in the Junior School or Head of Year in the Upper School. Alternatively, you can contact the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at the Junior School, or a member of the SLT at the Upper School. If your concern cannot be resolved by this informal route or the matter hasn't been satisfactorily resolved in ten working days you have the option of taking the matter to Stage 2.



## **Stage 2: Formal Resolution**

- 2.3. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, you should put your complaint to the Principal (or the Chair of the Board of Directors if your complaint is about the Principal) in writing at which point it becomes a formal complaint. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, what appropriate course of action to take. It may be necessary for a senior member of staff to carry out further investigations at this stage on behalf of the Principal.
- 2.4. If the complaint is about the Principal the Chair of the Board of Directors, or whomever he deems appropriate, will follow the process above.
- 2.5. Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed in writing within 28 working days of the original receipt of the complaint. The Principal will also give reasons for her/his decision.
- 2.6. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they may proceed to Stage 3.

## **Stage 3: Complaints Committee**

- 2.6. Stage 3 should be a full-merits hearing of the complaint, not merely a review that process was followed.
- 2.7. If your complaint has still not been resolved to your satisfaction at Stage 2 you may write to the Clerk to the Board of Directors, stating exactly why you are not content with the Principal's decision. The matter will then be dealt with by a Complaints Committee which will comprise:
  - Two Directors not directly involved with the matters relating to the complaint.
  - An independent person who has some relevant experience but is independent of the management of the school and who is not a parent of a current student in any part of the school.
- 2.8. The Clerk will acknowledge the complaint and arrange a meeting of a Complaints Committee within 15 working days. You can attend and bring a relative or friend to support you if you wish, though legal representation will not normally be appropriate. If the Principal is required to attend they may also be accompanied. Electronic recording devices will only be used with the consent of both parties and will be used only to assist the Committee in reaching their decision and the reasons for it.
- 2.9. Where further investigation is required, the Committee will determine how this is carried out. You will be informed in writing about the Committee's decision, reasons for it and any recommendations within ten working days from the date of the meeting, as will the Principal and Chair of the Board of Directors and where relevant, the person complained about. This decision will be final.
- 2.10. A hard copy of the findings and recommendations of the review is held on the school premises and is available for inspection by the proprietor and the Principal.



**The number of complaints received in the school year 2020-21 reaching Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) was: 1 and Stage 3 (Complaints Committee) was: 0**

### **3. Review in the Event of Removal or Expulsion**

- 3.1. Separately, this applies in the event of the removal or expulsion of a student and relates to paragraph 7 of the College's Standard Terms and Conditions (updated September 2021).
- 3.2. If a student is expelled or their removal is required from the school a written application for a review of the decision may be made to the Board of Directors. Notice of any appeal should be made in writing addressed to the Chairman of the Board of Directors, care of the Clerk to the Board of Directors, within 7 days of the expulsion or removal. The Chairman will then convene a meeting of the Board of Directors (excluding Directors who may have had any prior involvement in the matter). You will be advised of which of the Directors will hear the appeal and the procedures to be followed in relation to it.